

Case Study: **Crossings** <http://www.crossings.org.uk/>



Transforming lives through music and art

Founded in 2009, Crossings provides a weekly programme of arts based activity for refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, local people and their children, with a particular focus on music. To date almost 300 people from more than 40 different countries have participated.

Choirs, bands and individuals regularly perform live, increasingly at a national level, and have begun to record, distribute and broadcast their work more widely. Members of Crossings also devise and lead school and community based workshops, for all ages, promoting and celebrating the values of multiculturalism.

The need for support

Having achieved significant success in the first three years of operation as an entirely volunteer run organisation, by 2012 Trustees identified the need to consolidate and strengthen in order to make the most of opportunities ahead and to avoid potential 'burn-out' of key individuals due to an increasingly demanding workload.

What we did

With initial funding support from the Northern Rock Foundation, the production of a business plan and fundraising strategy was prioritised. Over the course of three months Robert led the Chair and Board of Trustees through a process culminating in the production of Crossings' first Business Plan and Fundraising Strategy. Activity included a visioning exercise with Trustees, consultation with Crossings' Members, risk analysis, budget forecasting, analysis and mapping of funding opportunities and detailed action planning.

During this time Robert also led the successful submission of a funding application to Arts Council England, providing substantial funding support for the artistic development of Crossings' members alongside on going organisational development. With this new funding support in place, Robert continued to work with Crossings throughout 2013 with a particular focus on implementing the Fundraising Strategy through leading the submission of key strategic funding applications.

In 2014 Robert led the successful submission of Crossings' second strategic funding bid to Arts Council England and is now mentoring their Programme Manager with a particular focus on building capacity and skills in relation to evaluation, strategic planning, fundraising and the successful delivery of a North East region-wide feasibility study into the formation of a coalition of arts organisations and projects working with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

What changed as a result

- Crossings' activity has grown significantly, both in terms of hours per week of activity and people engaged, including dedicated activity for children and activity in new art form areas.
- Income has grown significantly, from around £15k per year in 2009 to almost £80k in 2015/16.
- Crossings now employs a full-time Programme Manager, with permanent office space, alongside meeting, workshop and performance spaces.
- Crossings is now leading the exploration of longer-term North East region-wide approaches to nurturing and developing artists who are also refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

Keys to success

- Taking a facilitation/capacity building approach throughout – encouraging, supporting, empowering and developing the people who lead and experience the work.
- Building on the inherent strengths in the organisation and recognising preferred 'ways of doing things', that work, rather than imposing an unwieldy outside approach.
- Being focused, structured, methodical throughout – so we never lose sight of where we are trying to get to and why.
- Being a good critical friend, available when needed, but not afraid to challenge.

I cannot speak too highly of Robert's strategic skills, his thorough research of his subject (including assessment of needs) and his enormous attention to detail and to producing the best possible result for his clients. Lucy Fairley, Founder and Chair of Crossings