Research shows how crowdfunding can help arts



Royal Research Ship Discovery secured money for its restoration via crowdfunding Dundee Heritage Trust

A new report has highlighted how UK arts and heritage organisations can access more funding, forge partnerships and create a network of supporters and volunteers by embracing crowdfunding.

These findings follow a nine-month pilot programme run by Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Arts Council England (ACE), HLF and Nesta.

The report entitled 'Matching the Crowd - combining crowdfunding and institutional funding to get great ideas off the ground' on the effectiveness of the pilot shows:

- £251,500 was generated from funding bodies, inspiring the crowd to donate £405,941
- Donors gave 17% more than those within comparable campaigns without match funding
- 86% of donors had never supported the organisations they backed financially

[quote=Anne Young, HLF Head of Strategic and Corporate Planning]“This matched crowdfunding programme has proved to be an effective way of increasing public support for heritage."[/quote]

Launched in August 2016, the pilot programme matched public funding with individual donations from the public to fund 59 arts and heritage projects, through crowdfunding platform Crowdfunder. Popular projects ranged from immersive

opera in South London, to the restoration of one of Britain's most important historic ships, the Royal Research Ship Discovery, in Dundee.

Hasan Bakhshi, Executive Director, Creative Economy and Data Analytics at Nesta, said: “Nesta has been tracking the crowdfunding sector since 2010, including the growing involvement of institutional funders. This pilot programme has given us unique quantitative evidence that arts and heritage funders can make public money work harder by matched funding.”

One of the most significant results was the ability to help arts and heritage organisations reach new supporters, rather than drawing on existing networks. As many as 86% of backers had not previously supported those organisations financially, and 20% had never backed a project in the arts and heritage sector.

Beyond raising money, 85% of organisations running crowdfunding campaigns inspired the crowd to offer non-financial help. Backers provided feedback/advice to 38% of projects, indicating the role of the crowd extending beyond funding towards shaping the campaign as it progresses towards its funding target.

Anne Young, Head of Strategic and Corporate Planning at HLF, said: “This matched crowdfunding programme has proved to be an effective way of increasing public support for heritage. It has been particularly interesting to see how match funding from National Lottery players has helped to boost the size of crowd-funded donations and help the organisations involved extend their range of supporters and volunteers.”



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