



BLUEPRINT



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THE NATIONAL LOTTERY
COMMUNITY FUND



Belfast
City Council



Blueprint is a pioneering 5-year financial growth programme enabling small to medium-sized* cultural organisations in Northern Ireland to take a more long-term approach to income generation.

Blueprint is informed by five years of research and development led by the team at Arts & Business NI (A&BNI), in partnership with a cohort of public and private funders.

The rationale for Blueprint began to form in 2016, when A&BNI commissioned a piece of research entitled *'Socially Investing in the Arts'*. The financial fragility of the arts sector highlighted in that research has only been compounded further by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Blueprint is about investment in long-term growth and finding the route to greater financial security and artistic freedom.

"Blueprint is a game changer with big ambitions to create transformational change and build long-term financial strength in the NI arts sector."

Kate Beggs
The National Lottery Community Fund Northern Ireland



*Small to medium-sized is defined as having an average turnover in the 3 financial years ended March 2020 of between £25k and £500k.

WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANISATION TAKE PART IN BLUEPRINT?

“The Blueprint programme is a long-term commitment to help small to medium-sized arts organisations thrive, and to build the financial strength of their balance sheets.”

Niamh Goggin, Small Change NI



Blueprint will support and develop a cluster of organisations, investing in them over a five-year period to identify opportunities for income growth and to strengthen long-term financial sustainability.

What makes Blueprint truly radical in approach is that it is a long-term financial growth programme. It will support and incentivise organisations to build a strong balance sheet for the longer term through increasing income and building reserves enabling the growth of capital for future innovation.

THERE ARE TWO PHASES TO THE PROGRAMME. ▶

Phase 1 will start with a broad group of organisations. Over six months, these organisations will benefit from taking part in a capacity-building programme which will include practical workshops and

peer learning to help build the skills and knowledge of those involved and to support income diversification.

In **phase 2** a final cohort of 15 organisations will move through to the remainder of the Blueprint programme. These organisations will have identified opportunities for development and will have the appropriate governance and strategic buy-in to commit to the remaining four years of the programme.

The 15 organisations in phase 2 will be able to access financial support over the four years via a range of investment grants that will help them free up capacity, test new income generating ideas and invest in, and incentivise, financial growth.

The organisations who do not automatically proceed to phase 2 will continue to be supported through a range of specialist advice and will be invited to attend the tailored masterclasses programmed in phase 2.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE Phase 1

The first phase of Blueprint is open to up to 30 organisations. It commences in January 2022 and runs until June 2022.

This phase includes completing six training days and participating in cohort learning, advice and support. Phase 1 will lay the foundations for building long-term financial strength, looking at topics such as creative resilience, leading change, building financial sustainability and purpose-driven governance.

The six training days will be structured as below ▶

DAY 1

Introduction to Blueprint
20th January 2022

Participants will come together to set their objectives for the programme and explore the routes available to diversify their income.

DAY 2

Creative Resilience with Mark Robinson
17th February 2022

Mark Robinson is a writer, researcher, facilitator, strategist, coach, editor, and never bored. The vision Mark brings to every room is of working with others to make culture that opens up (rather than closes down) possibilities. Mark will be using tools from his latest publication *'Tactics for the Tightrope'*.

Part manifesto, part toolkit, *'Tactics for the Tightrope'* shows how creative resilience can be a process of resistance not co-option, and can help anyone connect, collaborate and multiply the voices of creative communities, to move from hurt to hope.

DAY 3

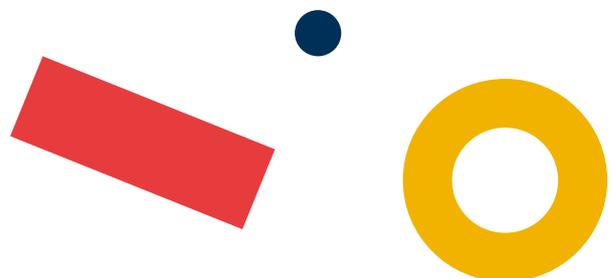
Leading for Change with Dorothy McKee
9th March 2022

Dorothy McKee is an Occupational Psychologist with an MA in change management and is an accredited Coach and Mentor. She has been instrumental in the development of numerous in-house leadership development programmes.

Many of the challenges navigated by cultural organisations are common to those faced by leaders in other areas of life:

- How to stay solvent in an ongoing financial crisis
- How to engage digitally-connected and networked individuals
- How to work in less carbon-intensive and more environmentally sustainable ways

Whilst these similarities exist, we do appreciate that cultural organisations are different from other organisations and as such face their own distinctive challenges. Dorothy will offer practical leadership tools for navigating these obstacles.



