

Theatre Nemo

Evaluation of the funding received from the Enterprise Ready fund

Commissioned by Scottish government

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Evaluation of the funding from Enterprise Ready Fund (ERF) Investment of £47,061 for the hiring of a Business Development Manager, new computers, personalised database system and for an independent researcher to increase efficiency, improve services and promote mental health awareness.

Background

Theatre Nemo is a community arts organisation and social enterprise that was created in 1998 to support and give a voice to adults with mental health and social issues. It began as a Sunday workshop in the local community and has expanded to involve many participants and staff from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds.

Theatre Nemo delivers arts projects such as drama, Taiko drumming, music classes and animation. Projects are conducted within the community, prisons and psychiatric hospitals with the aim to improve confidence, well-being, mental health and life skills. It further provides a means of stimulation through creativity for excluded or disadvantaged people and encourages participation and involvement in the community.



Theatre Nemo also acts as a means of support for people facing liberation from prison or discharge from hospital and helps to re-integrate its service users back into their communities. Using art as a medium, the organisation aims to break down barriers of stigma and discrimination for those suffering from mental health impairment. Theatre Nemo now intends to develop further as a social enterprise and increase income generation in order to provide more artistic projects for those suffering from mental health issues.

The Issue

Theatre Nemo found it difficult to manage both the creative projects as well as progress the social enterprise to increase its services and business relationships. This meant that there was a lack of business development and creative projects had little chance of increasing and reaching a larger number of possible participants. It was felt that an extra member of staff with the appropriate experience would be required to take on this specific role.

Further to this, Theatre Nemo's IT systems were out-dated and inefficient. A more effective database system was needed to organise Theatre Nemo's files electronically and proficiently so that project information could be more clearly recorded and updated.

Lastly, there was a need to employ an independent researcher to produce a research report that evidenced the benefits of using art and creativity as a form of therapy for those with poor mental health. This would make it easier for other agencies, particularly in the prison services, to better understand the work Theatre Nemo is conducting as well as develop partnerships and win contracts to increase services and projects across Scotland.

Social Impact

There have been a variety of social impacts created due to the ERF investment for Theatre Nemo and the local community. Firstly, due to the ERF funding, the organisation was able to recruit and hire a new Business

Development Manager. This has enabled Theatre Nemo to increase joint working with other mental health services across Scotland such as the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH). As Theatre Nemo's Project Co-ordinator commented: "Partnerships are an essential component to improving services. It not only improves the outcomes for the clients but also allows services to share resources providing better value for money. Partnership working promotes continuity which makes it easier for the service users...they get to see people they already know."

With the help of the ERF funding, Theatre Nemo has been able to develop and implement a new training programme aimed at prison service staff that aims to educate prison officers on mental health issues. Through training, staff will be better equipped to deal with prisoners suffering from impaired mental health and prisoners will benefit from an improved understanding of their current issues and needs.



The ERF investment has also contributed to providing projects such as Taiko drumming in Cornton Vale Prison. Prisoners suffering from poor mental health stated that because of the drumming they had seen positive

improvements in their confidence, attitude and socialisation skills. One woman stated: "It's really improved my mood and attitude," and talked about the positive impact it had had on another prisoner: "She really came out of her shell, started opening up to us, the other girls and talking to everybody."

As well as prisons, Theatre Nemo has also been able to provide more services for psychiatric hospitals across Scotland. This has meant that more people can participate in artistic projects which help to alleviate stress and isolation and increase self-esteem and confidence in patients. The Chief Executive of Theatre Nemo stated that: "These are people who feel threatened, anxious, lonely and for those people to start doing drumming or animation, it opens up a whole new state of confidence and gives them the ability to talk about issues that are troubling them."

Due to the ERF investment, Theatre Nemo can increase its focus on income generation and self-sustainability as well as provide support, stimulation and skills training for the local community. New guitar lessons are being set up to help disadvantaged members of the community combat social isolation, increase their confidence and improve general well-being. On the topic of using music as a form of therapy, one of the Musical Facilitators at Theatre Nemo commented: "It's more than just a music lesson; it's about impacting mental health and making a positive difference."

Theatre Nemo has been able to purchase new computers and update the company's digital database with the ERF

funding. This has improved efficiency within the organisation and enabled easier communications with other service providers and users.

Families of service users have indirectly benefitted from the investment as they have noticed a positive difference in their family members. Increased confidence levels, self-esteem and improved relationships have been observed due to participating in creative projects with Theatre Nemo. This has led to prisoners and patients being more engaged with support providers upon their liberation and helps to facilitate integration back into the community. This extra support, increased life skills and self-assurance also contributes in helping to avoid recidivism.



Without the ERF funding less people would be engaged and participating in creative programmes and there would be a loss of security for the staff and volunteers involved in the organisation. The investment has enabled Theatre Nemo to positively impact the community on a larger scale and help support and encourage many of its vulnerable and disadvantaged members.

Contribution to Prevention

The ERF investment has contributed towards preventing negative outcomes identified by the Scottish Government's prevention and welfare reform strategies. Theatre Nemo is focused on supporting prisoners inside and outside of prison through education, skills learning and creative therapy. In return, this decreases the likelihood of re-offending as ex-offenders are integrated back into their communities and given new forms of responsibility and purpose. This helps to improve confidence and self-esteem which can contribute to decreased recidivism and a positive sense of self.

Theatre Nemo also helps its service users to access key support organisations which can lead to training, volunteering and employment. This helps to combat unemployment, homelessness and motivates individuals to make positive life choices and engage with key support services which may lead to extended periods of non-offending.