

Year 1 Evaluation (2013/14)

Executive Summary

March 2015



We are pleased to publish the Executive Summary of the Evaluation Report for Year One of the Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy Programme. We are committed to the continuing evaluation of the Programme throughout its three-year initial life, learning from the evaluation, and using this knowledge to improve and refine the Programme going forward. We want to ensure that the Programme is truly helping to transform arts fundraising, and we will continue to work with our Consortium partners, arts sector bodies and people across the sector to make this happen. We have already taken the following action to address the fourteen Recommendations in this report.

1. We are planning training, debates and networking activities for 2015/16, which take a more holistic view of arts fundraising.
2. We are continuing to offer Leaders and Development Heads opportunities on our [Coaching & Action Learning programme](#). We are in discussions with Arts Council England regarding both Philanthropy and Resilience future policy development.
3. The Programme team and trainers are working to ensure that our training offer is relevant to the needs of people across the arts and cultural sector. We ask all participants on our training sessions to tell us what they would like to achieve through their training. Our trainers also ask participants at the start of each session to give a brief introduction to their organisation and their own role.
4. We have now launched [recruitment for our Year 3 Fellows](#), and are seriously addressing the need to widen the diversity of applicants to the programme. We have raised the salaries for London and Regional Fellows to recommended Living Wage levels, and have included an active encouragement for a wider range of people to apply in our recruitment pack. We are broadening the channels through which we advertise for Fellows, and widening the criteria to encourage people interested in charities, volunteering and broader social engagement to consider applying. We are also amending our recruitment processes to include video submissions and smaller, more focussed assessment days.
5. *Cause4* and DARE are now managing a more streamlined Fellowships programme in Year 2. *Cause4* will manage the Year 3 Fellowships, and make further improvements to ensure that Fellows in all Areas feel part of a consistent national programme, whilst allowing space for host organisations to respond to particular needs in a region.
6. The Fellowship programme provides a supportive and challenging environment for Fellows to develop their fundraising, communication and team-working skills. The [Postgraduate Certificate in Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy](#) offers further opportunities for Fellows to develop more strategic and leadership skills, to equip them for their long future careers in the arts.

7. The Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy Programme team is working with the University of Leeds to further develop the programme for the second [Summer School in Arts Fundraising & Leadership](#), which will take place in August 2015.
8. We have revised the material we provide participants on our [Coaching & Action Learning programme](#), and included more information on the nature of coaching and its relevance to strategic leadership in fundraising.
9. We are working closely with the AMA to develop the fundraising programme for their [2015 Conference](#), which will again offer subsidised places for arts fundraisers.
10. We remain committed to offering free resources and opportunities through our Programme, including digital resources and regional networking events. We are working with the AMA to encourage a wider range of organisations to submit arts fundraising case studies to [CultureHive](#). These will be published over the coming months.
11. We are keen to market our opportunities across the arts and cultural sector in England. We have recently expanded our Programme to include the museums and libraries sectors, and welcome participants to our events from the broader charities sector. We are particularly keen to explore further links with youth-based charities, which often use arts activity as a means to engage with young people.
12. We are very proud that we have exceeded our initial quality and satisfaction benchmark of 70% across our training programme. We are now raising the minimum expectation to 80%, and will continue to drive improvements to our training offer in Year 3.
13. We are very keen to explore international partnerships through the Programme. We are in discussion with stakeholders across the UK and internationally to explore ways in which people from other countries could benefit from our work in England, and ways in which we could undertake some of our work in other countries.
14. We are working with partners to develop robust, sector wide data on arts fundraising behaviours and strategies. Our partners the Audience Agency will publish an initial report on their [Donor Finder](#) project in 2015. We are also in discussion with Arts Council England regarding data analysis on philanthropic giving in the arts.

We welcome any comments, questions or ideas you may have for us regarding the Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy Programme and our response to this evaluation. Please do not hesitate to contact us at artsfundraising@cause4.co.uk. Please sign up to receive our regular e-Newsletter for further Programme updates at www.artsfundraising.org.uk

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AFP in Year One: key findings

The following executive summary pulls out the main findings, key conclusions and summary analysis from the Year One evaluation of the Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy (AFP) Programme, and includes the recommendations outlined in the accompanying evaluation report. All context, explanations and full details underpinning these findings, including details of the evaluation approach, are found in the main body of the report.

