

New Stream – Fundraising Fellowship, Dublin

Case Study: Fishamble: The New Play Company

Fundraising Fellowship
Dublin

Business to Arts' New Stream programme in partnership with Dublin City Council's Dublin's Culture Connects



Board engagement to enhance marketing and fundraising strategies

Fundraising Fellowship, Dublin is a partnership between *Business to Arts*, Dublin City Council and Dublin City Council Culture Company. The Fundraising Fellowship is part of *Business to Arts'* New Stream programme and stems from a series of Legacy Projects developed by Dublin City Council following their European Capital of Culture 2020 designation bid in 2015. In 2016, four cultural organisations were offered 50% part-funding toward the employment of full-time 'Fundraising' or 'Marketing & Fundraising' human resources over a 24-month period. A structured programme of training and mentorship with *Business to Arts* supported the recruited Fellows. This case study is part of a series of case studies, which highlight the achievements and challenges faced by the Fellows and their organisations throughout their time on the programme.

Organisation Profile

Established in 1988 and based in Dublin, Fishamble: The New Play Company is an Olivier Award-winning, internationally acclaimed Irish theatre company, which discovers, develops and produces new work across a range of scales.

Fishamble is at the heart of new writing for theatre in Ireland, not just through its productions, but through its extensive programme of training, development and mentoring schemes. These currently include 'A Play for Ireland', the 'New Play Clinic' and 'DUETS', which is run in partnership with Dublin Fringe Festival and Irish Theatre Institute. Each year, Fishamble typically supports 60% of the writers of all new plays produced on the island of Ireland.

The company celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2018 with a special programme. This programme and the company's core marketing strategy were key areas of focus for their activities when they joined the Fundraising Fellowship,

Dublin programme. Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan was appointed Marketing and Fundrasing Executive in 2017 under the Fellowship.



Fishamble's 2018 Programme Impact

“Fundraising Fellowship, Dublin enabled me to develop, launch, and implement Fishamble’s new marketing and fundraising strategies during its 30th year. The Fellowship provided the support and structure to develop and secure a number of new partnerships, and focus our messaging for 2018 and beyond.”

Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan, Marketing & Fundraising Executive, Fishamble: The New Play Company

2017

Organisational Funds raised: €554,537
Due to the Fellow commencing their role late in 2017, funds from this year are not attributable to them.

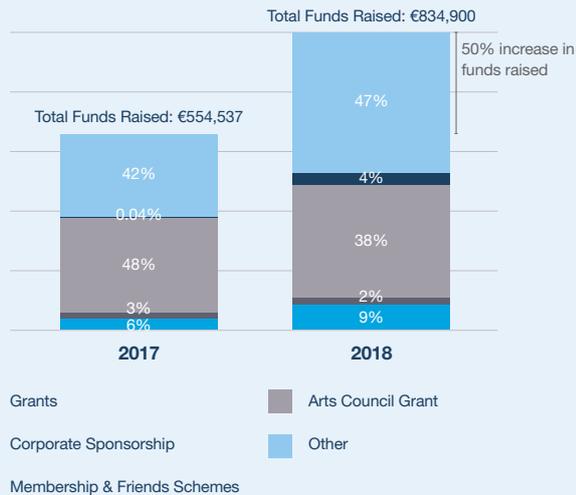
2018

Funds raised: €834,900
Amount of funds raised attributable to Fellow: €31,818

FTE Staff: 3

FTE dedicated to fundraising: 1

Sources of Contributed Income 2017 & 2018



The Challenge

In the past, Fishamble has had very successful sponsorships and a strong Friends programme. However they needed someone to create and implement a strategy to ensure that these partnerships were aligned with Fishamble's communication activities which would help foster sustainable relationships. In terms of fundraising, Fishamble was in need of a dedicated person to conduct prospect research, analyse past partnerships, gather data on existing and lapsed friends, so that they could re-connect with supporters and plan ahead.

According to Artistic Director of Fishamble, Jim Culleton, the theatre company had a lot of goodwill, support and a small, loyal group of friends. It had also taken part in *Business to Arts'* New Stream programme with the DeVos Institute. However, with only two full-time members of staff, it did not have the human resources or time to maximise on this.

Fishamble was already a strong brand with an ambitious artistic programme. When it joined the Fellowship, it was in need of a stronger institutional marketing plan to ensure that audiences attached the Fishamble name to its work. Fishamble sought to benefit more from its interesting marketing collateral such as behind-the-scenes stories showcasing its support of new writing and productions.

“We have always been a productive organisation, ensuring each production and activity reaches its potential, engaging with audiences, and supporting artists. However, Fundraising Fellowship, Dublin has been instrumental in bringing the company onto another level, in terms of raising sponsorship and communicating what we do to our stakeholders.”

