

ELEVATING ARTISTS SHAPING FUTURES

IMPACT REPORT → No. 1

THE SUPPORTING
ACT FOUNDATION

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FOREWORD

Dear friends and supporters,

The last three years have been nothing short of extraordinary—a period when creativity is more accessible than ever, and yet the competition for attention, engagement, and funding has never been fiercer. As a parent to two teenagers charting their own paths, I find myself endlessly debating at dinner how to balance passion, education, and preparation for a future that feels both full of promise and uncertainty. At sixteen, they're already expected to plan for a world eight years from now—a daunting task when so much remains uncontrollable.

Against this backdrop of rapid change, I'm immensely proud of what we've built together at The Supporting Act Foundation. Since our first grants in 2022, we have honoured our commitment to award unconditional support, distributing 75 grants totalling €1.8m across Europe and beyond. As you will see in this report, these funds have fuelled community-led projects, international residencies, and capacity-building initiatives—affirming our belief that artists, when trusted and empowered, can shape culture in profound ways.

In 2026 the foundation will face an important milestone, as the financial support WeTransfer has committed since its founding comes to an end. To ensure our grant programs not only survive, but thrive, we will need to broaden our community of supporters and strengthen our philanthropic partnerships. If you share our conviction in the transformative power of creativity, I hope you will consider making a gift today. Your donation will help us sustain unrestricted grants—and, more importantly, the bold ideas and courageous voices of emerging artists—for years to come.

Thank you for your ongoing belief in creativity's potential to unite, inspire, and challenge us. Together, we will continue to stand with artists—today and every day beyond.

With gratitude,

Damian Bradfield

Chair of the Board, The Supporting Act Foundation

Damian Bradfield — Photo by Joshua Tarn

WHAT'S THIS REPORT ABOUT?

In an arts funding landscape that is increasingly unpredictable, we work to empower emerging artists as well as the nonprofits that work to amplify, support, and enable them.

Since 2022 we have given €1.8m in grants to 40 artists and 35 nonprofits, utilizing a trust-based approach to grant-making that empowers, fosters creativity and diversity, and enables emerging artists to thrive, achieving their creative potential in spite of the challenges they face.

We understand the challenges emerging artists face. Established by WeTransfer in 2021 as an independent non-profit, The Supporting Act Foundation draws on WeTransfer's 15 years of experience working closely with artists and empowering them to succeed. Through our own research and that of our collaborators, we aim to positively impact the lives of emerging artists. In this report, we examine our impact across four key areas:

Stability: Improving living conditions for emerging artists by reducing financial precarity.

Time: Increasing time available for artistic, personal, and organizational development and growth.

Community: Fostering connection and collaboration among artists, while expanding reach and capacity for nonprofits.

Trust: Boosting self-confidence thanks to the trust and equity that's built into our approach to grant-making.

This report will explain who we are and what we do. It delves into our impact on the lives, work, and communities of our grantees, introducing you to some of the amazing artists and organizers we support along the way. You can find out more about our grantees [here](#).

The report concludes with a look to the future—sharing our aspirations for growth and increased impact, and our ultimate goal: to positively impact the lives and careers of more than 100,000 emerging artists in more than 100 countries by 2035.

€1.4m

In unrestricted grants to arts-focused nonprofits

€400,000

In bursaries for emerging artists

50+

Countries where our grantees are delivering their work, supporting other artists and those from underrepresented groups*

35

Nonprofits supported through our Impact Grants and Community Grants

40

Emerging artists received our Creative Bursary

14,000

Estimated number of people from underrepresented groups around the world who've benefited from our grants*