Based on the investigation of all activity undertaken during the first year of the AFP programme, the evaluation highlights the following key findings:

Specific achievements of the AFP programme in Year One

- **A positive return on investment is evident in the Fellowship programme:** an estimated minimum of **£765,939** has been raised to date by Year One Fellows, suggesting a return on investment of around £315,939 or **170%** (based on a unit cost of £30K per Fellow).
- **The broader impact of AFP Fellowships has been significant within host organisations:** The value of AFP Fellowships has been recognised beyond the financial return in enabling new channels and ‘infrastructures’ of fundraising to be established, and new emphasis on the fundraising priority within some organisations’ strategic planning. AFP fellowships are also contributing to fundraising professionalization; creating new roles and career opportunities; fostering a cohort of inter-connected, specialist and multi-skilled fundraisers and have been shown to be an attractive resource for organisations, and sought-after within the sector.
- **High rates of satisfaction within the national training programme: 90% of training delegates** agreed the AFP training they received was of high quality; and **88%** that it would have a positive impact on their professional practices and development.
- **Increased awareness and raised profile of the programme:** The Fellowship programme – described as the “flagship” of AFP – has **permeated across the sector**, raised the profile of the AFP programme, increasing web traffic to the AFP website; generating interest in the blog and shaping areas of discussion on social media.
- **Increased professionalization and accreditation of fundraising training:** By November 2014, 17 of 20 Summer School participants (**85%** of the cohort) had successfully enrolled on the new **Post Graduate Certificate in Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy**, graduating in December 2015.
- **Increased access to fundraising resources:** By November 2014, **119** dedicated fundraising resources were available on the **CultureHive** website, and had attracted **1,845** downloads.

Addressing the Arts Council’s objectives for the AFP programme

Objective 1: Ensure more income is generated for the arts from private giving and businesses

- Clear indications exist that fundraising capacity is increasing¹: more income was generated for arts organisations in Year One for example through AFP Fellowships.

However:

- It is too soon to assess the impact on the fundraising success of participants from the national training programme, those engaging with the digital resources, or those accessing AFP coaching. Such analysis of impact could require several years.

¹ An exclusive causal link between AFP delivery and income generation would never be possible to establish, and amounts of money cited must remain best estimates.

Objective 2: Develop the skills of individuals and organisations seeking to fundraise from the private sector

- Strong and irrefutable evidence shows that the AFP training programme has exerted significant impact on skills development in the sector.
- The training (formal, informal and experiential) received by the Fellows has significantly developed their 'hard' fundraising skills, and 'softer', transferrable qualities including confidence, networking, critical thinking and communications skills.

However:

- Although branding, promotion and social media marketing are all strong, by 1st December 2014, the average uptake (places sold) for the training programme's 800 budgeted places was **18%** (149), indicating that the programme is consistently failing to meet its target of 66% capacity by a significant margin, and prompting reflection on various aspects of the offer.
- A developing stratification of fundraising resources and approaches is noticeable across the range of different organisation types, in different regions. Basic skills gaps are evident, which AFP is certainly starting to address; however evaluation indicates the need for a more nuanced approach.
- AFP is challenged with designing and delivering a diversity of training that is sensitive to the wide diversity of need, and in an offer that can attract sufficient numbers to ensure viability.

Objective 3: Achieve a demonstrable change in the professionalism of the arts fundraising sector by building on existing best practice across the whole charity fundraising sector from the UK and further afield, and sharing that best practice widely

While this is clearly a gradual and ongoing process, AFP has made significant strides in this area:

- The development of the new National Occupational Standards (NOS) marked a significant step in professionalizing the discipline, identifying nationally agreed fundraising components and skills.
- The NOS have already formed the basis of the training needs analysis tool CulturePro, and informed the content and intended learning outcomes of the Summer School and its corresponding Post-Graduate Certificate ('PG Cert').
- The PG Cert represents the first formally accredited academic arts fundraising programme in Europe, and provides further strong evidence of the programme's contribution to addressing this objective.

Objective 4: Build a peer-to-peer leadership community which positions arts fundraising as a competitive, desirable and progressive career and which retains, develops and widens the talent pool

- Accumulating evidence that AFP is developing an emergent peer community of effective arts fundraisers is most apparent in the Fellowship programme.
- Evidence shows that the focus on leadership in the Summer School and PG Cert successfully contributed to fostering leadership aspirations and skills amongst delegates. Likewise delegates at the AMA Conference noted networking opportunities with peers as one of the highlights.

