THE BIG ASK
CASE STUDIES AND ADVICE ON FUNDRAISING FOR OUTDOOR ARTS

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In May 2013, a consortium of six leading outdoor arts companies was awarded a grant by Arts Council England to increase the Consortium’s skills, knowledge and experience of fundraising. This grant was awarded as part of the Catalyst investment scheme, aimed at helping cultural organisations diversify their income streams and access additional funding from private sources.

Recognising the threat to public funding, the grant was aimed at building knowledge and skills around three areas in particular: Individual Giving, Trusts and Foundations, and, to a lesser degree, Business Sponsorship. This report shares the experiences of the Consortium, and provides additional insight and advice to other outdoor arts organisations and creative producers interested in diversifying their income streams.

As the Consortium tested a variety of fundraising tools that were relatively new to them, the challenges experienced were not unexpected. Establishing successful fundraising systems can take significant time and, when producing work outdoors, with no building-based venue and a limited audience database, there are additional challenges in finding and attracting potential donors. Though there were varied successes in terms of money raised, critically, the project extended the Consortium’s knowledge of fundraising and they are now able to make informed choices about where they focus their fundraising energies in future.

Across the projects delivered by the Consortium, there were common learning outcomes that are worth highlighting:

- You need a compelling vision and a Case for Support that uses language appropriate for your target audience.
- It is important to understand the social value of your organisation.
- Invest in building your profile and diversifying your networks.
- Building relationships with donors and Trusts and Foundations takes time. Don’t underestimate the resources needed for fundraising.
- You need to learn how to ask for money.
- It can be a wise investment to work with external fundraising experts.
- Fundraising should be understood and supported across the entire organisation, from Trustees to freelancers.
- Think carefully about why you are collecting data and what information you need to collect before you set up any systems.
- Before and after every fundraising initiative, you should examine the return on time and resources invested.
- Your artistic vision and brand should be reflected in all your fundraising activities.

This resource has been designed around the Consortium’s experience and feedback, and should be considered an overview rather than a detailed handbook. There are many other fantastic resources and suitable training courses for those wanting to find out more about fundraising. A list of online resources is available at the end.
A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE CONSORTIUM MEMBERS:

Emergency Exit Arts (EEA) creates unforgettable events and participatory experiences using visual performance, processions, puppetry, music and pyrotechnics. Formed in 1980, EEA is a charity with six staff members, and its 2013/2014 turnover was £906,163. EEA explored a Friends scheme and Trusts and Foundations as part of the Catalyst project.

www.eea.org.uk

Bureau of Silly Ideas (BOSI) is an established public realm arts company based in Brixton, London. Founded in 2002, BOSI is renowned for making a song and dance out of road works, eccentric machinery, intervention, visual art and spectacle. There are two full-time staff members and the turnover in 2013/2014 was £170,000. BOSI explored business sponsorship as part of the Catalyst project.

www.bureauofsillyideas.com

Independent Street Arts Network (ISAN) is the national membership and strategic organisation that supports the development of outdoor arts in the UK and brings the sector together. ISAN is a company limited by guarantee. It has two full-time members of staff and its 2013/2014 turnover was £120,000. ISAN concentrated on leading the communications campaign as part of the Catalyst project.

www.isanuk.org

Kazzum is a theatre company dedicated to producing playful theatrical experiences for children and young people, engaging them as creative partners in the creation of innovative performances. Kazzum has three full-time members of staff and its 2013/2014 turnover was £219,600. For the Catalyst project, Kazzum explored grassroots individual giving and crowdfunding.

www.kazzum.org

Kinetika People is a world-class outdoor arts company, recognised for delivering high-quality, large-scale festival and event design while, at the same time, working at a grassroots level to engage local groups in long-term, meaningful outdoor arts projects that have the power to transform communities in a number of ways. Kinetika People is a registered charity and owns The Kinetika Design Studio Ltd. There are two part-time staff members and the company’s 2013/2014 turnover was £250,738. For the Catalyst project, Kinetika explored the potential of engaging high-profile Patrons and Major Donors.

www.kinetikaonline.co.uk

Tangled Feet is a physical theatre ensemble dedicated to devising original, accessible and innovative work. A registered charity with five part-time members of staff that work on a project-by-project basis, Tangled Feet’s 2013/2014 turnover was £246,293. For the Catalyst project, Tangled Feet explored the potential of Trusts and Foundations, Individual Giving at festivals, and crowdfunding.

www.tangledfeet.com

All Consortium members, except Tangled Feet, are part of Arts Council England’s National Portfolio.
Fundraising in its simplest terms is the act of raising money by asking for it. It is a function that ideally should be understood and supported across an organisation from Trustees to performers.

You may be currently concerned with raising money for a particular project but the bigger question to ask is, “Where will the money come from in the next few years?” To take a long-term approach to fundraising and income generation, you will need to ask a few essential questions about your organisation and your plans. An organisation able to clearly identify what it does, what it is trying to achieve and who benefits is better equipped to target appropriate funding sources for its work.

Ideally, you will be aiming for a diversified income stream so that you are not over-reliant on any one source. To achieve this, you will need to be strategic and prepared to access or develop the technical skills necessary to reach different stakeholders.

“If there are thousands of charities chasing finite resources for worthwhile causes, funding for outdoor arts won’t be a priority for many, so be prepared for some challenging conversations.”

Tangled Feet

Fundraising needs to be developed alongside your artistic programme, your financial planning and your marketing. There are donors happy to provide backing for projects or work without knowing the legal status of an organisation. However, most, if not all, will want reassurance that their contribution will be spent appropriately. Registering your company as a charity can be seen as a sign of your professionalism and commitment to public value.

“Every company is unique and the relationships we have with our audiences and partners are different. The personality of the company is important. What your brand is and how people have found out about you supports your fundraising work.”

Tangled Feet

“There is lots of support available to register your company as a charity. If you are delivering work that has a public benefit, start to think about how you can describe it effectively—this will help your transformation to charity status.”

