

## **ArtSupport NL 2.0 Final Report**

### **The Program**

April 2020 - September 2022

This program worked to increase arts organizations' fundraising knowledge and tools in order to improve their fundraising practices and diversify revenues.

Following on the heels of ArtSupport NL 1.0, which ran from March, 2018 to March, 2020 this program sought to:

- a) Build on this work, by enabling the original twelve participants in the program to continue to work with their fundraising coaches on a bi-weekly basis. ("Stream 1")
- b) Extend this work to twenty smaller organizations (those with one or fewer full-time staff members), by designing a scaled-down, flexible program that would be responsive to the needs of smaller organizations, and still allow them to improve their fundraising practices. ("Stream 2")

### **The Format**

Stream 1 welcomed nine returning organizations, and three new participants to this stream. (See Appendix A for a full list of participants). New participants participated in a "fundraising bootcamp" for their boards and staff, in order to begin with a foundation of understanding the fundraising landscape, recommended practices, etc. Then all participants were offered bi-weekly coaching sessions with coaches from RBR Development Associates (now Global Philanthropic). (See Appendix B - Fundraising Coaches)

Stream 2 welcomed fifteen new participants. These participants were offered online seminars for board orientation, and four online workshops, with accompanying materials, toolkits, templates etc. provided after each one. Upon completion of the training sessions, participants connected with the consultant team at The Good Partnership for an initial organizational evaluation, a custom 2-hour individual coaching session, two 1-hour individual coaching sessions, six monthly group coaching sessions, and a final evaluation meeting, over the course of spring, summer, and fall 2020. Eight of the original fifteen participants completed the full complement of workshops, evaluations, coachings, and group sessions.

The final activity of the program was a day-long fundraising symposium, featuring seminars, a keynote presentation, a panel conversation featuring corporate sponsors, and networking opportunities. Forty-one organizations attended, including most of the program participants, several other arts organizations, and some of our colleagues within the nonprofit sector.

## **The Results**

Participating organizations who were able to take advantage of the full program, including seminars, group conversations, coaching, and a symposium reported that:

- They collectively increased their number of donors and sponsors by 285%. These new donors are an important indicator of the foundation of relationships that has been laid through this program. With proper stewardship, this increased donor base to the sector can have a long-term impact on revenues in the sector.
- Increased their fundraising revenue by 28% collectively at a time when charitable giving decreased across the country.
- 88% reported increased fundraising knowledge and increased fundraising confidence.
- 50% successfully launched a new fundraiser or raised funds for the first time. These are campaigns and programs that will continue to grow and earn revenue for these organizations over time.

For a full report of projected and actual outputs and outcomes of this project, please see Appendix C.

### **ArtSupport NL and COVID-19**

This program launched in April, 2020, just as the COVID-19 pandemic was taking hold. We decided to proceed with launching the program, as arts organizations found themselves destabilized, unsure of what revenue and funding would look like in the evolving landscape, and in need of consistent support. We were able to make gentle modifications to the original plans and allow all of the work to take place virtually, without diverging from the original plan.

The immediate response from potential participants confirmed that arts organizations were keen for support and guidance during this time. However, as circumstances shifted, and organizations found themselves grappling with changes to programming, staffing interruptions, and increased workload focused on dealing with the constantly changing environment created through the pandemic, we did see several participants drop off over the course of the program, from an initial fifteen participants, to eight who completed all of the training and coaching offered. All of the participants who were unable to complete the program were from Stream 2; organizations run by volunteers, or by one part-time or full-time staff member.

We aren't able to evaluate whether or not these participants would have been able to complete and benefit from this program, had it not been for the pandemic, but we do know that between April 2020 and September 2022, the number of volunteers within the participating organizations fell to 54% of pre-pandemic levels. This represents a substantial decrease in a key resource that is central to fundraising success for many of these organizations.

## **Where Do We Go From Here? What We Heard**

**When we asked, “What does your organization need in order to be successful at fundraising?”, we heard:**

1) People - staff, board and other volunteers

Almost all of the participants who did complete the training commented on the fact that personnel (whether staff, board or other volunteers) are a critical resource in fundraising. Organizations with the greatest success had both staff and board members involved in all of the training and coaching. Many created new fund development committees, or changed their staff resources in order to allow for more time spent on fundraising.

This is part of a vicious cycle in the arts: we need more staff to help fundraise, so we need to fundraise to pay for more staff. Increased access to operational funding, core grants, increased knowledge and training related to leverage social enterprise opportunities and generating additional revenue, and/or increased administration fees on project grants could help ease this burden and allow more staff time for fundraising.