WHO WE ARE

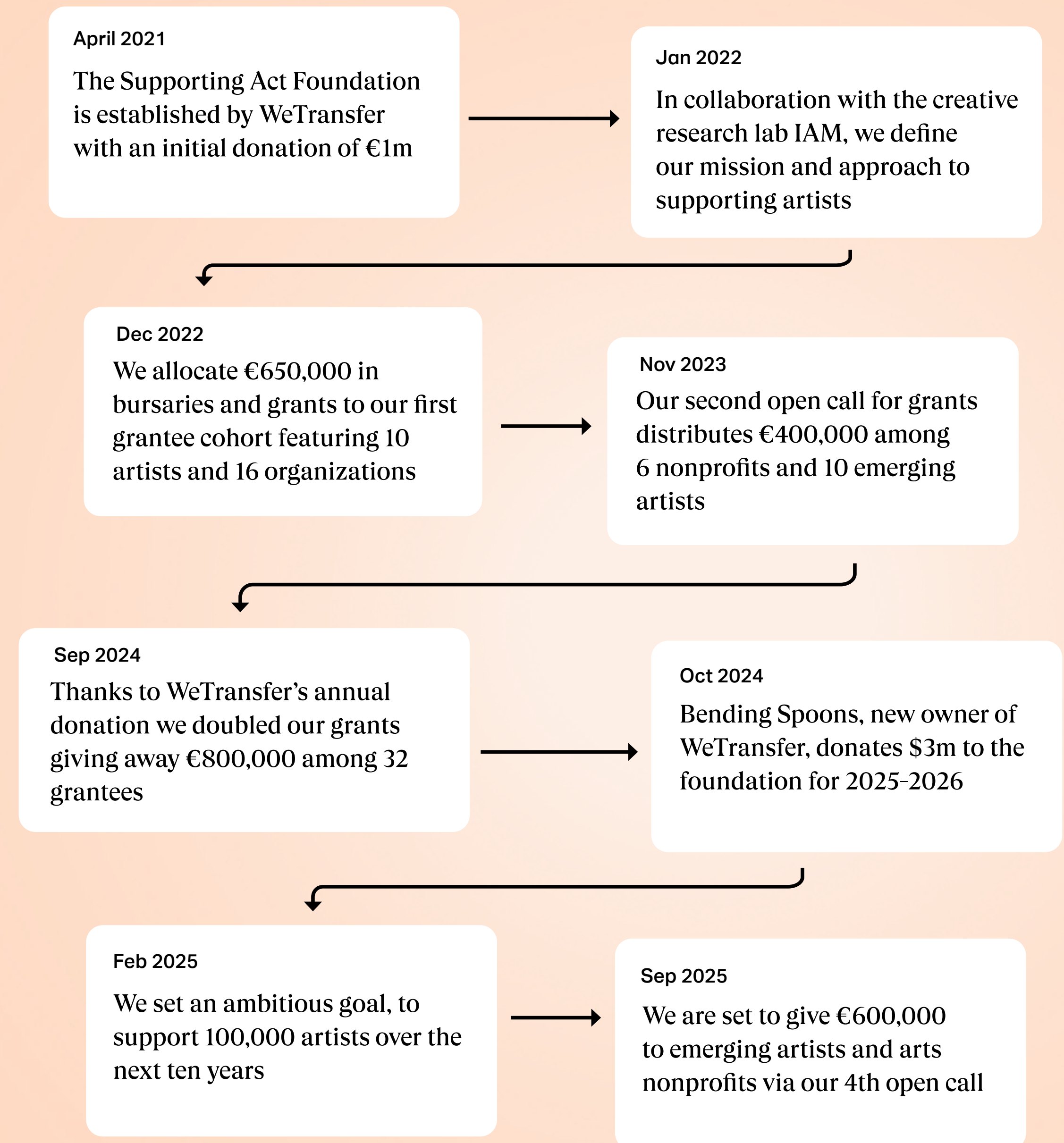
Our mission is to enable emerging artists who are dedicated to fulfilling their creative potential, prioritizing those from underrepresented groups. We also support ambitious nonprofit organizations, helping them to create more equitable art scenes and fostering opportunities for growth and expansion in their work.

The Supporting Act Foundation is a self-governing nonprofit established by WeTransfer in 2021 to create better opportunities for emerging artists from underrepresented groups. Between 2022 and 2024—the period covered by this report—we supported 35 arts-focused nonprofits and 40 emerging artists, and gave €1.8m in unrestricted grants and bursaries. These grants have positively impacted an estimated 14,000 people from marginalized groups in more than 50 countries.

At the foundation we do things differently.

We're dedicated to supporting emerging artists and taking time to understand the challenging realities they face. We believe that when artists thrive we all benefit, and we know that creative growth is powered by time, stability, community, and trust. That's why we give trust-based grants to emerging artists and arts nonprofits, with no strings attached.

Milestones



WHO WE SUPPORT

We believe in empowering emerging* artists, supporting arts-focused nonprofits, and nurturing creative communities. Why? Because we're convinced it's essential to building a more vibrant, inclusive, cultural future for all of us.

At the heart of our approach is a commitment to putting artists first. We remain behind the scenes so that artists can take center-stage. Their vision shapes our purpose, and their success is our goal. We listen to the people we work with, and trust them to tell us what they and their communities need. We work tirelessly to remove both visible and invisible barriers to their success.

The challenges our grantees face

We've identified five key challenges that emerging artists encounter. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these challenges disproportionately impact those from underrepresented groups:

- Dedicating time and focus to one's practice, as an emerging artist, is hard due to a lack of stable income
- Facing various forms of discrimination, most commonly in the early stages of careers
- Struggling with mental health issues, as a result of financial uncertainty, loneliness, or isolation
- A lack of access to affordable housing, education, workspaces or equipment

- Having to deal with the elitist dynamics of the art market and the myth of meritocracy in the arts

The arts-focused nonprofits we support also face a variety of challenges that we're working to help them overcome or lessen through our approach to grant-making. They are:

- Financial uncertainty due to a lack of stable income
- Diminishing public funding for arts and culture across Europe and other regions
- Most grants given to artistic and community-focused nonprofits are short-term or project-based, meaning they seldom cover operational or infrastructure costs

We work to improve the living conditions of emerging artists and the working conditions of the nonprofits that promote and support them.

**We define an emerging artist as someone likely to have been pursuing their practice for less than a decade, who's in the process of developing their artistic voice, and is establishing a foothold in their respective arena.*



Beirut Summer School — Community Grant

JAIL TIME RECORDS

Founded by Dione Roach and Steve Happi, AKA Vidou H, Jail Time Records is a collective of musicians, producers, and filmmakers who create self-sustaining music and arts programs in prisons and with former-detainees in Cameroon and Burkina Faso.