Tangled Feet

Fundraising is time-consuming; it requires research, planning, creativity, a willingness to build long-term relationships and tenacity. It may be that there are various sources of funding that you are keen to access but it is important to prioritise, research and plan before pursuing any funding source, particularly if you are a small organisation.
WHAT ARE YOU FUNDRAISING FOR?

Before deciding where to place fundraising efforts, it is worth examining the following:

- What is your mission and vision?
- What are your plans and objectives for the next 1–3 years and how will these be delivered?
- How much do you need to raise to deliver your plans and what are your likely or secured sources of income?
- Who will be the beneficiaries of your work?
- Who else would value what you are trying to achieve and why? Try and place yourself in the position of others. Writing the list won’t commit you to anything, but it will allow you the space to examine why anyone would buy your services or support your company through a grant or donation.
- Who are your current and future partners/stakeholders?
- What, if any, fundraising do you currently do?
- What are the wider external factors that might impact on your fundraising, e.g. likelihood of ongoing cuts to public sources of funding?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Without a compelling vision, clear plans and a degree of self-awareness, it is difficult for potential funders to understand the direction of your organisation or have confidence in your ideas and management abilities. There is also the risk that you lose time chasing funding opportunities indiscriminately, rather than seeking funding for the work you actually want to do.

WHY SHOULD ANYONE SUPPORT YOUR WORK?

There are over 165,000 charities in the UK serving a wide range of causes. Given the recent and ongoing cuts to public funding, many of these charities are also looking for new funders, so you need to be ambitious, clear and confident about the value of your work. You will be competing with organisations with established fundraising teams and considerable experience.

Even if you are not a charity, you will need to articulate and justify why anyone should support the work that you do. This is often referred to as a Case for Support. Some organisations will have this written down as a central document that they adapt depending on who they are trying to appeal to. Other organisations have a strong verbal argument for their work and collect relevant information when needed for applications.

To produce a Case for Support, you should capture the following information:

- What is your mission?
- Who benefits from what you do?
- Why are your activities important? What is the need, gap or problem you are addressing?
- Why are you the most appropriate organisation to address that need?
- Why are you worthy of support? What have you achieved? What makes you unique?
- Who are your partners? What makes you a credible organisation in your field?

“Think about what you value about your work and find the language to articulate that, and adapt it for different audiences.”

Kinetic

WHO SHOULD YOU APPROACH?

This document is about the experience of the Consortium in fundraising, particularly from individuals and Trusts and Foundations, but these funding sources should not be isolated from others, particularly the opportunity to sell services. It is the combination of these activities that creates your organisation’s financial model and you should be open to researching all possible routes for funding, not just those highlighted through this project.

“If you are expanding your fundraising, don’t forget to put the effort where you are already having success—maintain and build those relationships, see them as long term and work on expanding what they fund. Starting new relationships is tough, not impossible, but tough.”

Emergency Exit Arts

While you may want to continue exploring options with pre-existing stakeholders, if those stakeholders are public bodies, you should be careful not to become overly dependent on those sources of income. You also need to dedicate time and resources towards identifying potential new funders. You need to know their interests and establish where their interests cross over with your ambitions and plans. You also need to understand their funding processes and timelines.

WORKING WITH AN EXTERNAL FUNDRAISER

Recognising the expertise of others can save you a lot of time and, while there is an obvious financial implication, employing a fundraiser, even for one or two days a week, can provide a significant return on your investment in the long run.

The key word is “investment”, as fundraisers can feel as though they are expected to perform magic when they are employed by companies who have unrealistic expectations of what can be achieved. Their ability to raise money depends on a variety of factors, including: how long the organisation has been going, the management and governance structure, the cause/work that needs funding, the location, the reach, and the time available to fundraise.

“We have been working with a freelance fundraiser for 1.5 days a month for a few years, concentrating on applications to Trusts and Foundations. For the 2013/2014 financial year, 27% of our income came from this source of funding. Initially we had some resistance from the Board about this approach, but they saw that, with a small investment from our core funds, we were able to bring in far more in grant funding. In the first year there was very little return. We realised that our fundraiser needed to get to know us and, in turn, get us known by the Trusts we were applying to.”

Kazzum

“We have learnt that a strong partnership is needed between our fundraiser and our lead artists. Our fundraiser is a core member of the ensemble; he understands our work. Therefore, our applications reflect our work. It’s joined up; there is a mutual respect. Artists don’t always have the skills needed to fundraise. There is a skill in articulating the social as well as artistic value of our work.”

Tangled Feet
CASE STUDY

There are over 8,800 Trusts and Foundations in the UK. They range in size from small family Trusts with no staff distributing a few thousand pounds a year to large Trusts with million-pound grant programmes and staffing structures in place. They are also diverse in terms of what they fund. Often their only purpose is to distribute funding but, unlike public bodies, they do not have any obligations to make their programmes publicly accountable; it is their money and they can distribute it as they wish. They will often provide criteria or areas of interest but, in some cases, they will only solicit applications. Some large Trusts have extensive assessment and monitoring processes, while others distribute a small grant and are happy with a thank you.

TANGLED FEET ON APPLYING TO TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

“Thanks to this grant, we were able to employ our fundraiser as a core part of the team for one day a week. He was able to spend time researching Trusts and Foundations, developing relationships and making applications. It became evident that a lot of Trusts and Foundations that have traditionally funded arts organisations have less knowledge about outdoor arts, and, generally speaking, their Trustees have not experienced any professional outdoor work. Because of this, there is a lot of misinformation about the work. Part of the learning has been the realisation that we need to educate and promote our work to these Trusts and Foundations, which is why marketing is so important, as is raising the profile and critical dialogue of our work in the press. We were given feedback by a funder that one of the reasons the Trustees chose to support us was because we had partnerships with the NT Studio and the Lyric Hammersmith—the Trustees recognized these well-established organisations.

Success with Trusts takes time. You need to invest in researching who to approach, establishing relationships and preparing and submitting applications. We have had some success and we are building on that, but it has taken us several years. With three particular Trusts, we have had a number of failed applications but we are now in a position to describe them as ‘warm prospects’; they are expecting and encouraging our new applications. We have taken time to get to know our contacts at larger Trusts and tried to build their knowledge of us. We have invited staff and Trustees on several occasions to see our work. On one occasion, a member of a Trust’s staff team came along but only after they had awarded us a grant.