PROGRAMME STRUCTURE Phase 1

DAY 4

Building Financial Sustainability with Niamh Goggin & Helen McKenna

21st April 2022

Before taking up a full-time lecturing post at Ulster University Business School, Helen McKenna worked as a consultant for 20 years, specialising in financial and business planning for third sector organisations.

Niamh Goggin has worked in charity and social investment finance in Northern Ireland and Europe since 1991. She has worked with A&BNI on a series of projects, which ultimately culminated in the design of the Blueprint programme.

In this session, Niamh and Helen will explore what long-term financial sustainability means for arts organisations. Using practical steps, the day will involve looking at strategic approaches to support participating organisations in achieving financial security, diversifying income streams and achieving their missions.

DAY 5

Purpose Driven Governance with Anne Orr

19th May 2022

Anne Orr is the founder of Boards123, a platform that allows boards of directors to measure profit, purpose, diversity and impact.

This session will encourage participants to consider how good governance structures encourage arts organisations to create value

through entrepreneurship, artistic innovation, development and exploration.

They also provide accountability and control systems in keeping with the risks involved. In order to achieve the kind of change required for long-term sustainability, boards need to be cohesive. Trustees and boards who have a clear role and a clear focus on the purpose of their organisation are more productive and motivated, and in turn will be stronger for the future.

DAY 6

Presentation Day

23rd June 2022

Across the programme there will be facilitated peer-to-peer learning and collaboration among the Blueprint participants. In this final session in phase 1 participants will come together to share learning with each other and their board representatives.

As noted above, at the end of phase 1 a final cohort of 15 organisations will move through to the remainder of the Blueprint programme. These organisations will have identified opportunities for development and will have the appropriate governance and strategic buy-in to commit to the remaining four years of the programme.

The organisations who do not automatically proceed to phase 2 will continue to be supported through a range of specialist advice and will be invited to attend the tailored masterclasses programmed in phase 2.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE Phase 2

The 15 organisations in phase 2 will be supported over the remaining four years to develop and build on their identified income opportunity. This could be a product or service that has income potential or simply a new fundraising approach that they have not tried before.

Across these four years the 15 companies will receive additional training via masterclasses, which will be tailored to themes relevant to the product or service that they are focusing on or developing. They will continue to receive tailored mentoring and specialist technical assistance, and work with other participants to share learning through peer learning sets.

In addition to the capacity-building training, cohort learning and mentoring support, these 15 organisations will be able to access a range of investment grants over the remaining four years, which constitute over 54% of the overall programme budget. These investment grants will help support the participating organisations to build a strong balance sheet for the longer term through increasing income and building reserves. This process of 'capitalisation' will allow the organisations to grow capital for future innovation and de-risk the process for them.

THESE INVESTMENT GRANTS WILL INCLUDE:

- **Capacity Grants** each year to enable organisations to free up administrative time or capacity to focus on the programme.
- **Research & Development Grants** each year so participants have investment to help research and test product ideas and market opportunities.
- **Capitalisation Grants** where targets will be set each year to help build financial strength on the balance sheet of the participating organisations.

Blueprint's focus on long-term financial sustainability delivered by the capacity-building and 'capitalisation' elements makes this a truly radical programme.

PROGRAMME CRITERIA

Due to the transformational objectives and ambitions of the Blueprint programme, participating organisations will need to demonstrate that they (and their boards) are able and willing to invest the time required.

YOUR COMMITMENT

- Attendance by you at all scheduled programme activities
- Completion of mentoring
- Commitment to programme monitoring and evaluation

YOUR BOARD'S COMMITMENT

If your board are bought into this development process from the start, then your vision and ideas will be nurtured and supported internally from day one, which will help you effect real organisational change.

To ensure this vital dynamic is in place, your board must commit to the programme, and also nominate appropriate board members to attend a limited number of key activities.

ENTRY CRITERIA

We are seeking applications from organisations which:

- Are either a Registered Charity or constituted as a non-profit making entity in Northern Ireland
- Have at least one staff member at minimum 20 hours per week who can commit to the programme
- Have an average turnover in the 3 financial years ended March 2020 of between £25k and £500k
- Have a minimum of 10% earned income (on average) over the 3 financial years ended March 2020
- Are considered to be 'a going concern'; i.e. there is a reasonable expectation that the organisation has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future
- Can demonstrate they have the ambition, organisational culture and time to commit to the Blueprint programme
- Representatives from the board support and can commit to participating in elements of the programme
- Can demonstrate that they are open to a spirit of cohort learning and collaboration with other programme participants
- Are willing to commit to contributing to the programme evaluation and sharing learning for the benefit of the wider sector

Please note Arts & Business NI welcomes applications from across Northern Ireland and across all art forms.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply please complete the application form found on the remaining pages of this document and return by email to a.bradley@artsandbusinessni.org.uk.