The organization works with limited resources, notably in Douala, Cameroon, where it built the first recording studio inside an African prison. The nonprofit has since then created two more studios, one in the MACO prison in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, and another which is focused on the rehabilitation of former prisoners. They find, nourish, and support artistic talent from marginalized communities, seeking creative solutions to social reintegration, and working to change society’s perception of imprisonment.

Read more about Jail Time Records’ work, in [our interview with them](#).

“I think [the grant] gave us that kind of mental space to feel comfortable with what we were doing and to try out new stuff. We went to Burkina Faso, we created a studio in the prison of Ouagadougou. We could make more video clips, we could work more with artists that had come out of prison... It [gave] us the time and means to experiment independently and to come up with ideas and solutions.”

— Dione Roach, Jail Time Records

Our support

Impact Grant 2022

Grant amount

€50,000

Location

**Douala, Cameroon
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso**

Website

jailtimerecords.com



WHERE OUR GRANTEES MAKE THEIR IMPACT

To date, the 35 nonprofits we've supported through the Impact and Community Grant programs have had a positive impact on artists and their local or online communities in over 50 countries.

To learn more about them, click on a country in the map below or browse the Grantee Directory on our website.

[Visit grantee directory](#)

WHAT WE DO

The Supporting Act Foundation offers grants to emerging artists and nonprofits through annual open calls. Since 2022, we have run three grant programs, each designed to offer recipients optimal financial support and creative freedom combined with minimal reporting or oversight. We believe our grantees benefit from freedom and trust, and we have learned that our support goes further when we work with them as partners. In addition to funding, we offer non-financial support through promotion, networking opportunities, and workshops.

Our approach

We employ a trust-based approach to philanthropy. Our grants are unrestricted, meaning they aren't tied to specific projects and we don't dictate how funds can or should be spent. This gives the organizations and artists that inspire us the agency and security they need to pursue their goals and fulfil their creative potential.

For the review and selection process that follows our open calls, we form an independent jury made up of artists, organizers, curators, educators and former grantees to help us score applications and decide where our funding goes.

We take an intersectional approach to the arts, avoiding reductive or prescriptive labels when it comes to the artists and practices we support. Our grantees are unified by the challenges they face and their commitment to overcoming them.

[Learn more about our grantees here](#)

Impact Grant

Through this ongoing program we allocate grants of €50,000 to each recipient over two years, empowering artist-led and arts-focused nonprofit organizations that demonstrate community-driven approaches to using art for social change. We particularly focus on those offering support to emerging artists from underrepresented groups. These grants are unrestricted, meaning organizations can use them for administrative and running costs, greatly reducing financial precarity, and enabling them to expand their reach.

€1.2m

to 25 arts-focused nonprofits

Creative Bursary

Between 2022 and 2024, this program primarily focused on supporting undergraduate students in their final year of studies as they embarked upon their artistic careers. Each beneficiary received a monthly income of €1,000 over a ten month period. The bursary was designed to provide the stability artists need to start developing their art practice and finding their voice.

€400k

to 40 emerging artists

Community Grant

This program ran between 2022-2023 and gave ten unrestricted grants of €20,000 to support initiatives that were building networks of emerging artists, particularly from underrepresented groups.

€200k

to support the completion of ten projects

BLACK GIRLS GLOW

Black Girls Glow is a feminist nonprofit, founded by Ama Asantewa Diaka, seeking to increase the active participation and leadership presence of women and girls in their communities.

The nonprofit works to create spaces for female artists, musicians, poets and producers, harnessing the power of art to address social and economic issues affecting Ghanaian youth and women.

The organization brings visibility to women’s issues and explores ways in which art can be used to solve them, providing innovative programs that foster collaboration, community and leadership development. Following seven years of hard work and seven albums being released, the organization’s music program was re-named the KOSHKASound Residency this year, while its sexual health program, You Are Cared For, entered

its second year of awareness building. New to the roster of programs this year was Girl Atom, an intentional space focused on self-discovery through engagement with art.

“Since receiving the grant, we’ve been able to significantly strengthen our organization. One of the biggest shifts has been in our capacity—we added one more staff member to our administrative team, improving efficiency and sustainability. The grant also allowed us to host a second edition of our new community initiative, reaching 98 women without any cost to them.”

— Ama Asantewa Diaka,
Black Girls Glow

Our support

Impact Grant 2024

Grant amount

€50,000

Location

Accra, Ghana

Website

blackgirlsglow.org



OUR IMPACT

How do we define impact?

Based on our understanding of the challenges faced by emerging artists and nonprofits, we've identified four key areas where we see and measure our grants' positive impact on the lives of those we support: stability, time, community and trust.

How do we measure our impact?