Trusts and Foundations have different priorities so, when planning projects, you need to think carefully about what you can apply for—what will fit the criteria best?

Be aware that the fundraising team takes longer to build a relationship with a funder than the artistic team takes to build relationships with partners and
commissioners. We don’t have many champagne receptions in our sector where you might meet a Trustee, so you need to research carefully and try to make the most of your networks. Our research discovered that a member of our team knew someone who worked in a Trust, so we contacted them and referred to that person in our application, which was subsequently successful.

On another occasion, our fundraiser happened to be standing next to Foundation employee in a bar; he seized the moment and talked about our work. We subsequently made an application, referenced the Foundation employee and, again, we were successful and received a two-year grant. I would hope that our applications were strong, but it wouldn’t have hurt having made these contacts.

On average, Trust funding accounts for 30% of our annual income.

CASE STUDY

EMERGENCY EXIT ARTS’ ON APPLYING TO TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

“For this project, we focused on applying to Trusts and Foundations that did not mention the arts in their priorities but expressed an interest in funding community and social welfare projects. Initially we made eight applications to support our participatory work with young people. None of them were successful. We got very little feedback, except that there were stronger applications than ours. We also found that a couple of Trusts wanted to be the sole funder of a project. On reflection, we think the participation work may have appeared well funded; we didn’t provide enough evidence of need. We also lost our long-term fundraiser at the start of this process, which made a difference.

Subsequently, we abandoned our approach, realising that we should focus on those Trusts that indicate an interest in arts and cultural projects. It is already difficult getting funding from any Trust or Foundation so we didn’t want an even greater uphill struggle. We have improved our return on our investment since altering our strategy, and continue to see Trust funding as important to our business model.”

TANGLED FEET’S TOP TIPS ON APPLYING TO TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

- Nurture relationships—make phone calls, ask questions and be interested in the response you get.
- Trust/Foundation employees rarely want to meet fundraisers. If you have the opportunity to meet face-to-face, make sure the person at that meeting is well versed in your artistic vision/aims. Tangled Feet never attend a meeting with a funder without our co-artistic directors or participation director.
- Be concise in your applications. We used to write 100 words when, in fact, 20 would have done.
- Keep inviting prospects to see your work. They rarely say yes but be ready for the moment that they do.

RESEARCHING TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

There are many ways you can research Trusts and Foundations:

- Check supporters’ credits at other arts or local community events and follow up with online searches.
- The Association of Charitable Foundations has a list of its members on its website, www.acf.org.uk.
- Use an online database. Often these are accessible via a subscription fee, but you can check to see if your Local Authority has a subscription and allows access to local organisations and artists. Popular databases include Grantfinder and www.trustfunding.org.uk.
- Use a directory, such as The Directory of Grant Making Trusts. You can check your local Library to see if they have a copy.
- Ask those in your personal and professional network if they have relevant contacts, and ask your Board to do the same.
- Look for your local Community Foundation. Most counties have one, and they distribute grants on behalf of others to the local area.

MAKING AN APPLICATION

Writing an application is a skill. Not only do you need to articulate clearly and succinctly the organisation’s mission, project and outcomes, you also need to position the application and use language that appeals to a particular Trust or Foundation’s criteria.

If you are unable or unwilling to work with a fundraiser, then you need to learn this skill. If you can write persuasively and have great attention to detail, there are training courses that can support you. Alternatively, you could seek a mentor through your networks.

A few helpful hints:

- Follow the criteria carefully and keep the application succinct. If there is no application form then limit your request letter to two pages.
- Provide only the information requested, and don’t send additional unnecessary documents, DVDs, etc. Trusts and Foundations often don’t have huge administrative resources. They will contact you if they need more information.
- If you are successful, remember that some Trusts will ask to you complete an evaluation report. If they don’t, send a letter with an update on the outcomes.
- Don’t forget to say thank you!
- Keep your funders in touch with your ongoing work.
More money is given to charities in the UK from individuals than any other funding source. Why do people give? The results of various studies indicate the main motivations for philanthropic giving to be:

- To become a worthwhile member of a worthwhile group, or pride of association.
- Connection to a cause.
- Because a person is asked.

Unlike crisis fundraising (e.g. a natural disaster of enormous proportions), in the arts, to achieve any of the above, an organisation must work to actively engage individuals with their cause. There are many ways to do this, but all require staff and Board time, and a robust Case for Support.

The degree to which you can fundraise at live events is dependent on the relationship with the presenter of your work. If they are happy for you to fundraise then bucket collections are a possibility, but you do need to ensure that you have professional collecting buckets. You should also ensure that those collecting have a clear message regarding why you need donations and can give out small pieces of card or paper with information on your company to audiences. While you may not raise significant amounts through bucket collections, you are raising the profile of your company and illustrating that outdoor companies need support. Building up your social media networks can help if you intend to use crowdfunding as a fundraising tool, as you can target this group when marketing your project. Also, a wide social media network is helpful if you need to ask for gifts in kind because you can reach a lot of people very quickly with a specific request.

The demographic at outdoor events is often more diverse than traditional venue-based art forms, which illustrates the demand and significance of this work. What is important to funders and artists working in this field is that access to the work is free for all. When an audience member is asked to make a donation, whether they choose to give or not does not restrict their access or enjoyment of an event. With a large audience, we cannot assume we know who can and can’t give; by asking for a donation, every person is treated equally and can make their own decision. However, there are circumstances where you will want to be sensitive to the demographic of the participants of your project and adjust donation requests accordingly.

There are several factors an organisation needs in order to be successful at encouraging individual giving and, after consideration of what is required, you may decide that this is not the ideal route for your organisation. The Consortium explored the following three approaches:

- Hands-free giving: crowd fundraising, online giving, text giving and donation boxes.
- Friends or Membership schemes.
- Major Gifts.
KAZZUM ON RUNNING A LOCAL INDIVIDUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

“Prior to the Catalyst project, we focused on fundraising from Trusts and Foundations. We had also tried to generate local corporate donations but we had never talked seriously about individual giving.

