

# New Stream – Fundraising Fellowship, Ireland

## Case Study: Cork International Film Festival

Building sustainable partnerships through refreshed marketing and development strategy

## Fundraising Fellowship Ireland

*Business to Arts'* New Stream programme in partnership with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht



**Fundraising Fellowship, Ireland** is a partnership between *Business to Arts* and the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht. Fundraising Fellowship, Ireland is part of the evolution of *Business to Arts'* New Stream programme and is informed by the two-year Fundraising Fellowship, Dublin programme. The programme seeks to support and develop capacity building in cultural organisations across Ireland and address key fundraising challenges affecting the sector. In 2018, two 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

Cork International Film Festival is Ireland's first and largest film festival. Established in 1956, the Festival is a local, national and international celebration of cinema, running annually in November in Cork. The Festival showcases the latest international and Irish features, documentaries and shorts, and includes programmes for schools, families, a focus on film and mental health (Illuminate) and specialist Industry Days.

The Festival's mission is to present the best annual film festival in Ireland, that connects audiences and artists through a curated selection of great films, and a unique shared cultural experience in Cork. In 2020, Cork International Film Festival is the only film festival in Ireland to have three awards with Oscar® Accreditation. Over 90% of the films presented at the Festival are the only opportunity for audiences to see these films on the big screen in Cork and Ireland. In 2019, the Festival screened

over 300 films. Cork International Film Festival will celebrate its 65th edition November 5th – 15th 2020. The preparation for the 65th edition and Festival marketing and development strategies were key areas of focus when they joined the Fundraising Fellowship, Ireland programme. Aoibhie McCarthy was appointed Marketing & Development Officer for the Fellowship.



Closing Night Gala of Cork Film Festival 2019. Photo: Jed Niezgodka

*“Fundraising Fellowship, Ireland offered tailored guidance in building my campaigns and ultimately gave me the confidence and peer support to deliver a marketing campaign which has increased our audiences by 36% and a development strategy that has successfully diversified our public funding income sources.”*

Aoibhie McCarthy, Marketing & Development Officer, Cork International Film Festival

### 2018

Organisational funds raised: €537,220  
Amount of funds raised attributable to Fellow: €75,254

### 2019

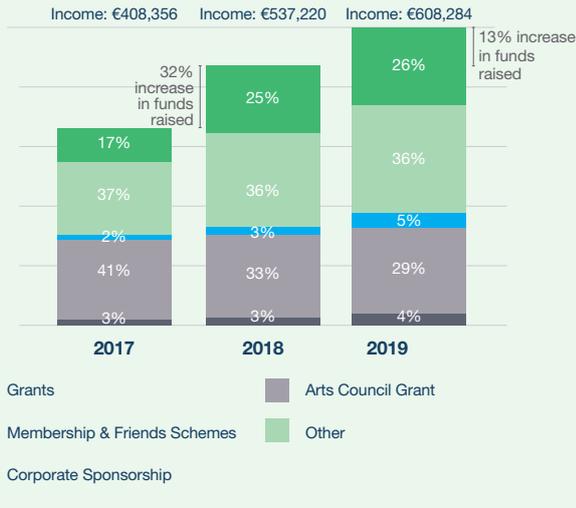
Organisational funds raised: €608,284  
Amount of funds raised attributable to Fellow: €99,186

FTE Staff: 5.0

FTE dedicated to fundraising: 0.5



### Sources of Contributed Income 2017, 2018 & 2019 (Organisation)



This excludes box office figures

### The Challenge

Cork International Film Festival (CIFF) engages a network of business supporters through its Corporate Membership programme. The membership packages, Debut (€500), Classic (€1,000) and Premiere (€2,500) offer local businesses visibility across print, digital, on screen and on-site platforms and unique staff and client entertainment options.

When McCarthy commenced the role in June 2018, an immediate challenge was to reposition their Corporate Membership programme. This involved tight deadlines and meeting key retention and growth targets. An intensive period of desk research on membership programmes of national and international comparator organisations was required to help clarify and consolidate their membership 'offering'. An increased level of sophistication was also needed to hone their corporate prospect pipeline. Consultation with existing supporters suggested that an enhanced level of year-round communications, and stewardship activity was required for long-term success and sustainability.

### Fundraising – Strategy for Success

This process of clarifying the Corporate Membership offering and increasing stewardship activity resulted in corporate membership revenue more than doubling during the Fellowship to €24,000. In a campaign that exceeded revenue targets, all existing members were retained and 14 new corporate members were recruited. Membership is now more diversified (including new members in the hospitality, academia and financial services sectors), providing a strong basis from which to grow their business supporters locally, regionally and nationally.

Inspired by her learnings, McCarthy focused on identifying programme assets that would be attractive to new corporate partners. This strategy helped to secure in-kind benefits

of €448,235 during 2018 – 2019 as well as the recruitment of 5 new corporate sponsors/members in 2019, achieving revenues of €31,000. Overall, corporate sponsorship increased by 72% in 2018 and 104% in 2019.

McCarthy already had a successful track record in grant-writing and the Fellowship also assisted in developing her understanding of other opportunities in this area.