Completed applications must be received by 12 noon, Wednesday 1 December 2021.

GOT A QUESTION OR QUERY YOU WANT TO DISCUSS?

The Arts & Business NI team will be offering pre-booked advice surgeries to give support on application submissions. For details on how to book these sessions please see the A&BNI website or for any other general Blueprint query please contact:

Brona Whittaker, Head of Arts:

b.whittaker@artsandbusinessni.org.uk

028 9073 5155

Adam Bradley, Arts Programme Co-ordinator:

a.bradley@artsandbusinessni.org.uk

028 9073 5156

If disability access issues will affect your ability to complete the form please let us know and we will support you in finding alternative methods that allow you to submit your application.

Arts & Business NI would like to thank the following funders for their investment and support for the Blueprint programme.



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Blueprint Application Form

When designing this application process Arts & Business NI has been mindful that all cultural organisations have stretched resources at this time. Please ensure you read the information contained in pages 2-8 of this document, before completing this form, to ensure that the Blueprint programme is right for you. Please also refer to the programme criteria on page 6 when answering each question as your application will be assessed against this criteria.

All organisations in phase 1 can apply for £500 to support them in committing the time to the programme in this pre-grant phase.

If you have a query about any aspect of making an application or if disability access issues will affect your ability to complete the form, please contact:

Brona Whittaker, Head of Arts
b.whittaker@artsandbusinessni.org.uk

Adam Bradley, Arts Programme Co-ordinator
a.bradley@artsandbusinessni.org.uk

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The deadline for applications is 12 noon on Wednesday 1 December 2021.

Please return your completed form via email to Adam Bradley,
a.bradley@artsandbusinessni.org.uk

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We will acknowledge receipt of applications. If you do not hear from us within 7 working days of the closing date please get in contact. We regret that we cannot accept responsibility for delivery problems beyond our control.

The information you provide on this application is treated in confidence and in line with the Arts & Business NI Data Protection Policy and Privacy Policy.

PART 1

Staff Contact Details (Lead contact for the Blueprint programme)

Title:

Full Name:

Job Title:

Organisation:

Address:

Postcode:

Email Address:

Contact Number:



PART 2

Organisation Details

Company type

Please state that you are either a registered charity or constituted as a non-profit making entity:

Staff Members

Do you have at least one staff member at minimum 20 hours per week who can commit to the programme?

Y / N

If Yes, please state how many staff members your organisation has:

PART 3

Financial Details

As Blueprint is primarily aimed at supporting organisations to become more financially resilient, we require some financial information about your organisation to enable us to make an informed assessment about your eligibility.

We ask that you share the following information, which will be treated in confidence:

1. Average annual turnover over the last 3 financial years (2017/18–2019/20):
2. For the year ended 31 March 2020 what percentage of your income was 'Earned Income':
3. Unrestricted reserves at 31 March 2020: _____ at 31 March 2021: _____
4. Projected surplus / (deficit) at 31 March 2022:
5. Estimated core operating costs in the current financial year (2021/22):

Please attach the last 3 years' financial accounts (either audited or independently examined) when returning this application via email.

PART 4

Your Board

Please list below details of two of your board members who are supportive of this application and who are willing to participate in elements of the programme.

Note: this will include a board member attending the sessions on Thursday 19 May 2022 and Thursday 23 June 2022.

BOARD MEMBER 1

Name:

Role:

Email Address:

Contact Number:

BOARD MEMBER 2

Name:

Role:

Email Address:

Contact Number:

PART 5

Statement on Meeting Programme Criteria

1. Please tell us how your organisation meets each of the entry criteria for Blueprint (please refer to overall programme criteria on page 7). *No more than 750 words.*

PART 5

Statement on Meeting Programme Criteria

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2. What does your organisation hope to achieve in terms of measurable impacts through participation in Blueprint? *No more than 500 words.*

PART 6

Declaration of Commitment to Blueprint

If you are accepted onto Blueprint you must commit to take part in all elements of the programme, attend all training days and complete all practical work between sessions.

By completing the below, you agree that your organisation and board are fully committed to the Blueprint programme.

Staff Contact Name:

Board Member Name:

Staff Contact Signature:

Board Member Signature:

Additional Information:

Please use this space to add anything else that you wish to share about your board and organisation's commitment to this application and opportunity. *No more than 100 words.*

- Your organisation's last 3 years' financial accounts
 - Your fully completed application form
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