There were a number of barriers to Kazzum approaching individuals:

- **Capacity**: the thought of how time consuming it would be was holding us back, when we knew we could invest that time in supporting our fundraiser to write a good application to a Trust or Foundation.
- **Emarrassment**: we didn’t want to ask someone for a donation, probably because we didn’t know how to do it.
- **A fundraising narrative or Case for Support**: we didn’t have one aimed at individuals. We had learnt how to write application forms and we knew that funders wanted to know about our outputs, but clearly these were not going to be of the same interest to individuals within our local community.

We worked with consultants to help us prepare a campaign to reach out to our current supporters and local community. It was called Kazzum’s Christmas Countdown. We also set ourselves a target of raising £2,500 across the year from individuals.

Firstly, we developed a narrative that would appeal to individuals. It was at this point that we started talking about Kazzum as a charity; this was a pivotal moment for us. Identifying ourselves as a charity doing charitable work was important. We realised we had to use language in a way that we hadn’t before; for example, we agonised over the use of the word ‘kids’ in our print. We would never normally use that word but realised that it was more relevant to ‘Mary’ in the local shop, so we should use it.

To start the campaign, we printed a generic business card with information about the organisation and instructions on how to make a donation, produced an e-flyer, got a few donation collection boxes, created a toolkit for the Board, produced a low-budget, two-minute film for the website, and, crucially, set up the capacity to receive donations online. There are a few online donation providers, and we chose Charity Checkout. We learnt that a barrier to donors giving was the number of clicks they had to make before making a donation. We liked Charity Checkout because they could embed our branding and design on the donation page so it looked like it was part of our website to our donors. We also established a Gift Aid account. We hadn’t done this before; registering was quite a lengthy process but, in the long run, it will be worth it.

We had a plan and agreed actions across the team. We launched the campaign with 1,200 people on our database and our Twitter and Facebook followers, and we got two local businesses, including our local pub, to agree to take donation boxes. The campaign lasted 35 days and we had to keep the effort up daily. Keeping the momentum up was tough, and we realised that by doing a Christmas campaign we were competing with many other established organisations and causes. We wanted to take risks and we learnt a huge amount, but it was hard work. We hadn’t done this before so we were really pleased when we raised £600.

We would have to think carefully before running this again, because it was a lot of hard work for a small return, but this was the first time we had approached people on our database or gone out to our local community. We’ve done a lot of the ground work needed to get individual donations, but we’ve realised it is going to take many years to build up a donor base of the size we need to make a significant difference to our income. The Christmas Countdown was our starting point and, since then, we have continued to build our individual donor base. In the first year we raised £1,072 and the subsequent year a further £1,254, totalling £2,326 from this group. This is separate to our crowdfunding campaign.

This whole Catalyst project has changed our staff’s attitude towards fundraising. We all feel more responsible for bringing in money, more comfortable asking for money and more aware of the value of our work for the communities we work with.

KAZZUM’S TOP TIP FOR LOCAL GIVING CAMPAIGNS

- **Involve your Board at the beginning of any fundraising project, and agree their ongoing role in fundraising for the organisation.**
- **Look for small ways to gather donations, such as donation buckets at local events.**
- **When running a campaign, have a specific fundraising goal in mind. It is much harder if you are raising general funds.**
- **Be sensitive to the context you are working in; for example, if you are working with new arrivals and refugees, it’s probably not appropriate to ask for donations from those groups.”**
AUDIENCE COLLECTIONS AT FESTIVALS

As part of this project, Kazzum and Tangled Feet researched the possibilities of individual giving with four festivals: Stockton International Riverside Festival, Kendal Mintfest, Greenwich and Docklands International Festival, and Winchester Hat Fair. The festivals each had their own policies on whether artists could or could not directly collect from audiences and had also having degrees of success themselves in fundraising from audiences during their festivals.

Consistently the festivals found that text donations were not successful in raising significant income, even though text details were promoted widely across the festival sites. Bucket collections were more successful; however, Hat Fair, who have a long tradition of having both paid artists and ‘Hatters’ who collect donations from audiences, found that audiences gave more for Hatter collections than for text donations. The festivals raised different approaches to raising income from individuals both prior, during and after festivals; some have ticketed events, another has a Patron scheme, and all collect during the festivals. Their two shared primary concerns around allowing artists to collect donations on-site were that there needed to be clarity of message to audiences and that there was a potential conflict of interest: if an artist had been paid a fee by a festival then why should they be supported to collect additional donations on-site?

Collecting knowledge of individuals in the form of data is important in both understanding who your audiences are and in supporting your fundraising plans. This is difficult for touring outdoor arts companies, as festivals, venues and other programmers often collect their own data on-site, and want to ensure that audiences are not subjected to multiple surveys. The festivals interviewed indicated that they were rarely asked by artists about sharing audience data. Therefore, there are some ongoing questions to explore: how can artists and festivals support the growth of their own organisations while supporting the growth of others in the arts at the same time? And how do you encourage a culture of giving amongst audiences who have enjoyed free experiences?

CASE STUDY

KAZZUM ON COLLECTING DONATIONS AT A FESTIVAL

“Our focus was to trial a ‘donations only’ approach to performing at festivals; however, following our research, we knew it was going to be hard. We had learnt that audiences gave more money through bucket collections than downloading apps to donate, so we concentrated on achieving cash donations on the day.

Our first festival was Stockton. They didn’t pay us a fee; instead, we agreed that, when audiences entered the marquee where the show ‘Nana’s Jumble’ took place, we could ask them for money in that space. We did this by giving audiences postcards explaining who we were and what we were doing and built a donation request into the show, the performers asked for donations at the end when we played bingo. However, we realised performers found this difficult, as did the stage managers, so Daryl, our artistic director, made the ask ‘in character’. We raised £82 over two days. Audiences were giving but not very much. The demographic of the audience probably had an impact, and the fact that they were not used to donating to artists at that festival.