2) Training

Many participants see where the gaps in their knowledge are, and are hungry for more training, including topics that will continue to evolve over time, like text-to-donate campaigns, and hybrid events.

Several organizations have had some turnover in staff or board since beginning the program, and are interested in foundational fundraising training for their teams.

**When we asked, What does your organization need in order to feel you have a sustainable financial model? We heard:**

1) Sustaining Funding.

The cycle of project-based funding which allows organizations to cobble together 10% - 15% administration fees on each project grant in order to fund their staff positions creates an environment where staff are spread thin and underpaid. This results in high turnover rates within the sector, and causes lost time and institutional knowledge and relationships, all of which are critical to fundraising.

2) A desire to better balance revenues between private, public, and earned revenue.

While project-based funding is unstable, so it being overly reliant on government grants. These organizations know that financial sustainability depends on a regular flow of private support and earned revenue, in order to be able to survive during economic and political shifts over time.

Some organizations pointed to social enterprise development as an area of interest related to revenue generation.

### 3) Endowment funds

An endowment fund, for those who have the means to put money away in one, can offer an annual revenue source that can help cover operating expenses.

### **Praise for ArtSupport NL 2.0**

“It's been fantastic - it's been a game changer for our organization because the training doesn't only address the issues of fundraising - but how to create the foundation to be able to fundraise. That's the step that most organizations miss.”

“I feel an increased confidence and the board is more excited. One board member has been engaged, sharing links to the podcast, more excited to get involved. We have never seen that before.”

“We completely changed our approach to corporate sponsorship and it's working!”

“Our fundraising committee has come around. We just had a really productive meeting. I think this program is valuable, especially for small organizations. I felt like I wasn't alone. Now I'm focused on the right things that don't require a lot of work but have a high yield.”

“Having the fundraising plan has been extremely beneficial. Something strategic that we can follow. I also gained a better understanding of how to relate to donors.”

“It is a shame we can't quantify the value of the increased confidence we have as a result of this training. We know it is going to pay off.”

“It was invaluable to share in others struggles and successes.”

“It was FANTASTIC! Not only did it help us increase the amount we raised, it helped us evaluate what operational changes needed to be made in our organization. It helped provide the tools and the support we needed to make a huge transformation happen. I can't rave enough about this program. It was a game changer for our organization. It also helped me in other aspects of my career outside of the office. Well worth the time investment and commitment. Thank you Business and Arts NL! : )”

“The coaching with RBR has been tremendous in that it has resulted in major interest and training for a number of Board members, in the 'art' of fundraising. Our Board has a much greater understanding of their fundraising role as a result of the coaching. We have yet to see results on our bottom line, due to other issues, like Covid-19, but we are hopeful the results will come in the coming years.”

“The program has given our organization a more focused approach to fundraising and the confidence to make direct requests of patrons, donors and potential sponsors.”

“Completely transformed us! Completely. We would not be where we are without it.”

“This has been an invaluable confidence-building exercise for both the full-time staff member and board member. Having regular time each week even to think through goals, planning, and objectives, was a gift. It kept us accountable and focused on progress. Our mentor was incredibly knowledgeable, patient, and generous with his time. Our sessions were fundraising-focused, but also comprehensive, covering governance, administrative practices, team building, operations, recruitment, HR, professional development, and more. This holistic approach will continue to have an impact not just on fundraising, but on all our operations. The board member also gave of her time so generously and consistently. We three had wonderful synergy, rapport, and mutual respect. I looked forward to our sessions each week enormously, and miss them now that the program has concluded.”

“I feel I have gained a clear path forward and better buy-in at the board level. I've learned about best practices, become more comfortable with the idea of INVESTMENT, and have enhanced our operational efficiency, which in turn has enhanced my capacity for fundraising and business development. Small steps this year, but these will undoubtedly lead to greater and greater impact as we build on our ideas and objectives. I could not have imagined progress of this scale and scope even one year ago.”

“It has been a truly valuable experience which I believe will have long term positive impacts on achieving the company's fundraising goals! Thank you!!!”

“I feel that we worked with an amazing firm, and were able to gain some important insights into better ways to engage and fundraise. While I don't have numbers today which show a marked increase, I feel that we are on a new trajectory as a result of the ArtSupport program which will set us up for a successful future. THANK YOU AMY and the whole team!!!”

