

MEETING: 28/11/2019

Ref: 15614

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Connecting the Capital**On Road Ltd****Adv: Natalie Jordan
Base: Tower Hamlets
Benefit: London-wide****Amount requested: £120,000****Amount recommended: £120,000****The Applicant**

On Road Ltd, commonly known as On Road Media (ORM), was set up in 2008 as a company limited by guarantee and then registered as a charity in 2016. ORM aims to address social problems by improving media coverage of under and misrepresented communities and social issues.

The Application

ORM seeks a further three years' continuation funding in support of the 'All About Trans' (AAT) and 'Angles' projects. Working with transgender people in AAT, survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Angles, and the organisations that support them, each project creates what ORM terms "interactions": curated face-to-face meetings with media professionals, which enable them to take control of their own stories and improve knowledge, understanding and representation in the media. Activists with lived experience and the organisations that support them access training in strategic communication, interviewing and self-care, joining a growing network of media-trained peers.

The Recommendation

This timely proposal addresses your priority to fund specialist organisations working with under-represented and marginalised communities, through ensuring skills are nurtured and embedded at both the level of individuals and the organisations that support them, and that appropriate support is in place for those engaging in activities relating to their lived experience. ORM is a connector, not a representative, of the communities supported, emphasising self-representation from those with lived experience. ORM delivers across England, but your funding will support only those organisations and activists based in London. A grant is advised:

£120,000 over three further and final years (3 x £40,000) towards media training courses, interactions, and peer support, as part of the All About Trans and Angles projects in support of London organisations.

Funding History

| Meeting Date | Decision |
|--------------|---|
| 23/11/2017 | £80,000 over two years (£40,000, £40,000) towards the media training courses and interactions, and the cost of the activist network meetings, for both the All About Trans and Angles projects. |

Background and detail of proposal

ORM has had high-profile reach, including Angles' listing as a New Radicals 2018 winner, and successful engagement with ITV through AAT, resulting in a storyline on Emmerdale about the first trans character to be played by a trans actor. Underpinning these achievements is ORM's support of activists through whose 'interactions' with the media positive changes in representation are made, finding

that professionals are more driven to nuanced understanding of issues having been moved by connection with someone with lived experience. However, ORM's carefully curated model ensures that individual cases are not sensationalised, and individuals are not burdened with being portrayed as isolated individual experiences. Media work ensures individual examples, including those portrayed through support organisations, fit into narratives on wider issues.

Peer support meetings follow an Action Learning Set structure, and through private online groups where activists can share opportunities and learning. The introduction of the Angles project through your original two-years' funding has provided transformative learning regarding ORM's self-care practice for activists, which is applied across all projects. Participants report increased confidence and understanding and trust of the media—91% of Angles participants are more likely to engage with the media following involvement.

Financial Information

At assessment, your officer noted that the accounts for the period of 2017/2018 showed all expenditure as unrestricted, including the existing grant from CBT. ORM has dedicated additional time and resource to work with its accountants in this and subsequent years for the preparation of accounts. ORM is currently looking to recruit a new treasurer and appreciates its need for strong expertise in this area, currently reaching out to potential candidates via Reach Volunteering.

Although the free reserves target is low in relation to total expenditure, reserves held in 2019 account for over 50% of unrestricted income. In light of ORM's growth, the strategy for building reserves is due for review by trustees in December 2019. An increased proportion of income from sales of consultancy (approximately £30,000 annually) will be considered for use to build free reserves. The aim is to hold reserves at the equivalent of three months' total expenditure.

| Year end as at 31st October | 2018 Signed Accounts £ | 2019 Forecast £ | 2020 Budget £ |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Income & expenditure: | | | |
| Income | 232,076 | 302,907 | 436,000 |
| - % of income confirmed as at 8/7/19 | N/A | 100% | 77% |
| Expenditure | (222,895) | (294,691) | (426,000) |
| Total surplus/(deficit) | 9,181 | 8,216 | 10,000 |
| Split between: | | | |
| - Restricted surplus/(deficit) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| - Unrestricted surplus/(deficit) | 9,181 | 8,216 | 10,000 |
| | 9,181 | 8,216 | 10,000 |
| Cost of Raising Funds | 3,790 | 25,368 | 25,368 |
| - % of income | 1.6% | 8.4% | 5.8% |
| Total expenditure | 222,895 | 294,691 | 426,000 |
| Free unrestricted reserves: | | | |
| Free unrestricted reserves held at year end | 24,232 | 33,186 | 43,186 |
| No of months of operating expenditure | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.2 |
| Reserves policy target | 30,000 | 30,000 | 106,500 |
| No of months of operating expenditure | 1.6 | 1.2 | 3.0 |
| Free reserves over/(under) target | (5,768) | 3,186 | (63,314) |