Our second festival was Minttest. Ticketed shows were already a part of their offer, and they had previously collected donations from audiences for the festival itself. They paid us a small fee for ‘Nana’s Jumble’ but agreed we could ask for donations again. This time, we asked for a minimum donation of £2, knowing that there were shows costing £12 elsewhere at the festival. However, Daryl wasn’t with the show and, again, we don’t think the performers or stage manager were really comfortable asking for money or motivated to do so. We only raised £135 over two days. We learnt how important it is to engage your whole team in the fundraising process; you need to train up your freelance staff if you want them to help. We were pleased we had the chance to test this model of fundraising but it felt like a lot needed to change before artists could successfully fundraise in a festival context, and a wider discussion was needed about the most appropriate ways to fundraise from audiences for work that is intended to be free.”

Friends or Membership Schemes

These are usually relatively small gifts of £20–£40 a year and a significant volume is required before these gifts become a reliable and meaningful revenue stream. With Friends or Members, although they may support the philanthropic cause, they are usually interested in priority booking or exclusive access to events and/or information. This is difficult for outdoor arts companies to provide, although there are more schemes being established that are aimed at lower level givers with minimal benefits and are more focused on the cause.

Any Friends or Membership programme will require back office support. You will need a content management system (database) sophisticated enough to complete some segmentation. If there is no database, an excel grid can do, but it will make communicating and tracking the activities of this group very labour intensive which may not be appropriate for small organisations. This all requires substantial staff commitment and, in many cases, it takes several years before a Friends or Membership programme is actually bringing in more than it is costing.
**THE BIG ASK:**
Case studies and advice on fundraising for outdoor arts

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**EMERGENCY EXIT ARTS ON SETTING UP A FRIENDS SCHEME**

“We started by researching other Friends schemes. We learnt there were two types of scheme: benefits-driven or philanthropic. Our conclusion was that, if someone gets benefits, then you have to add on the administration costs and cost of those benefits to your own organisation, and that these can outweigh the income you make from the scheme. We therefore opted for the philanthropic model.

We originally thought that we would try and find a way of reaching audiences, ideally through our show ‘Spin Cycle’. We would get people’s contact details through the show and follow up afterwards. We gave out golden tickets as part of the show to collect information but we quickly realised that we were collecting data from children. The show had six dates. We decided to change our thinking when we realised we were not reaching our target audience members, so we decided to explore our immediate network.

We wanted the Friends scheme to be affordable; we were aiming at people who knew us, such as industry peers and beneficiaries. We requested £2 a month as a minimum donation, with no maximum donation. Everything has been managed online via emails and signing up via our website. We found we became clearer about our target audience as we went through the process; if we had got this right earlier, we could have perhaps created a stronger vision for potential Friends to sign up to.

We have under 20 Friends. It has been useful but, to date, return on investment has been poor and we will need to keep looking at how we develop this. However, during this process, we have had the chance to re-evaluate our approach to our volunteers, as they give time and skills, both of which are important to the organisation. Sometimes, volunteers are also Friends but the functions are different. With volunteers, we can now clearly state the value to the organisation of their time and also what we can offer them. We now also calculate how much time is given to the organisation by volunteers and put a monetary value on that. That has been really worthwhile.

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**EMERGENCY EXIT ARTS TOP TIPS WHEN CONSIDERING A FRIENDS SCHEME**

- Clarify the purpose of your Friends scheme, its relationship with your organisation, and any privileges Friends are entitled to.
- Few things in life are free, and to ensure that the goodwill of your Friends and volunteers continues, it’s important to consider the management implications that come with it.
- Ensure you understand the difference between Friends and volunteers and the difference between those relationships.
- Don’t forget Gift Aid—as a registered charity, organisations can claim Gift Aid on a philanthropic Friends scheme and all additional donations made.”

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Link to the EEA Friends scheme:
www.eea.org.uk/about/comrades/
CROWDFUNDING

There have been some high-profile success stories of online crowdfunding for creative projects. This is a relatively new platform for fundraising, with great potential to reach new supporters for your work. There are four main types of crowdfunding platforms: donation crowdfunding, reward crowdfunding, and equity crowdfunding. They are each different in terms of the finance being sought and what funders get in return. The Consortium tested reward crowdfunding; this is the most popular form of crowdfunding, where a person makes a financial contribution and receives a non-financial reward in return, such as an experience or item. The highest profile platform for this type of funding is Kickstarter.

Successful crowdfunding campaigns inevitably generate more coverage than unsuccessful examples, and the considerable effort it takes to reach your fundraising targets should not be underestimated. When considering this tool, you will need to think imaginatively about the rewards you can offer: what are the unique experiences or gifts you could give that no-one else can? This might include access to a rehearsal or gifting a prop from the show.

Utilising networks is crucial with this type of fundraising, and mobilising your network of supporters to back the campaign can make a significant contribution towards its success. Donors want to support projects that are likely to succeed, so persuading current supporters to donate early on is essential; indeed, 90% of Kickstarter projects that receive one third of their funding go on to achieve their target.

With only 43% of Kickstarter projects successful overall, there are risks in using a reward crowdfunding platform where you only receive the donations if you reach your target. You should weigh up the time and resources required to deliver a crowdfunding campaign against how much you can realistically raise and the risk of being unsuccessful before embarking on this route.

CASE STUDY

KAZZUM ON CROWDFUNDING

“One of our Board members decided to lead our crowdfunding campaign, as a result of being inspired by our work and our Christmas Countdown campaign. He did a lot of research on the best online platform and concluded that the Kickstarter model, where if you don’t reach your target you don’t get the money, was the most appropriate and the costs reasonable. You also get all the data on your donors, which is important. Our project was to tour a children’s show, ‘Nana’s Jumble’, to play centres based in housing associations in deprived areas of East London. The show already had a commission and some performances but we had no funding for the tour. We had a target of £3,000 to reach in 30 days, and if we didn’t achieve the target then the tour wasn’t going to happen.

Preparing the campaign was extremely time consuming—how do you keep it interesting for 30 days? We emailed everyone on our database, tweeted and used Facebook and we came up with creative ways of asking for donations. We kept our rewards cheap to deliver but playful, as this reflected our style of work. As the show was about a jumble sale, we rewarded donors with items from the fictitious jumble which we picked up at the local charity shop. We also recorded a bedtime story from Nana, and gave away tickets for a tombola that took place during the show.