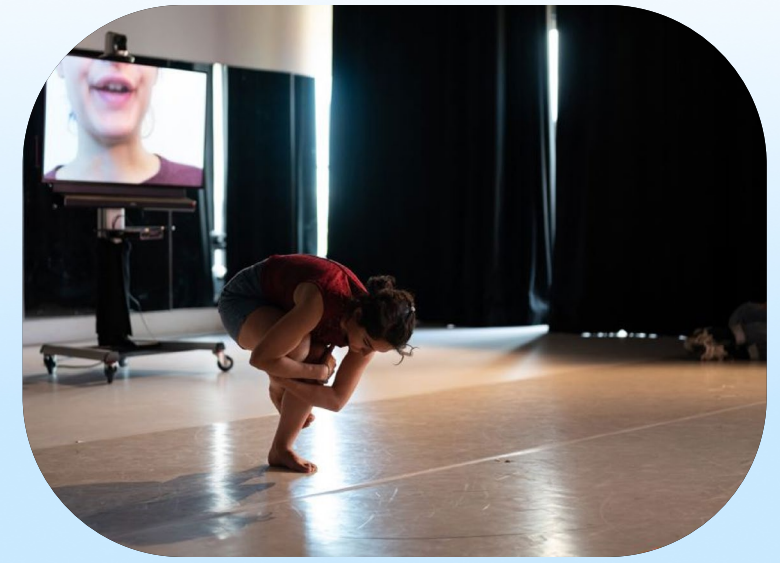
We listen to those we support. Our impact analysis is informed by grantee interviews, surveys, and testimonials, which inform and drive our own desk-based research into the needs of emerging artists. We also draw insights from the hundreds of applications we receive annually through our open calls.

The insights shared in the following pages are the result of nine months of research and analysis which looked at the changes in the lives, practices and communities of the 40 emerging artists and 35 nonprofits we supported between 2022 and 2024.

This insight-gathering gives us the information we need to guide our work. It enables us to keep track through key metrics, of the direct and indirect outcomes of our programs, which allows us to interrogate our approach and constantly improve our processes, increasing our impact.

Stability

Improved living conditions for emerging artists thanks to reduced financial precarity.



Time

An increase in time available for artistic, organizational, and personal development and growth.



Community

The acceleration of networking and connection-making for artists, and the expansion of reach and capacity for nonprofits.



Trust

The boosting self-confidence thanks to the trust and equity that's built into our approach to grant-making.



Our impact

STABILITY

Our grants give nonprofits and artists the stability and headspace needed to grow and develop.

Freed from having to secure basic income they pursued their practices with renewed energy and focus, reconnected with the communities they exist within and represent, dedicated time and resources to reflection, and reattributed time and effort to personal care and the nurturing of relationships.

Grantees welcomed having the stability and space needed to develop as artists and practitioners, to self-analyze, explore, and—crucially—to grow.

Reduced stress, increased mental bandwidth, and a sense of being trusted and invested in were key benefits of our programs. These contributed to feelings of happiness and security, fueling creative and organizational growth while benefiting mental health and well-being.



Spit It Out — Impact Grant



Halar Soomro — Creative Bursary



Diren Demir — Creative Bursary

Reduced financial uncertainty

Our multi-year grants offered many of the nonprofits we support time to take stock. Those with annual budgets similar to the grant sum were able to take the opportunity to review and critically engage with their missions and ways of working, opening their practices up to constructive critique and redefining both their big-picture goals and day-to-day processes. Mid-sized operations engaged external support in areas like accountancy or production and focused on problem-solving, while the larger-scale nonprofits we support put the funds toward improving organizational stability.

62%

of organisations were able to increase the number of paid staff members or increase the existing wages during the grant period

The flexibility of our trust-based approach allowed grantees to use funding to cover overheads, pay staff and volunteers, meet unforeseen financial hurdles, and to finance expert input. Multiple grantees described our financial support as ‘a pillow’ or ‘safety net.’ This feeling of comparative safety allowed organizations the confidence to tackle major structural reviews, undertake long term planning, and set aside daily fundraising needs in order to improve ways of working and re-define goals.

Addressing financial pressure

For the emerging artists who received our support, the reliable influx of funds allowed for long running and stress-inducing financial burdens, such as student or other debts, to be addressed. In some cases debts were settled within the first few months of a bursary being received.

Beyond the help our bursaries offered in meeting costs around living spaces, workspaces, and materials, a period of reliable income also allowed our grantees to engage with and overcome hurdles relating to immigration, such as visa costs. The reduction of pressure around these daily outgoings enabled grantees to start engaging with their environment in more constructive ways.

“[Writing grant applications] takes up so much time and energy. That’s why support from organisations like The Supporting Act Foundation has been really important. Over the past few years, they’ve provided long-term funding, which has been crucial because otherwise there’s always the stress of not knowing if there’ll be money to keep the work going.”

- Jail Time Records

Improved living conditions

Our grants offered emerging artists the means to improve their living conditions, for example by moving to better or more secure places of residence or being able to pay reliably for services and amenities. Reliable income can act as ‘guarantor’ in place of a trusted guardian in tenancy agreements, allowing individuals a route out of dangerous, restrictive, or stressful domestic situations. This is particularly important to grantees who lack a local familial or social network. Reduced anxiety around rent and living-costs for the period of the bursary allowed artists to reallocate time to themselves and their practices.



Planta Inclin — Impact Grant

“The amount [of funding] we got from The Supporting Act is very, very good because we can’t get this amount from our national systems.”

- Juan Onofri Barbato, Planta Inclin

“As female migrant founders, financial insecurity has often been our shadow. We’ve learned how to keep going—even when the budget was tight—but when The Supporting Act Foundation confirmed the grant, it felt like someone finally saw us and our mission. The “no strings attached” approach gave us room to breathe, dream and create.”

