

*Business to Arts*  
Developing Creative  
Partnerships

# New Stream

BUSINESS TO ARTS AND THE IRELAND FUNDS BUILD  
DIALOGUE & PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ARTS IN IRELAND

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Business to Arts is a membership-based non-profit, developing and supporting partnerships between businesses, individuals and arts organizations. We believe that the creativity of the arts and the acumen of the business community enhance each other and help drive world-class performance in Ireland.



# NEW STREAM

## Improving Fundraising and Raising the Bar

Our team of four, based in Temple Bar in Dublin, delivers professional development programs designed to create an impact. In 2009, just as the economic crisis started to impact on the fortunes of the cultural sector, we created 'New Stream' a multi-year organizational development program to improve fundraising and strategic-planning skills in the arts sector.

In the first five years of this project, created with the support of The Ireland Funds, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, participants have raised €12 million which they attribute to the skills and supports provided by Business to Arts.

In support of these principles, since 2012, The Ireland Funds have been an investor in the New Stream program, supporting the sharing of content and learning through an online Knowledge Center [www.businessstoarts.ie/newstream](http://www.businessstoarts.ie/newstream). This is allowing a broader reach for New Stream, particularly to individuals and organizations who need more support, but perhaps don't have the resources to participate in a program.

The catalyst of The Ireland Funds support was the beginning of a two-year partnership with the DeVos Institute of Arts Management at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, which saw 24 organizations from across Ireland go through the DeVos Ireland Programme. This is an intensive organizational capacity-building program which focuses on strategic planning, marketing, board development and fundraising.

Participating organizations included performing and visual arts presenters (e.g. Fishamble Theatre Company, Glucksman Gallery Cork); multi-disciplinary arts centers (e.g. glór Ennis, Project Arts Centre), festivals (e.g. Clonmel Junction Festival, Tiger Dublin Fringe, Dublin Theatre Festival); arts-based organizations serving youth, older people, and individuals with disability (e.g. Arts & Disability Ireland and Age & Opportunity).

The scale was national, engaging organizations from Clare, Cork, Wexford, Limerick, Tipperary, Dublin, and beyond and it built on the achievements of the first three years of the New Stream program.

The DeVos Ireland Programme included annual group seminars, regular online working groups, site visits, and ongoing, one-on-one consultation. At the outset, the dominant concern of participants was the impact of the recession on organizational finances. The majority had experienced recent substantial reductions in both public and private funding. Many had encountered parallel losses in earned revenue from ticket sales, class fees etc. and as a result, had limited the frequency and scale of their programming.

### The guiding principles in creating the New Stream program were:

- To identify and engage those who will benefit from fundraising development in the arts
- To ensure that the education process is ongoing and that participants have the opportunity to continue to develop their skills
- To create an environment where the arts sector can become increasingly collaborative in its approach to fundraising and development



We feel we have had a complete attitude change. The ethos has shifted. For the first time, I feel hopeful about us making a successful pitch. I feel fundraising is now considered to be a collective responsibility and there is more trust between the board and executive and development staff. We have always worked as a team but we have a clearly outlined strategy and all of our attitudes and ambitions are now more closely aligned."

— Projects Arts Centre

### What Works in Ennis May Not Work in Clonmel

As the participating organizations had varying levels of capacity, we recognized that the program was unlikely to have the same outcomes for all. Some organizations were large and based in affluent urban centers; others were smaller, based in rural environments with less apparent access to private support.

Working together with the DeVos Institute, we ensured that the program delivered best international practice balanced with rigorous localization, as what worked in Ennis may not work in Clonmel; and accepted practices in the United States would not translate uniformly into the Irish context. Likewise, the limits of a two-year program were acknowledged: organizational habits accrued over years (or decades) prior to the program would not give way overnight!

### The intensive training thus asserted that, to survive (and ideally flourish), participating organizations must:

1. produce consistently superior art and services
2. market that art aggressively
3. build a "family" of funders, donors, ticket-buyers and other "buyers" of its services
4. convert the goodwill of that "family" into a financial resource
5. re-invest that resource in even more impactful art the following year

We have witnessed new thinking and growing proactivity and entrepreneurship in the arts sector. A focus on strategic planning in participant organizations, is beginning to enhance resilience – which we believe is critical at this time. We're also seeing progress in sharing learning, through the developing network of arts fundraisers created via New Stream. This is the first of its kind in Ireland and has become a model for delivery and focus on accountability in other sectors. Our annual evaluation of New Stream shows that this program delivers measured, tangible results year on year. The Evaluation is independently assessed by the School of Cultural Policy and Arts Management at University College Dublin.

*Put simply, there is no more successful program of this type operating in Ireland, and the model is now attracting international recognition and being replicated elsewhere in Europe. Business to Arts is enormously grateful to The Ireland Funds and their supporters for this investment over a number of years in New Stream. We hope to continue this support with new partnerships and success into the future.*

# CASE STUDIES



## CLOMEL JUNCTION FESTIVAL — LONG-TERM ARTISTIC PLANNING AND FUNDRAISING

**OUTCOME:** A number of significant outcomes have resulted from the introduction of a long-term planning approach paired with new fundraising mechanisms. A sponsor who had contributed for 10 years, made a three-year commitment at 250% of their original investment level. At the introduction of the Commissioning Patron Programme, three long-term, €300-level Festival Friends increased their gifts to the €500 level.

## THE ABBEY THEATRE — INTEGRATION OF MARKETING AND FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

**OUTCOME:** In one year, the Abbey Theatre has more than doubled its membership base, representing a 52% growth in membership income. Additionally, 17% of the membership renewals in 2013 increased their giving from one level to the next. During the same period, total individual giving grew 36%.



## THE ARK — BUILDING “FAMILY” THROUGH MEMBERSHIP

**OUTCOME:** The Ark has attracted 52 new Family Members, resulting in increased revenue. By the end of 2014, the Ark’s target was to retain 200 family members; by 2015, that goal increased to 300. While revenue from this program is still relatively modest, its significant growth in one year alone argues forcibly for the future impact of a properly-resourced effort.

## WEXFORD FESTIVAL OPERA (WFO) — MAJOR DONOR FUNDRAISING

**OUTCOME:** Between 2011 and 2013, WFO generated increased revenue from major gifts. Gifts from major donors increased in value by an overwhelming 81% from 2012 to 2013 alone. Major gift revenue represented 3.2% of the Festival’s total income in 2012; and represented almost double that, or 5.6%, in 2013. Approximately half of the donors in this period were new to WFO, representing a major expansion in the diversity of WFO’s funding base.

