

## Case study

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# Creating a community of philanthropists united by a theme or collective

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*Substantial cutbacks to public budgets supporting culture in the Netherlands, as in other countries, mean that private investment and funding is more essential than ever before.*

This piece will use an anonymous case study, for the sensitivities of the donors and the member organisations of this charity, founded to support the advancement of the arts in the Netherlands, and throughout the world, by encouraging excellence and growth in the sector.

The foundation originated when three of the Netherlands' leading cultural organisations had the idea to unite forces and launch an international fundraising scheme as a collective, to strengthen their offer and their case for support.

## **Objectives**

The foundation aims to create a community of philanthropic individuals and businesses who share a passion for the Arts, a love of Dutch culture and are committed to ensuring it can thrive into the future.

## **Target Groups**

Individuals and corporate entities that share an affiliation with the Netherlands and its culture.

## **Process**

The three member organisations were selected on the basis that they were all pre-eminent in their field and between them presented a diverse range of artistic media.

A network of known Dutch expats living in London were invited to a series of networking events, showcasing the work of the three artistic organisations that the charity would support. The charity received significant support from key individuals including the then Dutch Ambassador, who acted as strong advocates of the initiative, and in turn gave confidence to those who were unfamiliar with the Arts and/or cultural philanthropy.

All donors were united by their connection to the Netherlands or to Dutch culture, and therefore were made to feel as though they had a place within the group, and a reason to support the charity.

The foundation was launched at an event at the Dutch Ambassador's residence, after a period of six months of preparation including cultivation of prospective donors, agreement of the charity model, and protocol agreement between the three member organisations.

The initiative was launched whilst the charity was being established. There are currently four trustees; each member organisation nominates a trustee for the board, and the Chairman is an independent appointment.

Individual donors give a suggested donation of £5,000 and corporate donors give £10,000. As standard, there are four events each year. The purpose of these events is to promote the activity of the charity and key projects being funded, and develop donor interest and understanding in the charitable objects of the foundation. There is usually an event for each of the member organisations and one that combines all three organisations (the Annual Dinner).

## **Outcomes**

Whilst many of these individuals were passionate supporters of the Arts already, some were relatively unfamiliar or had not previously considered being an active supporter of them.

By becoming a part of this donor group, individuals are introduced to new art forms and, as such, the foundation plays an important role in developing cultural philanthropy.

For example, the work of the one of the organisations was relatively unknown to some of the donors at first, but the innovative choreography of this modern ballet company quickly captured the hearts and minds of the group.

Now, donors will introduce friends to the charity and invite them to events where they can experience each of these three organisations in intimate settings.

## Key points for effective practice

- Develop a uniting theme for your cause.
- Appoint strong advocates of the charity that will give confidence to prospective donors, and extend the network of the organisation.
- Through this commonality between donors, create a strong philanthropic community.
- Devise a programme of unique events through which donors can engage with the artists/choreographers/curators.

## Conclusions and recommendations

This foundation is a successful demonstration of how people can be brought together through shared identity, experience and passions, to create a strong philanthropic community. In addition to this, the charity also demonstrates how, by uniting these three pre-eminent organisations, individuals can be introduced to new art forms and experiences.

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