- Melisa Manrique, much cooler than yours



much cooler than yours — Impact Grant

Investing in people

All of the organizations we supported were able to increase their investment in people: nonprofits with fewer staff and volunteers often directing funds toward monthly salaries, mid-sized ones paying freelancers to take on time-consuming or specialized tasks, and larger nonprofits doing both, as well as starting important conversations with their collaborators about fair pay.

“Prior to receiving the grant, we were struggling to make ends meet. But now we’ve been able to focus on paying people fairly for their work. We had been volunteering a lot on top of our busy day jobs, which wasn’t sustainable. The grant is enabling paid work – to pay people to do good work.”

- York Anti Racist Collective

Grants enabled nonprofits’ artist-leaders to pay themselves a salary, allowing them to focus on their missions, instead of working second jobs.

Financial security enabled organizations to look ahead: to plan for and start to implement the next organizational life cycle while reducing or eliminating the high-risk volunteer-centric dynamic on which their activities relied.

Improved mental well-being

The period of predictable income provided by our grants helped manage stress levels among nonprofits’ teams and reduced fundraising workloads, allowing for a shift from ‘survival mode’ to re-engaging with core values and aims. While in some cases this ultimately translated to more work, crucially it was fulfilling work embedded in the organization’s mission.

95% of Creative Bursary recipients said the grant had a positive impact on their mental health and well-being

Emerging artists experienced a reduction in pressure to earn as a key driver of improved mental well-being. Grantees were able to give up on second or third jobs or, in some cases, ceased paid work altogether in order to focus on their artistic development while allocating funds toward activities that benefited their mental well-being, from visiting relatives to increased socializing and attention to their physical health.

The stability instilled by our grants allowed artists and those running nonprofits to return to creative ways of thinking, providing the head-space needed for beneficial introspection. For some this translated to re-evaluating their position in the art scene, for others, it meant having the peace and quiet to engage with the world and their work more philosophically. Freed from fear of immediate failure and resulting financial risks, grantees engaged with new ideas, and constructive confrontations with failure.



Bosla Arts — Impact Grant

Our impact

COMMUNITY

Our grants empower organizations to scale their operations, expanding both their reach and impact by increasing the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries, enhancing visibility, and extending community engagement.

Nonprofits with annual budgets similar to the grant sum generally focused grant use on securing physical spaces and designing new initiatives that welcomed more diverse audiences from their local communities. In the case of AfroDiaspora 2.0, this meant incorporating programming for children, while Jail Time Records established a second recording studio in a prison in Burkina Faso, extending the organization's reach and amplifying its positive impact.

More established organizations were able to formalize partnerships and initiate wider conversations within their sectors thanks to the grants they received. Espacio Común, for example, built alliances with universities and collaborated with other NGOs. Larger organizations also demonstrated structured approaches to strategic expansion: Impact Grant recipient AFIELD positioned itself as a resource hub for artists and cultural practitioners working on social projects that drive positive change and empower their communities, and Bosla Arts laid the groundwork for a network of freelance creatives which will foster future collaborations.



Beirut Summer School — Community Grant



York Anti Racist Collective — Impact Grant



Magical Women — Community Grant

The forming of positive interpersonal connections among grantees has been a powerful and uplifting outcome of our programming. These relationships highlight the foundation's role not only in advancing professional growth but also in cultivating networks of solidarity and mutual support.

Increase in number of direct beneficiaries

Our multi-year grants offered the nonprofits that we support the time and resources to scale up their operations in order to engage with and help more people. Jail Time Records's work, mentioned earlier in this report, offers a strong example of this potential for expansion of reach. With the opening of two more recording studios the nonprofit has managed to triple the amount of people affected by their initiatives. On top of that, the support they offer artists expands outside the realm of music production - medical and familial expenses of the artists are often covered, further expanding the reach of their programs into the communities the artists are part of.

“We have been able to cooperate with universities and NGOs, as well as freelancers. But we have [also] been making a network with other professionals and colleagues to develop projects with”

- Espacio Común

98% of our grantees said the funding had a positive impact on the performance of their organisation

Increase in number of indirect beneficiaries

Local communities experienced meaningful indirect benefits from our grant programs, as a trickled-down benefit of our grantees' up-scaling of operations. As organizations expanded their reach, more community members became engaged in their activities. Many nonprofits we support started, or increased the frequency of, community-facing events such as music performances, workshops and film screenings—inviting broader engagement and participation. The financial stability offered by our grants made it possible for organizers to put on such events without the need to charge attendees, breaking down financial barriers and inviting wider community involvement.

Offering free admission to its events is one the key ways that Bosla Arts is enhancing its reach, while LegalAliens Theatre offers workshop participants compensation for travel costs, ultimately allowing for the participation of more people, and particularly those who might not otherwise have had the opportunity or ability to take part.

Expanded reach

At the same time as increasing their numbers of indirect and direct beneficiaries, many organizations used the time and resources the grant provided them with to make progress in expanding their networks: forming affiliations with higher education institutions, other non-governmental organizations, and professionals in their respective fields.

98%

of our grantees said the grant had a positive impact on the community they serve

Increased visibility

Our grants allowed emerging artists to open doors to a wider network of potential connections, elevating the visibility of their practices and catching the attention of influential players in the cultural ecosystem.