However:

- The report findings indicate that AFP could intervene more effectively in building a peer-to-peer community through a greater proactive focus on networking.

Objective 5: *Ensure that arts organisations better address the needs of current and prospective donors, as well as attracting first-time givers to the arts*

- No specific activity has yet been delivered on this objective and hence no specific progress towards this objective has been made in Year One. However, the consortium has acknowledged the risk of over-relying on a single approach such as 'Donor Finder' to achieve this objective. Greater focus will be placed on donor cultivation and management in the Year Three training programme, seeking to align with organisational development initiatives. The evaluation will report further on this in Year Three.

Objective 6: *Develop an enterprising culture in which fundraising is placed at the heart of an arts organisation's business model and ethos, enabling organisations to better integrate their fundraising work with their artistic ambitions and their audience development activity and, by so doing, helping organisations better understand and articulate their case for support*

Small progress has been identified here as an element of the Fellowship strand:

- Evidence shows that hosting an AFP Fellow has impacted on the cultures of organisations acting as Hosts in Year One, contributing to this objective in the following ways:
 - better connectivity and communication across the organisation
 - enhanced performance of other members of the fundraising team, alerting them to further training opportunities
 - raising the profile of the fundraising team, with other departments interested in the Fellow and the wider AFP programme, and in taking on their own trainees.

However:

- There is no evidence yet that AFP is impacting on business models, nor on a more strategic approach to fundraising which might engender a cultural shift.
- Findings identify the risk of an overriding focus on skills development within the AFP programme detracting from the pressing need to focus mind-sets on long-term approaches, less fixated on quick wins, channels and techniques.

Objective 7: *Maximise learning through knowledge exchange, resources and thought leadership (e.g. pioneering practice, innovation, field-leading discussion) within the sector.*

- There is clear evidence that the Fellowship Programme, Summer School (and PG Cert), AMA Conference, and Digital Learning Programme are beginning to harness and facilitate knowledge exchange, and thought leadership.
- Good progress has been made towards this objective noted in digital and social networking activity: regular e-newsletters to a database of 1,700 subscribers; a vibrant twitter platform of over 1,100 followers; a dedicated Linked-In group of 100 members; 37 blogs and articles published by programme staff, Fellows and trainers; and AFP website's average traffic of 428 visits per week (93% from the UK, followed by the USA, Australia, Canada and Brazil).
- Evidence was apparent amongst some AFP participants of frustrations that the AFP programme did not offer space for critical and political discussion of the current funding context facing the arts and cultural sector. Broader debates which allow for political aspects of arts fundraising to be discussed would be welcomed by many and will be programmed into next year's Summer school and will be addressed explicitly in the forthcoming AFP national debates.

AFP's impact within the current climate faced by the arts and cultural sector in England

The context

It has proven extremely difficult to establish a clear baseline position from which to gauge shifts within the sector. The following snapshot is indicative, based on responses to a sector survey.

- *More than 1 in 5 NPOs in England relied on ACE for over 50% of their income*
 - *37 % of respondents received no corporate sponsorship*
 - *87% attracted some individual giving*
 - *The absence of a fundraising strategy in one in four arts organisations*
 - *Fundraising capacity ranged from 0-9 FTE staff.*
- There are strong indications of AFP impact and visibility, despite having little time to brand and market itself before beginning programme delivery: AFP has taken hold in the sector and is exerting a broadly positive influence.
 - Organisations are generally hugely impressed so far, and extremely keen to see the AFP programme succeed.

Specific challenges which AFP will need to negotiate in future planning

- Fundraising through philanthropic support is becoming increasingly saturated, with many organisations competing for limited funds and many potential donors feeling cash poor. As more and more organisations seek assistance from the same sources, obtaining funds is increasingly difficult.
- In the area of corporate giving, donors are applying ever-increasing pressure on arts organisations to prove the worth of the donation, "... often wanting a pound back for every pound spent." Offering more to donors requires increased organisational resources to manage the corporate or philanthropic relationship, with added pressure on already stretched organisations.
- Smaller organisations, organisations that lack a 'conventional offer' (e.g. venue; recognisable artistic 'product'), and those based outside London face particular fundraising challenges, which the evaluation found were not currently adequately addressed by AFP.
- AFP is perceived by the sector as the 'one-stop shop' for all of the challenges and skills gaps related to arts fundraising; carrying the burden of misconception that it can solve all financial challenges encountered by the majority of arts organisations across the sector.