### Sources of Contributed Income 2018 & 2019 (Attributable to Fellow)



### Marketing – Strategy for Success

Fundraising Fellowship, Ireland supported CIFF in the development, delivery and implementation of a successful marketing campaign. McCarthy also helped to reinvigorate CIFF's Media Partnerships with Red FM, The Examiner and RTÉ, which have helped increase levels of engagement and heightened visibility in the period leading up to the Festival.

Targeted micro activity campaigns helped to achieve a 36% increase in audience engagement and 44% increase in online audiences. Box office (ticket values) targets for 2018 and 2019 were revised upwards and exceeded.

### Impact of Fellowship – Key Developments Developing an Engaged Community of Corporate Supporters

Amongst the 14 new corporate members who joined in 2019 was Cork Chamber of Commerce. As part of their 200th anniversary celebrations, the Chamber supported the Cork on Camera 'local films for local people' presentation of heritage footage drawn from the IFI archives. CIFF offered the Chamber an engaging and visual platform to celebrate Cork's heritage and its illustrious filmmaking heritage. As the Festival looks to mark its milestone 65th anniversary edition in 2020, CIFF is aiming to secure a partner for the digitisation of its extensive archive.

### Cultivating New Opportunities – 'Intinn'

In a game-changing initiative, CIFF's unique film and mental health programme and engagement strategy for schools



were combined to create a new outreach programme called 'Intinn', meaning 'mind' or 'mindfulness'. McCarthy secured significant funding from the Creative Ireland National Creativity Fund, one of 30 projects nationwide to receive this funding. 2,000 Transition Year students across Munster participated in this programme. It offered film screenings, workshops and resources exploring mental health and wellbeing. The results were significant: annual schools participation has more than quadrupled in two years.

### Leveraging Programme Assets to Inspire New Partnerships

McCarthy secured in-kind support from the Gate Cinemas, UCC School of Nursing and Midwifery, Jigsaw Cork, Spunout.ie and Wildcard Distribution to help launch a pilot programme on World Suicide Prevention Day in September 2019. McCarthy also secured corporate sponsorships for ClIFF's film and mental health programming from the ESB Energy for Generations Fund and Irish Rail. 300 students in Cork attended the screening of 'I Used to Live Here', an award-winning Irish film directed by Frank Berry, which sensitively explores youth suicide clusters in Dublin. It was researched with Jigsaw Cork, The National Centre for Youth Mental Health, and with young people impacted by loss through suicide in their community. A further 1700 students in Cork, Limerick, Waterford and Kerry will participate in the programme and the ambition is to roll this out nationwide in partnership with UCC.

### Conclusion

Fundraising Fellowship, Ireland has helped Aoibhie McCarthy to adopt a broader entrepreneurial fundraising mind-set and to become a vital full-time resource to engage a diverse range of festival partners. McCarthy was successful in integrating programming, marketing and fundraising, enabling Cork International Film Festival to realise its strategic ambition of expanding its presence programmatically, geographically and demographically. She ultimately exceeded her audience targets to an overall increase of 36% in an 18 month period. Diversification of its public funding sources, securing new corporate sponsors, expansion of significant in-kind partnerships and audience growth have been achieved through refreshed marketing and development strategy.

***"Fundraising Fellowship, Ireland has been instrumental in providing Cork International Film Festival with a dedicated resource to engage meaningful partnerships and much-needed investment in our mission. Through training, mentorship and matched-funding, the Fellowship supported us in establishing and nurturing new partnerships that have produced vital resources to invest in realising our artistic and organisational ambitions."***

**Fiona Clark, Director & CEO, Cork International Film Festival**



### Fellow Profile

Aoibhie McCarthy was appointed as Marketing and Development Officer of Cork International Film Festival in June 2018 as part of the Fundraising Fellowship, Ireland programme.

McCarthy is an arts manager, curator and communications professional with over twelve years' experience in project management, festival management, fundraising, arts education and multi-disciplinary programming. After graduating with a B.A in Art & Architectural History and English Literature from T.C.D, she worked in a number of curatorial and educational roles before securing the prestigious Shinnors Curatorial Scholarship. She undertook programming and development roles with Galway Fringe Festival and Limerick City of Culture 2014 before returning to Dublin to support The Year of Irish Design 2015 and the National Adult Learners' Festival 2016. In 2016, she was recruited as Visual Arts and Outreach Manager of Garter Lane Arts Centre Waterford and appointed to the board of Waterford Youth Arts.

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For more information see [newstream.ie](http://newstream.ie)  
e: [info@businessstoarts.ie](mailto:info@businessstoarts.ie)

## Core Skills/Learning/Activities

- ✓ Review Strategic/Business plans
- ✓ Marketing plans
- ✓ Fundraising plans
- ✓ Friends & membership schemes
- ✓ Understanding and communicating organisational impact
- ✓ Ongoing development of prospect and predisposition lists
- ✓ Relationship management
- ✓ Board engagement & ongoing development
- ✓ One-to-one mentoring sessions
- ✓ Presentation skills
- ✓ Pitching skills and opportunities
- ✓ Job specifications