Becoming a Supporting Act Foundation grantee provided recipients with increased institutional credibility and recognition, empowering grantees to establish new relationships, not least by fostering confidence in potential collaborators and supporters. Daniela Tovar Rodríguez, one of our grantees, was able to reach an audience of over 700,000 and significantly expand her professional network, thanks to being invited to participate in a global campaign run by the foundation’s funding partner, WeTransfer.



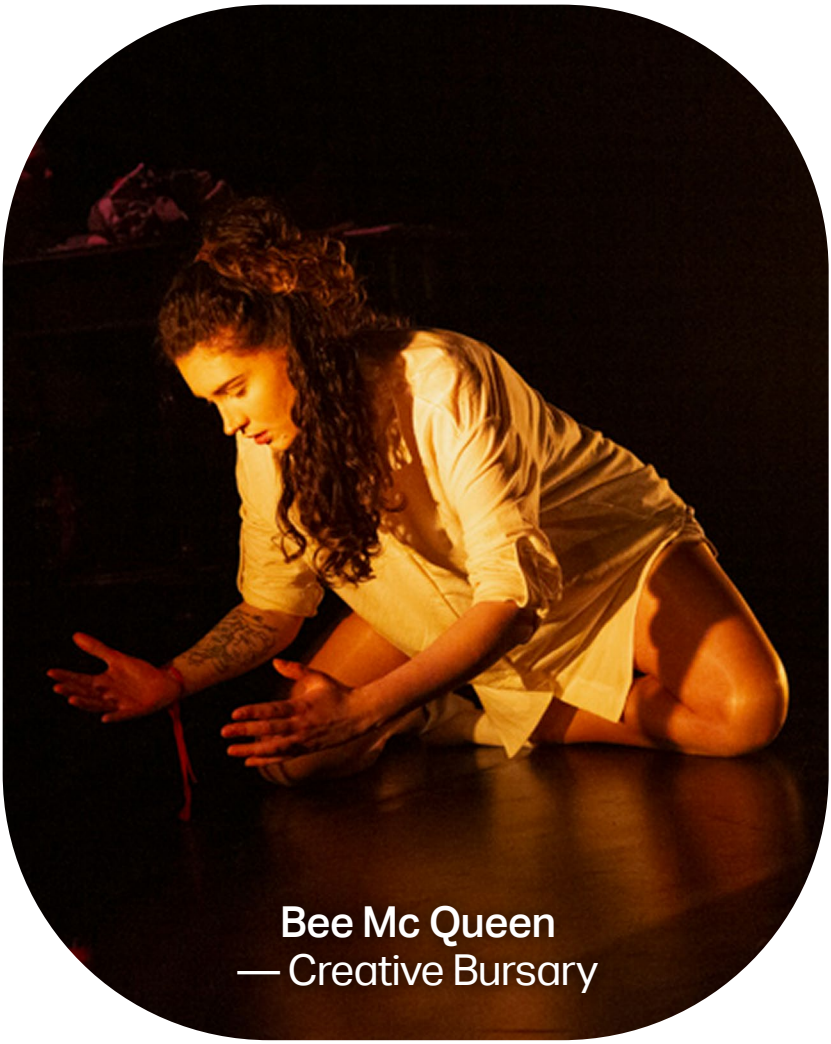
Daniela Tovar Rodríguez
— Creative Bursary

“I always say that passion and talent alone mean very little if you don’t have access or support — and that’s why institutions like The Supporting Act Foundation are so important.”

- Ramon Theobald

“I’ve been more able to network and start having those conversations with people. You can slip in there and say: ‘I’m currently supported by the Supporting Act Foundation - I’ve got their creative bursary.’ That’s a great way to say someone’s put stock in me and it would be great if you did that too.”

- Bee Mc Queen



Bee Mc Queen
— Creative Bursary



Ramon Theobald — Creative Bursary

ESPACIO COMÚN

Founded by Daniel Canchán Zúñiga and Paula Villar Pastor, Espacio Común is an organization that works toward the improvement of the urban and social landscape in vulnerable areas of Peru, especially in the capital, Lima.

Espacio Común work to combine community and artistic processes while defending the idea of a city in which caregiving, free play, and coexistence in the public sphere can act as tools for learning, creation, and cooperation.

The nonprofit has a creative approach to built space that encompasses the design, management, and construction of physical interventions and the documentation of everyday life. Together with grassroots organizations and collectives Espacio Común works to improve the public spaces and the quality of life for communities, most recently through Muyuna Fest, a

“floating jungle film festival” in the Belen neighbourhood of Iquitos that centred around the defense of territory, culture, and community.

“With [this grant] we’ve been able to pay a monthly salary to myself and Paula. It’s a small one, but it [allows us] to explore new projects and to get more projects that generate income to the office. [Receiving this] support, financially, I think gave us tranquility and removed the need to accept any kind of jobs.”

— Daniel Canchán Zúñiga, Espacio Común

Our support

Impact Grant 2023

Grant amount

€50,000

Location

Lima, Peru

Website

espaciocomunpe.com



“I have more time for my practice. I can buy materials. I feel more at peace: less stressed, and more focused”

- Sarah Ama Duah



Sarah Ama Duah — Creative Bursary



Kani Lent — Creative Bursary

“My art practice and all aspects of my life are more accessible and manageable. I have more room to reflect on my health, organisation of my life and for inspiration, education and progressing in my art practice.”