Summary Conclusion

The AFP programme is operating very successfully overall, addressing or exceeding most of its original objectives for this stage of the programme.

Delivery and satisfaction rates are exceeding expectations and qualitative feedback is largely positive. Particular success can be witnessed in the strands of the Fellowship and the Digital Learning Programme.

At the end of this first full year, there is clear evidence that the programme is impacting on individuals, arts organisations and the sector as a whole. CultureHive is now providing a significant online resource for the real-life case studies demanded so clearly by training delegates. The Fellowship scheme participants have elicited extra funds, new roles and career opportunities that would not have been secured without the programme.

Though difficult, if not impossible, to quantify in financial terms, the impact of the AFP programme, evaluated at this early stage, indicates some strands of the programme are already producing a healthy return on investment.

Areas for reflection

There is strong consensus on concerns about the widespread tendency for a reductive and short-term approach in existing arts fundraising activities, focussing too narrowly on and placing too much hope in sometimes inappropriate tools and activities, rather than developing a more entrepreneurial mind-set and regarding income generation more broadly. Awareness of the risks of accommodating the appetite for quick-wins, and a focus on absorbing standard techniques and toolkits (albeit often useful and effective at the basic level) will be important in the remaining phase of the AFP programme.

In a climate of sustained, reduced public funding for the arts, philanthropy is not necessarily the best or most realistic focus and solution. The arts sector, and arts fundraisers, especially touring companies, those with a less conventional offer, and organisations outside London, may need help to take the broader view: more entrepreneurial ways to diversify their income streams and make their business models more innovative, flexible, responsive, resilient and future proof.²

A subtle emphasis shift may therefore be appropriate within the programme, towards developing and supporting long-term strategic understanding of the territories of arts fundraising amongst arts organisations sector-wide and an understanding which accommodates the diversity in organisations' size and context.

A critical overview suggests that the discipline and professional practice of arts fundraising is beginning to broaden and diversify. There is potential for AFP (and the arts sector in general) to broaden its view of what constitutes arts fundraising, what skills, contexts and interventions might be of interest to the diverse range of professionals working in this field, with a particular focus on engaging Chief Executives and their Boards in the fundraising debate.

² For an elaboration of this point, see also Bolton, M., Cooper, C., Antrobus, C., Ludlow, J. and Tebbutt, H. 2011. *Capital Matters: How to Build Financial Resilience in the UK's Arts and Cultural Sector*. London: Mission, Models, Money.

AFP Evaluation Recommendations

- I. AFP should consider promoting a more holistic view of arts fundraising and facilitate more regular and effective networking between arts fundraising professionals, focussing more on developing entrepreneurialism and exploring new business models. The AFP consortium might also bring together key stakeholders to explore what form a future arts fundraising network might take and how to make this happen most effectively and sustainably.
- II. There is some evidence that AFP is perceived by the sector as the sole solution to the “arts fundraising problem”. While the programme might take on a greater role in facilitating communication and change, it is ultimately up to arts organisations themselves to implement and embed change and effect their own organisational culture shifts to diversify their income streams and take a more entrepreneurial approach. AFP might facilitate this by offering training opportunities in change management and leadership, and by considering developing further strands such as consultancy and organisational development. The consortium should continue discussion with ACE regarding aligning the AFP programme with the latter’s Resilience fund to encourage a more joined-up and sustainable approach to income generation.
- III. While positively evaluated by delegates, the national training sessions might benefit from a slightly broader focus, which could cater more effectively to the needs of delegates from non-venue-based organisations. Following discussion with the AFP Project Manager, our recommendation is that trainers are re-briefed on the need for a responsive and delegate-focussed approach to training delivery. More training sessions might also be programmed in the North of England to reflect the geographical spread of NPOs and potential delegates.
- IV. Serious concerns have been expressed by many stakeholders about the lack of diversity in this year’s Fellows, which are 93% female and represent a poor ethnic and educational mix. Recruitment for Year Three might therefore target alternative cohorts, such as university business schools, which are generally more male and ethnically diverse. Cause4 and DARE could exploit their HE and FE partnerships to facilitate this. The Fellows’ selection days might also be reviewed in order to provide clearer instructions to candidates in advance and incorporate more rigorous and standardised assessment techniques.
- V. While the Fellowship programme has emerged as a resoundingly positive strand of the programme, there are indications that it might be improved even further by: more careful management in the initial stages of the expectations of both host organisations and Fellows; by a slightly less managerial approach to the Fellows; by recruiting more committed and better briefed mentors; and by a more joined-up relationship between DARE and Cause4 to ensure that the AFP Fellowship ‘brand’ is more consistent and overcomes perceptions of any North/South divide. Cause4 might also wish to reconsider its £100K fundraising benchmark, which seems to cause undue anxiety and which is not currently being met by the vast majority of Fellows.
- VI. Findings from Year One of the programme suggest that a greater emphasis on leadership skills might be useful, and expectations of leadership opportunities should be managed carefully through marketing communications. Apart from the Summer School, the leadership aspirations of the Fellowships are not provided for as fully as they might be, so further consideration might be given to functional secondments and shadowing, for example, to develop the strategic awareness of the Fellows and broaden their knowledge and skills base. Leadership skills could also be developed by encouraging all the Fellows to feed their training back into their respective organisations more explicitly. In the interim, the Fellowship marketing copy has been amended to communicate more realistic expectations of leadership development and to promote sustainable career development amongst the Fellows.