We made the project look fun and exciting. The film, produced on an iPhone, gave donors a good idea of the creative content of the show. This was also our associate director’s and designer’s first show, so they were both invested in making the campaign a success, which was important. Our associate director became the face of the campaign, so it also had personality.

We achieved the target with 73 pledges, 10 of which were new donors who found us on Kickstarter, so they are now on our supporter database. Some of the Board shared the campaign with their networks and one of their friends gave a donation of £500, our highest pledge.

We raised £3,007. After paying the fee to Kickstarter, we got £2,696. On reflection, we would run this again, but we underestimated the resources it needed. We learnt that if your campaign lasts 30 days then you need as much time before the campaign to pull it together. Next time, we would have to ensure we had the resources to deliver it; ideally it would be a project for a university student on a placement or a volunteer. We liked the ‘all or nothing’ nature of the project; it pushed us and we would not have done that tour without that money so, ultimately, we reached more people because of the campaign.

We ran the campaign in the March after our Christmas Countdown. It was probably a bit soon and we would recommend more space between campaigns. We now need to work on how we keep our donors in touch with our work, and find good moments to connect with them and get them involved.”

Link to Kazzum’s Kickstarter campaign: www.kickstarter.com/projects/2028909937/nanas-jumble-playful-theatre-in-unusual-places

TANGLED FEET ON MAKING THE DECISION NOT TO PURSUE CROWDFUNDING

“We had planned to create a new piece of work by raising the money from a variety of sources, including crowdfunding. We analysed a range of financial situations and couldn’t see an applicable use of crowdfunding where the risk would justify the return. We were concerned that we would be letting down our wider group of potential project stakeholders, such as Local Authorities and donors, if we couldn’t deliver the project. At the time, it was the right decision for us not to pursue crowdfunding.”

We couldn’t deliver the project. At the time, it was the right decision for us not to pursue crowdfunding.”

Research other campaigns before preparing your own. Make a donation and experience the process for yourself.

Allocate plenty of time to prepare the campaign and budget carefully for the staff costs and the rewards.

Be careful with your timeline for the campaign. Don’t make it too long or it will be hard to maintain the momentum.

Research your online platform. What are the commission fees? Are there card processing fees? Do you get the data on your donors?

Tell a compelling story. Why is it important your project is funded? Be creative and don’t be afraid to step in front of the camera to enthuse donors about your idea. Test your narrative, film and information with others before your campaign goes live to check you are communicating effectively.

Generating awareness prior to your launch is really important. Contact your database, friends, colleagues, family, and local press, and get them involved and interested in the project. Keep communicating during and after the campaign.

Remember you can use crowdfunding as a tool to raise your profile and tell your story. It is not just about raising the money.

Try and seek advice from peers who have already undertaken a campaign.
MAJOR GIFTS

The Institute of Fundraising undertook a study in 2013 to look at current practice around Major Gift fundraising. They found that there was no standard agreed amount that defined a Major Gift, and it is different for each organisation. Most of the respondents in the study considered a Major Gift to be £5,000 or more; however, they also considered a Major Donor to be someone who made a gift of £500 or more on a regular basis.

This is the basic process for almost any Major Gift programme:

- Identification/evaluation of prospects.
- Cultivation period to engage the prospect.
- Solicitation of gift (asking).
- Stewardship of the donor after the gift is made.

Major giving statistics show that one in four prospects give. And, in this case, prospects are defined as cultivated or engaged individuals, not stone cold or remote prospects. This means that there needs to be a significant volume moving “in the pipeline” in order to increase the odds of being successful. There is no doubt that Board members can assist in the identification and cultivation of individuals as they ideally have networks different to your own. However, there is a significant amount of back office support also required in order to keep the process flowing.

Although most Major Donors don’t require a substantial list of benefits, they usually like to be given special access or priority; in other words, benefits that money cannot buy. In traditional arts organisations, this means first priority booking for shows that may be in demand, access to the best seat locations, and it is different for each organisation. Most of the respondents in the study considered a Major Donor to be someone who would appeal to their donor’s interests. If you put together an events programme, even just one or two a year for these donors, you will need staff time and some financial investment. Also, once the gift is made, as an organisation, you will need to continue to steward this donor and ideally keep them engaged so that they will make another gift when a new major donor needs to do to get ready, ranging from having a Case for Support to researching and building our databases of contacts that could give.

We had originally estimated that we were aiming for donations of £5,000 a year. The consultants we worked with advised us that, unless we were aiming for at least £25,000 a year, it wasn’t worth our time and we were better off looking at other sources of income. At this point, we developed our Case for Support, and we talked a lot with our Consortium partners about the value created by outdoor arts companies. Our companies animate town centres, engage rural communities, develop skills to build local employment, support the health sector, complement regeneration projects and encourage tourism. At Kinetika, we decided to pursue corporate commissions where we could offer our services. We would rather play to our strengths and get paid for making great work; it’s more satisfying and quicker than establishing Major Donor schemes. We talked about the value Kinetika makes to society and all of this helped us construct a charitable fundraising narrative and define our pitch to businesses.

KINETIKA ON MAKING A DECISION NOT TO PURSUE MAJOR DONORS AND DEVELOP A COMMERCIAL OFFER INSTEAD

“We had started with the hope that we would recruit high-profile Patrons for the Consortium members and they would be able to help us reach individual Major Donors, by becoming donors ourselves and advocating on our behalf to circles of contacts we didn’t have. We realised early on in the process that, actually, if we wanted to work with Major Donors, there was a lot of work that we needed to do to get ready, ranging from having a Case for Support to researching and building our databases of contacts that could give.

At the same time, we moved out of East London to Thurrock and worked with a communications agency to help us with the launch. They were fantastic at getting a wide range of potential stakeholders to the event. Approximately 300 people were invited, 100 turned up and 80% of those contacts were new to us. We targeted a number of regional developers, regional regeneration companies, the National Trust, cultural destinations, regeneration projects, and the local press. There were also targeted follow-up calls to some who didn’t attend.