- Kani Lent

Our impact

TIME

Our grants allowed emerging artists and the organizers of nonprofits to dedicate more time to their practices, processes and planning.

They dedicated this time to personal development, improving their mental well-being, and engaging with the introspective processes of (re)formulation and the reassessment of respective approaches.

More time for art

For the emerging artists we support, the extra time they had available drove personal growth and the development of their practices, encouraging periods of reflection and self-analysis, and the building of a more integrated creative identity. With financial pressures lessened, grantees reduced working hours that were distinct from their artistic output. This left them feeling more grounded, empowered, and confident in their approaches.

Crucially, when freed from overwhelming financial burdens and the pressures of juggling paid work with artistic development, grantees re-engaged socially, many seeing this as a form of structured self-care as well as a productive route for peer-to-peer networking.



Makossiri — Creative Bursary



Melli Erzuah — Creative Bursary



Shahd Katba — Creative Bursary

“The time I was able to [gain] through the bursary allowed me the space to re-assess, [to focus on] where I really want put my time and resources and make better decisions”

- Melli Erzuah

More time for planning

Our support offered nonprofits the time and security to plan ahead, in some cases for the first time. For those organizations with annual budgets similar to the grant sum, this welcome increase in time and bandwidth enabled renewed experimentation, self-evaluation and long term planning. Larger-scale nonprofits deepened their understanding of internal power dynamics, reevaluated their community-building goals, and progressed toward the next stage of their organization’s life cycle.

Our grants allowed the leadership of nonprofits the time to build ‘application calendars’, allowing them to systematically apply for future funding opportunities, future-proofing their practices beyond the scope of our grants. For example, the founders of Espacio Común found that the grant period was the first time they’d been able to focus on creating an in-depth calendar of potential grant applications.

The two-year period of support offered by the Impact Grant program provided the founders and staff of nonprofits much needed runway for development, planning, and improvement. In some cases, organizations were able to treat the first year as a period of restructuring and strengthening, while the second year was used to apply learnings and implement plans for growth.

25

additional hours per week, on average, that artists could dedicate to their practice thanks to the Creative Bursary

Multi-year funding enabled a more thoughtful and coherent approach to organizational improvements and programming, while the unrestricted, no strings attached nature of the grant allowed organizations to adapt to last-minute changes and unforeseen challenges with greater ease.

“For small groups like ours, longer-term funding is crucial. It’s rare to have an opportunity like this. This gives us the context to step back, breathe and develop a strategy for change making – to ask how we can truly embody our values.”

- York Anti Racist Collective

Our impact

TRUST

Our grants offered the nonprofits and artists we work with crucial support in realizing their creative potential. Whether through new projects, interdisciplinary collaborations, or ambitious touring plans, grantees have been able to push boundaries with less fear of financial instability.

Receiving a grant validates the work of emerging artists and the approaches of nonprofits, showing belief in their potential and ultimately laying the groundwork for artistic and organizational growth.

This support enables emerging artists and organizations to expand their scope, take creative risks, and build confidence. Our programs' emphasis on trust and flexibility act as catalysts: granting artists freedom while allowing them to reimagine their potential and to reposition themselves in the broader arts ecosystem. The recognition and trust embedded in our funding structure provided much-needed validation, combating burnout, and positively impacting mental well-being.





Sheyda Hashemi — Creative Bursary



Saman Mahdavi — Creative Bursary

Increased self confidence

Our multi-year grants gave the founders and leaders of the nonprofits we supported a boost in self confidence. This led to more creative and imaginative ways of thinking and problem-solving, and revitalised their commitment to their respective projects. Fatigue, a common result of working in a precarious field was combated, while lingering disappointments from previous funding rejections were dispelled. This external acknowledgement of grantees' work and the roles they play in their communities positively impacted the mental health of those involved.

Our trust based approach to funding boosted self-assurance among artists we supported. Access to the resources needed to start materializing ideas was a significant factor, as was the feeling that they were in the process of building a well-rounded CV, accruing experience, and being able to talk about their artistic work without feeling inauthentic. By simply explaining their circumstances artists felt seen, both during and after the application process: their needs were addressed, and their work was invested in. The process in itself bolstered self-confidence in their artistic practices.

“The Supporting Act allowed me to imagine more [thanks to being more at] ease. I made the work I am the most proud of during my graduation year which is getting so much positive feedback and I’m able to tour with it.”

- Saman Mahdavi

Taking creative risks

A reduction in day-to-day stressors had a liberating effect upon emerging artists we supported. With external validation in-hand and formalized, grantees were able to step away from pursuing perfection, allowing for fresh exploration of new ideas and ways of working. In some cases grantees felt able to have constructive confrontations with failure.

95% of our grantees said that the unrestricted nature of the funding was positive for their organisation

This increase in creative risk-taking took many forms, from experimenting with different styles, to incorporating new disciplines and re-engaging with institutions. Increased resources, time, and confidence meant that grantees could invest in creating new methodologies, further solidifying their artistic practices and stabilizing themselves within the artistic ecosystems they exist in.