- VII. Although the Summer School was very positively evaluated by the delegates, it could benefit from improving the timely flow of information to participants in future years; reviewing the quality of the practical sessions; and reconsidering the timing of the group presentations. It might also benefit from addressing the politics of arts fundraising more directly – perhaps in a public panel session with ACE representation.
- VIII. The coaching programme remains in its early days, but there are already indications that it will not produce any ‘quick wins’; that the evaluation of the effectiveness of the coaching strand will benefit from incorporating an organisational and longitudinal perspective; and that the coaching-participant relationship could be better prepared for by providing participants with pre-coaching information that more effectively introduces the nature of coaching.
- IX. The AMA Conference exceeded its delegate targets for fundraisers and represented an important and manifest commitment to developing a professional network of arts fundraisers.
- X. The costs of engaging with many aspects of the AFP programme are still regarded as prohibitive by some. The “free” elements of the programme, such as the digital learning resources are therefore vital tools, both practically and politically, and should possibly be prioritised in the final stage of the programme to make it as accessible as possible. To respond to calls for less focus on urban, venue-based organisations, future commissions and appeals for case studies might specifically target rural, regional, small-scale and touring organisations.
- XI. Regarding marketing and recruitment, the training programme might consider collaborating more closely with the wider third and voluntary sectors, as there are indications that delegates from these sectors find the training well suited to their needs. Many non-arts charities draw on arts activities to address and achieve their strategic objectives, so some of the sessions are directly relevant. In future, this could be used to subsidise places for arts fundraisers. The programme might also market more widely to marketing and producing staff in NPOs and project-funded organisations.
- XII. Given that almost every strand and sub-strand of the programme is exceeding its initial quality and satisfaction benchmark of 70%, we would recommend raising the minimum expectation to 80% from April 2015 to raise standards even further. Considering the on-going challenges of hitting recruitment targets for the National Training Programme, we would also recommend revising these ambitious targets and incorporating them into a new KPI on recruitment and selection under Objective 2.
- XIII. In the final stages of the programme, AFP might benefit from developing its marketing across the UK and start to disseminate on an international level. International collaborations and partnerships could also be developed to broaden the reach and focus of the programme beyond the initial three-year funding period. There are indications from web analytics that the programme is appealing to visitors from the USA, Australia, Canada and Brazil in particular, so beyond ongoing European development, these might be the natural target countries for further international dissemination and growth. International dissemination might form a further KPI under Objective 3.
- XIV. Increased access to sector wide, cohesive data on arts fundraising behaviours and strategies, established during Year One of this evaluation to be in very short supply, would enable an effective understanding of the arts fundraising landscape in England. To establish a more informative baseline from which to measure change within the sector, the AFP evaluation team and AFP Consortium would welcome the more proactive collection and sharing of this data as a priority concern, and suggest ACE would be the most appropriate body to lead this process.