We are now marketing ourselves more strategically, and working with new arts partners we wouldn’t have considered before. Our new location has enabled us to help build partnerships with organisations such as the Royal Opera House and we mutually appreciate each other’s expertise.

The return on investment is sometimes easier to calculate with fundraising projects such as crowdfunding, but actually there is a lot of useful work in getting the building blocks in place to position your organisation, and making it ready to raise funds or generate earned income.

There has been a lot of change over the last couple of years for us; Kinetika has been restructured to better manage and integrate its creative community projects and commercial design business. Kinetika People serves the company’s core objectives of delivering outdoor arts projects with communities for social benefit, and we are now a charity. We have also established Kinetika Design Studio Ltd as a profit-making subsidiary company, wholly owned by Kinetika People. The purpose is to allow the organisation (while benefiting from charitable status) to undertake commercial trading and to generate profit that can be gifted to Kinetika People, supporting our aim to be less dependent on public sector funding. It’s invigorating and we can articulate much the better the value of our work to wider society. While we didn’t pursue individual giving, we have massively improved our strategies, thinking and opportunities have increased for us; we’re a charity but also building the market for our commercial services. We are receiving more enquiries and negotiating more contracts for international sporting events. We are based in Thurrock but we want to be an international brand.

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Philanthropic giving involves a gift without expectation of return, while sponsorship is a commercial deal between two or more parties that usually supports the marketing function of a business. This resource is intended to focus on the philanthropic elements of an organisation’s potential financial model; however, it is not ideal to isolate any one income stream from another. It is important to recognise that, for some organisations, utilising their assets commercially is far more appropriate and possibly less resource intensive than fundraising.

Commercial businesses do make corporate gifts. Sometimes these are distributed through an established Trust and/or at a local level to selected charities, and there are many unique application and distribution methods. Businesses also support arts organisations with gifts in kind or by offering their services free or for reduced fees, which can also be useful.

Business partnerships today are also far broader than the traditional sponsorship model; there is an increasing interest in the business sector in supporting social change and seeking tangible outcomes to their collaborations with charities. In addition to funding, business partners can bring helpful skills, contacts and perspectives to joint projects.

Building relationships and understanding a business’s objectives and interests are central to any successful exchange, be it philanthropic, commercial or a partnership approach.
The Big Ask:
Case studies and advice on fundraising for outdoor arts

Part 5
Business Partnership

CASE STUDY

BUREAU OF SILLY IDEAS CASE STUDY ON BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

“We wanted to focus on business sponsorship, and we started by recruiting an agency that had a lot of experience of working with commercial festivals. We learnt from the outset that the idea of ‘sponsorship’ was a slightly outdated term—that, actually, we needed to think of businesses as potential partners and not restrict ourselves to sponsorship or marketing opportunities. We now know that a business needs us to think on their terms first. We were given an example of a business asking a collection of potential sports teams why they should be sponsored by them. The teams answered by listing their credibility and achievements. ‘Wrong,’ said the businessman, ‘we want to know how supporting you is going to sell more of our products’. Identifying what’s in it for a business is crucial.

Unlike commercial festivals, we know little about our audiences at outdoor free festivals. Also our ‘catchment’ is not within a restricted space—individuals come and go, we cannot guarantee the length of time they will stay. We are also not running the festivals, so supporting individual companies is a more difficult sell to many businesses. However, there are other ways we can position our work to meet their objectives, such as illustrating how our projects meet their corporate social responsibility agenda or selling our expertise of delivering events in public spaces.

We had some interesting feedback about our name: that a business may not want to be associated with ‘Silly Ideas’. Also, if our work was provocative and difficult to explain, then potential business partners don’t have time or necessarily the interest to find out more, so we need to express our ideas clearly and in a meaningful way to a business. Before approaching any business sponsors, we updated our website so it articulated our approach and work accurately, as we knew new contacts would look for us online.

We learnt through this process the importance of contacts and profile; for example, we were developing a project in a new location for us, working with a school near the port, and we were having great conversations with the headteacher. They then introduced us to the CEO of the business managing the port, and they have subsequently become a partner in our project. We would never have got to the CEO if we had approached them directly.

We are going to become a charity, this will help us access Trust and Foundation funding, but we will also continue our work on generating business partnerships. With Consortium partners, we have recruited a PR agency with a specialism in property development, and they are helping us create materials appropriate for this sector, getting us some profile in specialist press and speaking opportunities. We’re excited about the potential of this to reach new partners, but we are also very clear that we need to concentrate on primarily being artists.

When you have funding from multiple stakeholders, they have different interests—some may be focused on the educational outcomes, others on the community cohesion. It’s the job of artists to question. We mustn’t lose our right to create art by pursuing the objectives of others, so ensuring the artistic vision is not compromised is an essential part of successful fundraising.

BUREAU OF SILLY IDEAS TOP TIPS ON DEVELOPING BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS:

- Learn how to communicate your ideas in a way that makes them relevant for a business. Really think about what’s in it for them.
- If you have a meeting with a business, spend time thinking about all the reasons why they would say no to the project. Be prepared.
- Use your networks to try and reach the most senior person in a business but also build links across a business’s workforce.”
The experiences of the Consortium illustrate the challenges that exist for all small organisations approaching new funders/donors for the first time. The project has also highlighted the specific conditions that those working outdoors face when fundraising, but there are certain advantages – such as the democratic and accessible nature of the outdoor work and the participatory opportunities for communities – which can be used to competitively position an organisation seeking funding.

There is no doubt that Individual Giving is seen as the greatest area of potential growth for charities working in the UK. At the heart of all the artistic work produced by the Consortium is the dynamic relationship that exists between the audience, public space and performance. Learning how to translate these positive encounters for the express purpose of developing donor relationships has not proved easy. In all activities tested, the return on investment of time and resources was small, and without the Catalyst funding, the organisations would have lost money. The context for outdoor arts organisations is difficult; if you do not have a building where people visit, do not sell tickets, have only a limited ability to run collections after performances and minimal information on your audiences, then how do you build sustainable relationships with individuals? How much work is required and is the effort worth the return?

