

MEETING 28/11/19

Ref: 15589

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides – Strategic Initiative**Media Trust****Adv: Geraldine Page****Base: Westminster****Amount requested: £236,256****Benefit: London-wide****Amount recommended: £236,000****The Applicant**

The Media Trust (MT) established in 1994 is a communications charity that believes in the power of media to change lives. It encourages the media and communications industry to share their time, knowledge and creativity to benefit charities, and underrepresented communities. It aims to amplify charities' voices by building their communications skills through innovative training, volunteer brokerage and content programmes to help them reach and engage new audiences.

The Application

The application seeks continuation funding for a further four years to deliver the 'Telling your Stories Project'. Each year 10 of the organisations funded by you will have short films made for them by professional film makers who volunteer their time and experience. The project is comprehensively facilitated by the MT throughout the entire process. As well as a film, the charities will receive training in film-making, social media and distribution. The films produced for the Trust previously have been very powerful and engaging. They are made sensitively and collaboratively with the selected charities producing very high quality films. The funding is requested for the Media Trust staff time allocated to the project, the production costs of the 10 films per year and the training sessions for the charities involved each year.

The Recommendation

MT has a very strong track record and expertise in the media and creative industry. Its unique partnership model enables it to connect professionals in the media and creative industry with diverse and under-represented individuals and groups. Your continued support for this project will allow organisations you fund to develop their skills and give them an opportunity to get a crucial promotional tool, with multiple purposes to showcase their work. Including demonstrating their impact, brand awareness, recruiting volunteers, fundraising and inspiring people to get involved.

£236,000 (£59,000 x 4) for the Media Trust to work with a cohort of 10 City Bridge Trust grantees per year for 4 further and final years on a "Telling Your Stories" project.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
26/09/2019	£1,500 for the Media Trust to develop and run a new Distribution workshop to complement the "Telling Your Stories" project.
14/11/2018	£49,995 over six months for the delivery costs of the "Telling Your Stories" project.
23/11/2017	£148,700 over two years (£75,000; £73,700) to contribute to the delivery costs of the Stronger Voices Training Programme for 30 equalities organisations, including Advocacy Masterclasses, digital guides and volunteer brokerage.

27/07/2017	The applicant has decided to withdraw its application, and plan to resubmit a proposal at a later date.
15/06/2017	£720 for the Media Trust to manage the subtitling for 'Telling Your Stories' screening at the Barbican
22/09/2016	The applicant wishes to increase the income it generates from the media industry by testing a tiered corporate membership fee structure. It is not clear that the applicant is on a journey towards social investment or whether revenue generation through fee income will be sufficient.
22/09/2016	£49,107 for the Media Trust to work with a cohort of City Bridge Trust grantees on a "Telling Your Stories" project.
09/07/2015	£50,000 over 12 months towards a marketing and business development programme that will allow Media Trust to explore opportunities for earned income and the potential to take on social investment.
06/06/2013	£80,000 for a final year's funding to provide media training to 110 young Londoners to tell London's stories to a wide national and regional audience.

Background and detail of proposal

The MT has been very successfully delivering the 'Telling Your Stories' project on behalf of the Trust for a number of years. This project will offer 10 of the charitable organisations you support each year (for 4 further years), the opportunity to have a short film made about their work by professional filmmakers. Following an agreed selection/application process, 10 organisations will be selected per year by the Trust and MT to take part in this project. The organisations will be given the opportunity to develop their production experience through their involvement with the film making process and shadowing of their allocated filmmaker. During the project the organisations will attend three training days. The first is a social media workshop where delegates will learn how to reach and engage their audience using social media and work on their external messaging. The second workshop is around the filmmaking process, producing powerful content. Finally, the third workshop on distribution will help ensure the charities have the knowledge, skills, tools and confidence to promote their film to ensure the maximum possible impact. The MT will produce and deliver 10 three-minute films, providing support to the charities and filmmakers throughout the process. MT will promote the films once they have been edited and will provide the charities involved with a copy of their film to use for their own publicity in the future.

We know from previous participants what a huge asset the films can be; raising an organisation's profile, increasing traffic to its websites and social media accounts as well as being a catalyst for increasing interest in its services and securing additional funds. From the most recent cohort of films screened at your event in the Barbican Cinema on 10 October 2019, Spectra's film #WholsAlex has already been nominated for the Charity Film of the Year Award.

Financial Information

MT is in a stable financial position and its strategic review includes a development plan for building the charity's reserves to its target level of £500k. The deficit in unrestricted funds in YE 2018 relates to several major programme areas coming to an end. Additionally, MT has been through a series of transitions with two CEOs (one interim) and the Head of Fundraising Events being replaced over the course of FY 2017/2018. Changes were made by the new CEO with a series of redundancies and a refocused drive to secure corporate sponsorship. Savings from organisation downsizing and being accommodated in new serviced offices in late 2018 will

generate further savings in running costs and give MT more flexibility to scale up or down its workforce in line with programme demands.

Reserves policy is £500k representing just over six months of salaries and overhead costs. Currently, reserves are lower than this target. The Trustees are considering ways of reducing the charity's dependence on unpredictable forms of income and securing more reliable funding streams. The Trustees review the policy and progress towards meeting the target level of reserves annually and the Finance and Audit Committee will review the policy in the interim if warranted.

Year end as at 31 March	2018 Signed Accounts £	2019 Draft £	2020 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	1,759,528	1,907,102	1,905,412
- % of income confirmed as at 8/7/19	N/A	100%	53%
Expenditure	(1,878,465)	(1,744,167)	(1,883,335)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(118,937)	162,935	22,077
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	34,891	143,036	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(153,828)	19,899	22,077
	(118,937)	162,935	22,077
Cost of Raising Funds	362,490	221,194	128,323
- % of income	20.6%	11.6%	6.7%
Total expenditure	1,878,465	1,744,167	1,883,335
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	203,377	223,276	245,353
No of months of total expenditure	1.3	1.5	1.6
Reserves policy target	500,000	500,000	500,000
No of months of total expenditure	3.2	3.4	3.2
Free reserves over/(under) target	(296,623)	(276,724)	(254,647)