

New Stream – Fundraising Fellowship, Dublin

Case Study: Dublin Theatre Festival

Special Events & Board Engagement to leverage advanced fundraising strategy

Fundraising Fellowship Dublin

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



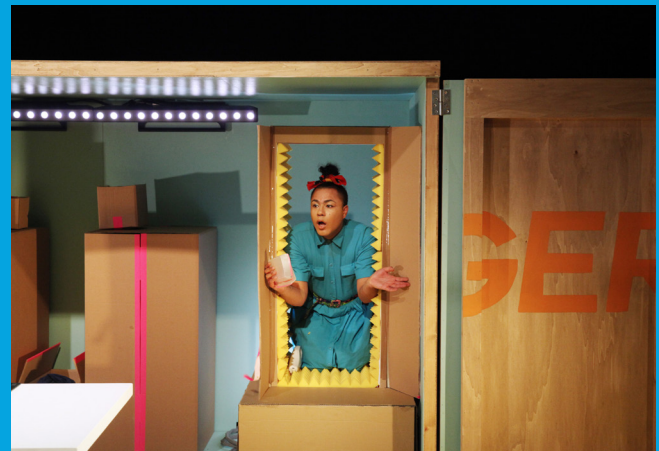
Fundraising Fellowship, Dublin is a partnership between *Business to Arts* and Dublin City Council Culture Company (formerly Dublin's Culture Connects). Fundraising Fellowship, Dublin is part of *Business to Arts' New Stream* programme, in development with Dublin City Council Culture Company as part of their commitment to developing capacity building and peer exchange programmes. 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. Dublin Theatre Festival delayed their participation on the programme until 2018. 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 1957, Dublin Theatre Festival is Europe's longest running theatre festival. DTF runs annually in September/October each year presenting around 300 performances over 18 days across the city. Over the years DTF has premiered work by Ireland's theatre greats and staged productions by some of the world's most celebrated artists and companies. DTF brings world-class international theatre to Dublin, presenting Irish theatre whilst supporting artists and remains the principal showcase of theatre in Ireland.

DTF's mission is to present a programme of exceptional theatrical experiences that will appeal to the diverse communities and visitors that make up Dublin. It includes classic drama by celebrated artists and new work by emerging theatre-makers, theatre for children and young adults, a free Festival+ Programme and Artist Development Programmes.

DTF's audience is diverse in age and interests and approximately 50% return each year. When Dublin Theatre Festival joined the Fellowship, they were committed to further diversifying and building new audiences for theatre. Fiona Garvan was appointed Development Executive for the Fellowship.



BURGERZ. Travis Alabanza. Photo: Dorothea Tuch

"The Fellowship has enabled me to review and update Dublin Theatre Festival's approach to fundraising. The feedback from Business to Arts and seminar guests has been valuable in helping to gain clarity around how to communicate all elements of the festival to audiences, artists, supporters and potential partners."

Fiona Garvan, Development Executive, Dublin Theatre Festival

2018

Organisational funds raised: €1,118,396
Amount of funds raised attributable to Fellow: €206,300

2019

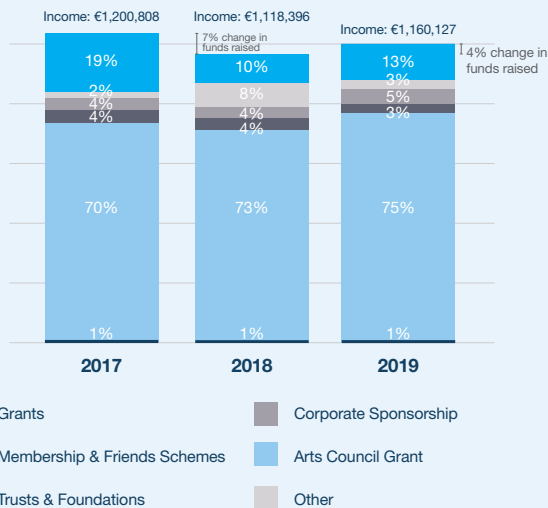
Organisational funds raised: €1,160,127
Amount of funds raised attributable to Fellow: €204,310

FTE Staff: 6

FTE dedicated to fundraising: 2

1 Over the last 10 years the New Stream Fundraising Capacity Building Project operated by *Business to Arts* has been supported by Bank of America Merrill Lynch, The Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, Dublin City Council Culture Company, The Ireland Funds, Accenture, The RDS and *Business to Arts'* wider corporate membership-base. Dublin Theatre Festival delayed their participation in the programme until 2018.

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



This excludes box office revenue

The Challenge

In recent years, Dublin Theatre Festival (DTF) has focused on developing a coherent and integrated fundraising plan. DTF has invested in several capacity building activities as it seeks to build the organisational structures and resources required for long-term, sustainable fundraising.

DTF has established a Friends Membership scheme (Membership options range from €120–€1,750), offering a range of benefits, including priority ticket booking and invites to exclusive events. The development team use their marketing resources to provide meaningful events for prospecting potential Friends. Maintaining year-on-year growth in the membership campaign however, has been challenging. The Fellowship provided a dedicated resource to sustain a level of membership engagement and stewardship throughout the year.