## Appendix A

### Program Participants

#### Stream 1

Artistic Fraud of Newfoundland  
Craft Council of NL  
Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra  
Opera on the Avalon  
Perchance Theatre (Cupids)  
Resource Centre for the Arts  
The Rooms, Provincial Art Gallery, Archive, and Museum  
St. John's International Women's Film Festival  
Theatre Newfoundland and Labrador (Cow Head)  
Tuckamore Chamber Music Festival  
Visual Arts NL

#### Stream 2

Bonavista Biennale (Bonavista)  
Business and Arts NL  
Canadian Federation of Musicians Local 820  
Dance NL  
Eastern Edge Gallery  
Eastern Labrador Arts Alliance (Happy Valley Goose Bay)  
Kittiwake Dance Theatre  
Landfall Trust (Brigus)  
Lawnya Vawnya  
NL Folk Arts Society  
Newman Sound Men's Choir  
Quintessential Vocal Ensemble  
St. Michael's Printshop  
Unscripted Digital Arts Festival (Twillingate)  
Writers' Alliance of NL

## Appendix B

### Fundraising Coaches

Brent Platt - Global Philanthropic

Brent Platt is an accomplished and seasoned fund development professional with a successful track record in strategic planning, organizing, and leading fundraising programs. His expertise includes website design, digital security, leadership development, conceptualizing and executing capital campaign initiatives, designing strategic sponsorship opportunities, and recruiting and engaging senior volunteers. Brent has spent the last fifteen (15) years working in the non-profit sector, most recently with L'Arche Homefires where he introduced AI and Machine Learning to streamline daily processes and track the community's outcomes. Brent has completed an EMBA with a specialization in data sciences and advanced statistical inference.

Brent began his work in this program as a Senior Consultant with RBR Development Associates. Upon the untimely passing of Rosalie Courage, President and CEO of RBR, Brent stepped in to keep the team at RBR connected to Business and Arts throughout the duration of ArtSupport.

Cindy Wagman - The Good Partnership

Cindy Wagman is the President and Founder of The Good Partnership, a values-driven, social-justice informed consultancy that is working to unlock the potential of small nonprofits through fundraising. Cindy became a Certified Fundraising Executive in 2009 and received her MBA from the Rotman School at the University of Toronto in 2013. Cindy has presented for AFP (Association of Fundraising Professionals), CanadaHelps, CharityVillage, Bloomerang, Keela, and Fundraising Everywhere. She is the host of The Small Nonprofit podcast, Canada's #1 podcast for charities and best-selling author of *Raise It! The Reluctant Fundraiser's Guide to Raising Money Without Selling Your Soul*.

## Appendix C - Outputs and Outcomes

Activity	Output	Proposed Outcomes	Final Outcomes
1 - Orientation Event	Host day-long orientation event focused on board engagement and community building	60 participants (30 organizations x 3 people from 10 stream 1 and 20 stream 2 orgs)	69 participants in three online orientation sessions + three individualized bootcamps
2 - Mentorships to Stream 1 orgs	Fundraising bootcamp to new participants	4 new participants	3 new participants
	Deliver bi-weekly one-hour coachings over 18 months	500 coaching sessions to 14 orgs	541 coaching hours to 11 organizations
3 - Deliver mentorships to stream 2 organizations	Evaluate stream 2 registration forms	24 applications	15 applications
	Facilitate monthly check-ins to evaluate current fundraising strategy and identify 1-3 realistic goals	20 participants (6 rural/remote)	15 participants (4 rural/remote)
		240 check-ins (12 per org over 18 months)	117 check-ins
		40 goals set	30 goals set
	Stream 2 organizational assessments performed	20	15
	Organizational re-assessments performed	20	8
	Stream 2 self-evaluation indication of success	80% self-reported success	100% of those who completed training, 46 % of overall cohort
4 - Deliver educational modules		7 modules	4 modules + 9 individual 2-hour coaching sessions
		100 participants	66 participants
	Host an event towards the end of the program bringing together Stream 1 participants to share their case for support/success stories	10 participants	41 participating organizations
5 - Host an ArtsSupport graduation event		100 attendees	132 attendees
<b>Reporting Outcomes/Results</b>			
	Improve fundraising practices of arts organizations	30 organizations	28 organizations
		improvement reported in self-evaluations 80%	79% of those who completed program
		increased number of volunteers to orgs: 20	decreased 259
	Diversify revenues in arts organizations	20 orgs report increased # of revenue sources	13 organizations
		increased number of new donors to arts sector 15%	36% increase of donor numbers to successful organizations