Regardless of the nature of grantees' practices, materials—often costly or hard to obtain—are essential for experimentation and development. For those artists eager to engage with new processes and approaches the bursary granted access to custom-made equipment or expensive software. For those more settled within their discipline, our funding allowed for the acquisition of better materials, or more of them. The opportunity to experiment and the means to introduce new materials, tools, and processes into their practices saw the realization of long-held ambitions which in turn drove a broadening of scope and aspirations.

Expansion of scope

The highly flexible, trust-based premise of our support allowed nonprofits to take major creative risks and to reassess their goals and scale of ambition. This manifested in a variety of ways, from new collaborations with other organizations and individuals to expansions of remit and the philosophical boundaries of nonprofits' missions. Grantees also used funding to directly expand their capacity and reach, taking steps toward concrete growth that would have been prohibitively high-risk without our support.

“Being able to breathe with the security of a monthly support base has given me the freedom to explore new possibilities in my work, and led me to discover my creative self from a different angle.”
- Daniela Tovar Rodriguez

Our grantees were empowered to take program-altering risks, extending their reach and expanding their work, and amplifying the voices of their member artists and those they work with in their communities.

As well as expanding their physical presence, Jail Time Records used their grant to document more of their work on film, and to expand their focus to incorporate the rehabilitation of artists after they are released from prison. For Espacio Común the grant meant they could participate more actively in the Muyuna Floating Festival, in the Amazon, expanding their practice beyond their architectural knowledge to the practice of co-creating and organizing a film festival. For Legal Aliens Theatre the Impact Grant funded a complete show with their community group, as well as allowing them to take their professional actors program abroad, culminating in ‘Flowers of Srebrenica’, the organization’s first mid-scale international tour.



Jail Time Records — Impact Grant



Lele Bonz - Creative Bursary

LEGAL ALIENS THEATRE

Founded by Lara Parmiani and based in London, UK, LegalAliens Theatre is a migrant and women-led ensemble.

The organization’s mission is to include and platform migrants as artists, creatives, participants, and audiences, creating a ‘theatre of sanctuary’ where migrants and refugees can share and shape their own narratives.

Find out about LegalAliens’ story here, in [our interview](#) with Lara Parmiani.

Based in one of London’s most diverse boroughs, Haringey, the organization’s goal is to make theater that reflects the complex intersection between migrant and international experiences. Since 2012, it has been running free weekly theater classes

with refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in order to foster inclusivity and nurture a creative community while allowing migrants to tell their own diverse stories.

“I think I’m currently taking the biggest risk of my artistic life with the international tour... it’s absolutely terrifying. But I think because we had [this funding for two years] and we were given this opportunity by our partners in Sarajevo, I decided to take it and go international, to take what we do to other countries, to build potentially potential new networks. So yeah, I’ve been taking risks.”

— Lara Parmiani,
LegalAliens Theatre

Our support
Impact Grant 2023

Grant amount
€50,000

Location
London, UK

Website
legalalienstheatre.com



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

By 2035 we want to have had a positive impact on the lives and careers of more than 100,000 emerging artists in more than 100 countries.

Impact reports shouldn't only be about number-crunching the past. For us, evaluating where we've been and what we've done is just the first step to maximising our positive impact in the future.

While The Supporting Act Foundation was born of the creative spirit and longstanding financial support of WeTransfer, we are currently readying ourselves to step into a future of greater independence, one where we can expand our mission and impact.

Over the coming decade we want to work harder and smarter. We will impact the lives and practices of more grantees, nurturing and supporting emerging artists from underrepresented groups and empowering nonprofits to increase their reach and strengthen their offerings. We know our mission, and we're optimistic about the positive changes we can make in the arts, together with our grantees and our supporters.

In keeping with this vision of contributing to a more equitable arts world and society, where artists can thrive, we have set an ambitious goal for 2035: we hope by then to have had a positive impact on the lives and careers of more than 100,000 emerging artists in more than 100 countries.

In order to do this we're eager to welcome more like-minded partners, diversifying and growing the financial support that we rely upon. For peer funders dedicated to maximizing the benefit their support has on emerging artists and community-led arts organizations, we'll be a key resource and enabler.

We remain dedicated to our trust-based approach to philanthropy, confident that our ways of working not only sidestep the practical pitfalls of short-term or project-based grants, but also foster confidence among grantees, build mutual respect, and are a truly participatory means of grant-giving.

We're here to help artists thrive, and we're just getting started.



Untitled Tbilisi — Impact Grant

SUPPORT US

At The Supporting Act Foundation, we have big ambitions. We know that the best way to achieve them is together with others who share our vision and mission. We do all we can to ensure that each donation goes the distance, while making it easy for you to support emerging artists and arts-focused nonprofits.

As a Dutch charity with ANBI status, we rely upon financial support from corporate partnerships, other like-minded foundations, and generous individuals to make our grant programs possible and reach our long-term goal of having a positive impact in the lives of over 100,000 artists by 2035.

Our no strings attached approach to philanthropy means our grantees can choose how and where they use the support we give them, fostering relationships based on trust and mutual respect, and filling a gap in arts funding for underrepresented communities.

Join us on our mission →

Give a one-time sum to support our work, or become a regular donor.

Donate



Angelo Ormskerk — Creative Bursary



The DisOrdinary Architecture Project — Impact Grant

If you are interested in becoming a corporate partner, email us at partnerships@thesupportingact.org

Get in touch

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