As part of its annual fundraising plan, DTF has developed a successful Gala Benefit Night. This special event brings festival artists and members of the business and arts communities together for an evening of entertainment. Previous honorees at the Gala include Stephen Rea (2019), Cillian Murphy (2018), Fergus and Rosaleen Linehan (2017) and Sinéad Cusack (2016). Garvan recognised the need to identify and engage additional donor and sponsor prospects for the Gala and to create new income sources for the event.

Fundraising – Strategy for Success Leveraging Special Events to Increase Revenue

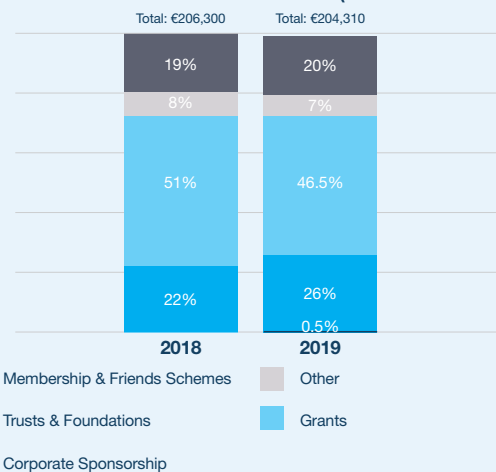
Following a period of consultation and research, Garvan devised a number of important changes to the 2019 Gala Benefit Night. The Gala would move to a new venue with an increased capacity of 200. This opened the possibility of attracting new table hosts and sponsors. She extended the planning timeline and worked closely with a development sub-committee to help drive ticket sales. Individual seats were

introduced for purchase by Friends and other supporters. With the support of an engaged and motivated committee, 4 new table hosts were secured, a number of new individual supporters came on board and overall sales increased by 11% compared to the previous year. Garvan secured in-kind support and the Gala produced its highest income return since 2015. The event also helped to reactivate lapsed sponsorship relationships and to develop new donor and sponsor prospects for future engagement.

Marketing – Strategy for Success 'Investing in Culture. Investing in Ireland'

DTF sought to develop unique marketing opportunities and to simultaneously provide high-value experiences for current and prospective donors and sponsors. To help build organisational visibility and to develop new networks, DTF introduced a series of 'In Conversation' events with business and arts leaders. Hosted by Accenture, the first of these events, 'Investing in Culture. Investing in Ireland', took place with Martin Shanahan, CEO of IDA in conversation with Tony Award winning director and co-founder of Druid Theatre Company, Garry Hynes.

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



Impact of Fellowship – Key Developments Inspiring Partnership Development

Garvan was successful in refreshing the festival's approach to partnership development, advancing the value of in-kind partnerships to almost €88,000 over a two-year period. Notable partnerships included The Irish Times (Media Partner), Accenture (Event Sponsor), The Westin (Gala Event) and Olytico (Social Media Analysis Partner).

An introduction from another Fundraising Fellow helped Garvan to identify a new drinks partner. Garvan led a successful sponsorship partnership pitch to Blackwater Distillery and this allowed DTF to host a drinks reception for the opening night show MÂM. This event provided an additional opportunity to connect with invited guests and prospects.



Cast of MAM. Photo: Ros Kavanagh

Successful Grant Writing

In a highly competitive environment, DTF won a series of grant applications between 2018–2019. Successful applications include Dublin City Council Arts Grant, Fáilte Ireland National Festivals and Participative Events Programme and Tourism Ireland. Funding from international agencies and embassies also responded to specific programme assets. Total grant funding attributable to Garvan’s role during the fellowship is in excess of €200,000.

DTF Futures

In 2019, Garvan helped to launch DTF Futures, a fundraising initiative created to support the next generation of contemporary Irish theatre artists. Through this initiative, DTF aims to commission, develop and co-produce daring work to Dublin audiences, improving the ways in which artists are supported by the organisation and the industry, and the way they are valued in society. The programme aims to nurture, celebrate and sustain talent in the performing arts and help theatre-makers – on and off stage – achieve their full creative potential.

“Participating in the Fundraising Fellowship, Dublin programme has given Dublin Theatre Festival renewed skill and greater confidence in making a compelling case for supporting the work that it does. We have been encouraged to reflect on how we present the festival, to refine our communications and to properly understand the motivations and expectations of philanthropists and sponsors. The Fellowship has been a great experience for the festival, and we are eager to get to work in implementing everything that has been learned”

Willie White, Artistic Director and CEO, Dublin Theatre Festival

Conclusion

Garvan’s experience with the Fellowship has helped to reinvigorate DTF’s approach to fundraising. The seminars and mentoring sessions helped her to focus and refine key fundraising messages and communications and to streamline DTF’s membership and sponsorship offering. Having previously worked for DTF, Garvan has achieved notable success in securing significant grant and foundation funding from national and international sources. She raised 18% of total organisational funds in 2018 and 2019 and has become a vital part of the DTF development team.



Fellow Profile

Fiona Garvan was appointed Development Executive of Dublin Theatre Festival in 2017. Initially joining the festival as Development Assistant in 2015, Fiona has held a number of positions in the Marketing and Development department. Fiona holds a BA in Anthropology and Film from Dublin Business School. Prior to Dublin Theatre Festival her professional experience included production roles in a number of film festivals in Ireland and New York as well as Event Co-ordinator of private events for high-profile individuals.

Contact: fiona@dublintheatrefestival.ie

For more information see newstream.ie
e: info@businessstoarts.ie

Core Skills/Learning/Activities

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