Following this experience, the Consortium has reviewed their expectations on what can be achieved in the short term through Individual Giving and they have some reservations about the long-term potential. There are Individual Giving tools that the Consortium did not try, such as creating joint campaigns with non-arts charities, but there was a strength of feeling within the Consortium that individual companies needed additional support to increase Individual Giving and that this was a responsibility that should be shared sector-wide. Current funding partners and ISAN, as the national membership and strategic organisation for outdoor arts, may need to reflect further on the skills and networks needed to fully support their constituents in diversifying their income streams. The cases studies are exclusive to the Consortium’s experience and it would be helpful if more fundraising experiences could be captured by others working outdoors so ongoing learning can be shared.

For some in the Consortium, there is still an underlying tension that exists between presenting work that is free to audiences, often comprised of demographically diverse communities and infrequent attendees of arts events, and then asking for donations towards that work. It is important that no company should compromise its values in its pursuit of increasing income streams; however, there is a long history within the arts of raising money via Individual Giving, and it is important that companies appreciate that the values of their potential supporters may be different to their own.
With small staff teams and resources, it is currently more efficient for Consortium members to focus on applications to Trusts and Foundations—ideally for multi-year funding. Trust and Foundations are very clear about what they require in terms of benefits, and they usually outline their criteria clearly so an organisation can ensure an application addresses their mandate. Trusts and Foundations have seen a dramatic increase in applications in recent years, and success rates have significantly decreased. By working with professional fundraisers, members of the Consortium have had some success and will continue to invest resources into this area in the future. There is concern, however, that the outdoor arts sector is not fully understood by Trustees, and that this threatens the potential for income from this source. If a lack of understanding is indeed the main barrier, there may be a role for those who have historically funded this type of work to help raise the profile and value of outdoor arts amongst their peers. Further discussion and feedback from the large arts Trusts would be valuable for the whole sector moving forward.

Alternatively, recognising the significantly increased competition for Trust and Foundation funding, outdoor companies should utilise and build their skills, knowledge and assets to establish new partnerships that are transactional and based on the organisation providing a service for payment. There was a strong emphasis in the Catalyst scheme on accessing funding from Individuals and Trusts and Foundations. However, in addition to this, it would be helpful if outdoor companies continue to explore how they can increase their artistic, social and financial value by applying broader entrepreneurial principles to their work. This would include recognising and developing their assets, learning about social enterprise and investment and avoiding isolating the fundraising strand of their work from the entirety of their business plans.

Given the ongoing cuts to public funding, fundraising is hard for all charities at this time, and arts organisations, regardless of form, are having to re-evaluate how to raise money effectively. The Consortium members are clear that they will not chase funding, but pursue what they do best: creating great work with a compelling vision, against which they will seek appropriate income streams and stakeholders who support their ambitions. As a result of the Catalyst project, they are now thinking creatively about who their future stakeholders may be and how to competitively position themselves to stand the best chance of funding. Most importantly, they have reflected on their artistic vision and values, and appreciate that their funding models will need to be as unique as their artistic work.
Arts & Business
National organization with specific expertise on private sector partnership, have produced a useful Crowdfunding Toolkit
www.artsandbusinessni.org.uk/eventstraining/

Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy Programme
Funded by Arts Council England to enhance fundraising practice across the arts
http://artsfundraising.org.uk

Association of Charitable Foundations
A support organization for Trusts and Foundations, includes a list of its members
www.acf.org.uk

Blast Theory
Arts charity, another recipient of Catalyst funding, produced a Crowdfunding Toolkit
http://www.blasttheory.co.uk/crowdfunding-a-guide-by-blast-theory/

Charities Aid Foundation
Aims to motivate society to give effectively. They provide research reports alongside offering banking and other services to charities.
https://www.cafonline.org

Directory of Social Change
Produces publications, training and online databases including Trustfunding.co.uk
http://www.dsc.org.uk/Home#.VPRC7F40Ng0

Grantfinder
An online subscription database of grants available to charities and individuals
http://www.grantfinder.co.uk

Gov.UK
Useful information from the Charities Commission, including Gift Aid guidelines for charities and other fundraising guidelines
https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission/services-information

Funding Central
A website resource of funding and finance advice for organisations based in England
http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk

Institute of Fundraising
A membership organization but also provides a range of online resources and training covering all areas of fundraising
http://www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/home/

Mission, Models, Money
An initiative that explored how arts and cultural organisations could use their resources to create greater public value. Website includes useful information on business modeling.
http://www.missionmodelsmoney.org.uk

National Arts Fundraising School
Provides specialist training on Fundraising in the cultural sector
http://www.nationalartsfundraisingschool.com

Nesta
Nesta aims to bring great ideas to life. A variety of resources on the site, including how to assess the value of an idea, includes information on crowdfunding platforms on the following links.
http://www.nesta.org.uk/project/crowdfunding

Small Charities Coalition
Aims to support small charities with skills, tools and information. Online resources available including information on how to set up a charity.
http://www.smallcharities.org.uk/home/

Third Sector
The online resource and publication for Not-for-Profit organisations, includes articles on fundraising
http://www.thirdsector.co.uk

KnowHowNonProfit
A website with a wide range of resources for Non-profits, encourages organisations to share their learning.
http://knowhownonprofit.org
ISAN: WHO WE ARE

ISAN is the national membership and strategic organisation that supports the development of outdoor arts in the UK and brings the sector together. We play a key role in raising sector standards and ensuring excellent art happens.

We develop the outdoor arts sector through networking, lobbying, information-sharing, training, research and advocacy support and by providing specialist advice for our members.

We are committed to supporting outdoor arts in all its forms and advocating its benefits and practice. We are the independent voice for outdoor arts in the UK.

Our members are individuals and organisations who actively support and participate in the development of outdoor arts in their professional work.

Since being established in the late 1990’s, ISAN has developed a strong track-record of delivering membership services, effective development support for the outdoor arts sector and strategic projects with national and international impacts.

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Marina Norris is a freelance consultant and producer. She works with individuals and organisations to help them articulate and deliver their artistic and social ambitions while building strong sustainable financial models.

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