Jim Culleton, Artistic Director, Fishamble: The New Play Company

Fundraising – Strategy for Success

A consistent prospecting strategy has been established whereby the executive works closely with the board to create prospect lists and secure meetings. These prospects are added to a fundraising pipeline. Narayanan-Mohan works on moving prospects through the pipeline and exploring what projects and partnerships will be best to pitch to.

With the Friends programme, she has been directly engaging Fishamble's Friends through phone calls, in-person introductions, and conducting surveys to get to know what they enjoy and why they support Fishamble. This increased interaction has led to renewals. Having a dedicated fundraiser also means Fishamble can research relevant grants and find more funding opportunities.

Marketing – Strategy for Success

Narayanan-Mohan has enhanced and expanded Fishamble's institutional marketing, social media presence and targeted programmatic marketing. The company reached its 30th year in 2018 and the Fellowship allowed it to maximise the potential of this, increasing brand visibility and awareness of the anniversary.

A major shift has been focusing on the messages of Fishamble's institutional marketing, which are to promote Fishamble as a vital resource; a platform for Irish voices; and a substantial representative of Irish theatre around the world.

The main goal has been to constantly communicate these ambitions across all communication channels using consistent, ambitious language.

Since September 2017, Fishamble has recorded an increase in newsletter subscribers. On average, Fishamble gains 10 new subscribers per week which has been bolstered by a new website pop-up launched in 2018. Fishamble has also recorded an increase in followers for all their social media channels (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram). The new Instagram profile created in 2017 now has 1,402 followers and is used to show the day-to-day work of the company. Narayanan-Mohan has also made a focused effort to create video content across platforms to engage audiences.

In November 2017, the company's website was redesigned—making it easier for audiences to navigate and understand Fishamble's impact, offerings, and legacy.

Impact of Fellowship – Key Developments

Corporate Sponsorship – Tesco Finest

In 2018, Fishamble secured a two-year sponsorship with Tesco Finest, to support Fishamble's 'A Play for Ireland' programme. This came about from prospecting through Fishamble's board and working with media companies.

Creating a sponsorship proposal, with clear intentions, benefits, and a strong message enabled Fishamble to pitch a robust case for support.

So far, Tesco staff have attended Fishamble's opening night of 'Rathmines Road' by Deirdre Kinahan and participated in a playwriting course. Tesco also provided food and drink for major milestone events, such as Fishamble's 30th year launch and the 'New Play Conference'.

Corporate Sponsorship – Irish Rail

In 2018, Fishamble secured Irish Rail as a two-year transportation sponsor for 'A Play for Ireland'. This came about through a board member making an introduction. As part of this sponsorship, Fishamble created a workshop called #PlaysonaTrain. It involved nine winners of a social media competition learning about playwriting on the Dart to Bray and resulted in completed short plays which were published online. This garnered excellent PR coverage and audience engagement.



Margaret McAuliffe, *The Humours of Bandon*. Photo: George Carter

Rebrand

In 2019, Fishamble will launch a complete rebrand, designed by Publicis. This was initiated by board member Pádraig Burns, managing director of Publicis. Narayanan-Mohan was able to gather requirements, carry out design research, and build a proposal for Publicis, with the team's input and approval. Her role has been crucial in the implementation and execution of this rebrand, a strategy that will help cement Fishamble's institutional marketing in a bold, visual way that will create a strong sponsorship offering as well as attract new prospects.

Conclusion

Since Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan joined the company, Fishamble believes the fundraising and marketing aspects of its work have been transformed with her dedication, time and expertise. The Fellowship has enabled Fishamble to think

strategically about fundraising and sponsorship. She has researched, identified and met with potential partners, and been successful in transforming them into sponsors. From a marketing perspective, Fishamble now has a much more focused, extensive and over-arching marketing strategy in place as a result of the Fellowship.

Fellow Profile



Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan was appointed as Fundraising and Marketing Executive at Fishamble in 2017, as part of Fundraising Fellowship, Dublin.

Born in India, she studied Art History and English Literature at the University of York and completed an MA in Art History at University College London in 2010. There, she worked in the arts sector for two years, at organisations such as Christie's Auction House, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and in fine art galleries. She moved to Dublin in 2012 for an MA in Arts Management and Cultural Policy at University College Dublin.

She was appointed Fundraiser at the Irish Architecture Foundation and then Arts and Culture Manager of the Liquor Rooms, part of Press Up Entertainment Group.

For more information see newstream.ie
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Core Skills/Learning/Activities

- ✓ Strategic/Business plans
- ✓ Marketing plans
- ✓ Fundraising plans
- ✓ Understanding and communicating organisational impact
- ✓ Prospect development/prospecting
- ✓ Relationship management/Implementing processes and procedures
- ✓ Board engagement & ongoing development
- ✓ One-to-one mentoring sessions
- ✓ Presentation skills
- ✓ Pitching opportunities
- ✓ International exchange – The Netherlands/Belgium
- ✓ Local community partnership (100 Archive)
- ✓ Job specifications