

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Strengthening London's Voluntary Sector

On Road Ltd

Adv: Shegufta Rahman

Base: Hackney

Benefit: London-wide

Amount requested: £60,000

{Revised request: £80,000}

Amount recommended: £80,000

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. The charity's objective is to tackle social problems by improving media coverage of misrepresented groups and issues.

The Application

The charity currently has two well-established projects; All About Trans (AAT) and Angles. The former focusses on improving the portrayal of transgender people in the media, the latter on bringing media influencers together with people with lived experience of sexual violence and domestic abuse, promoting new content and a better understanding of the issues. Within each project four key activities are delivered, known as interactions: informal and curated meet-ups between activists with lived experiences and senior journalists; bespoke media training with a focus on self-care; peer support for activists engaging with the media; and mentoring for project participants. The application is for a contribution towards the media training courses and the total cost of the peer support meetings over two years, with the balance to be raised from other trusts and foundations.

The Recommendation

ORM has established a unique and well-tested model through its AAT project, which is the basis for developing Angles. More recently, ORM won the Third Sector Award for the 'Small Charity, Big Achiever' category for the AAT project this year. You are recommended to agree the revised request and higher level of grant enabling ORM to recover costs for the curated meet-ups between activists with lived experiences and senior journalists. A revised budget has been provided (Appendix A).

£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, conditional on confirmation of a dissolution clause being added to the charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association, and providing satisfactory management accounts for the remainder of 2017/18.

Funding History

None

Background and detail of proposal

AAT was launched with an objective to use lived experiences to move senior media professionals to care on an emotional level and take it upon themselves to do things differently. Following AAT's success, the organisation felt that a charity structure would be better suited to the work it delivers. Since this change in structure, the charity has been able to secure funding from more trusts and foundations.

A core element of the work of ORM is to train and support ‘activists’ – which can be anyone from the community with lived experience, who wants to make positive changes. The support includes bespoke media training based on research of that issue, coupled with peer support, with emotional and pastoral care that activists need. Not only are these individuals utilised for reactive interviews to challenge intransigent opinions getting air time, but they also have a proactive role to play. The charity has been working closely with numerous soap operas such as Eastenders, Emmerdale and Hollyoaks, to support their researchers with storylines. Activists have supported casting workshops which have led to two out of three of these soaps to develop trans story lines. The BBC and Channel 4 have supported ORM to gather evidence of impact to date, and have calculated that since the charity began it’s AAT project, approximately £5.5m has been spent on positive programming.

Angles launched this year to improve how sexual and domestic abuse is reported, leading to a better understanding of the crimes and experiences of victims. The number of journalists and broadcasters producing and collaborating on nuanced content on these topics has increased, as well as the number of resilient survivors and/or practitioners who are confidently qualified to engage with the media, sharing experiences and opinions.

Financial Information

Cost of Raising Funds was nil in 2015/16 due to the relevant time of the CEO not being apportioned to this spend. This is now being reported against. For a young charity, the organisation is on track to achieve significant growth through to 2018. The considerable increase in income from 2017 to 2018 is expected from a number of trusts and foundations with the pending applications either agreed in principle or through to final stages at the time of assessment, as well as developing a charging model and an income stream from the work with soap operas and media buyers.

Year end as at 31 October	2016	2017	2018
	Examined Accounts	Forecast	Budget
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	119,043	168,900	268,362
- % of Income confirmed as at 17/10/17	n/a	100%	58%
Expenditure	(118,368)	(155,962)	(253,600)
Total surplus/(deficit)	675	12,938	14,762
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	0	12,115	(8,888)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	675	823	23,650
	675	12,938	14,762
Cost of Raising Funds	n/a	17,100	9,600
- % of income	n/a	10.1%	3.6%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	72,885	30,639	54,850
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	3,633	4,456	28,106
No of months of operating expenditure	0.6	1.7	6.1
Reserves policy target	30,000	30,000	30,000
No of months of operating expenditure	4.9	11.7	6.6
Free reserves over/(under) target	(26,367)	(25,544)	(1,894)