

Trust-based philanthropy for the arts

The Supporting Act's first funding round gives €600,000 to creatives with no-strings-attached



Refuge Radio. Photo by CeeCee - Gabriella D'Annunzio.

- €600,000 given to 26 emerging artists, initiatives and grassroots orgs across Europe.
- Pioneering trust-based philanthropy model supports marginalised creatives.
- Founded by WeTransfer in 2021 with a pledge of 1% of gross annual income.

In a world of exhausting, form-heavy applications and overblown bureaucratic reporting processes, the Supporting Act Foundation stands apart.

Founded by WeTransfer in 2021 with a mission to champion under-represented groups in the arts, the Supporting Act Foundation has given a total €600,000 to

emerging artists and community-centred initiatives through the first three funding programmes, enabling them to focus on their practices and projects, and alleviating some of the financial pressures associated with trying to sustain a career in the arts.

Such a forward-looking programme is made possible by a significant endowment and long-term funding from WeTransfer, the much-loved global technology platform used by 80 million people a month to share their content with the world. As well as providing an initial €1 million donation, WeTransfer has committed 1% of its gross income annually.

Ten art students, 10 artist-led initiatives, and six grassroots arts organisations have now received funding and, in contrast with many other foundations and funding bodies that impose restrictions on grant usage, are trusted to spend the money however they wish.



Creative grantees, Feven Eyoba and Alcide Breaux.

Trust-based philanthropy, with purpose

Through a series of grants and bursaries, the Supporting Act Foundation aims to provide a helping hand to artists at the beginning of their careers, with a particular focus on underrepresented groups and community-centred initiatives.

Trust-based philanthropy is sweeping across the charitable sector. Although there has been an increased focus on initiatives related to local projects, grassroots causes and social inequality, the tendency towards extensive and complex reporting processes means many of the funding streams are inaccessible to the very communities they hoped to support.

The alternative is to provide unconditional support, trusting artists to spend the money however they deem most appropriate – whether that's experimenting with materials, spending time to reflect on their work, or simply buying groceries and paying rent.

Highlighted beneficiaries

With a global perspective and creative to their core, the recipients are spread across Europe: in the UK, Germany, France, Italy and Netherlands, with the impact of their work stretching from Lebanon to Cameroon.

From experimental filmmakers to a magazine championing Black creatives and an art studio for women and non-binary people, the recipients represent an impressive line-up of next-generation artists and inspiring socially driven projects.

Creative Bursary recipient, **Alcide Breaux** is an artist who works with disability-rights educational platform Crip the Curriculum. For Breaux, their ambition is to be the first wheelchair user at the prestigious art residency, Rijksakademie.

In the same category, **Feven Eyob** is an artist committed to uplifting the work of Black creatives, as shown through her curation of the Black & African Solidarity Show (BASS) and archival work with Black Cultural Archives. The bursary will provide support for living costs for Eyob, while also giving her the confidence to further pursue work around archival research.

And as part of the Community Grant programme, **Refuge Worldwide** provides mentorship in radio and broadcasting to marginalised groups, such as those experiencing homelessness and young people fleeing domestic violence. With the funding, they plan to expand their mentorship scheme.

Through the **Beirut Summer School**, practitioners in Lebanon share their experiences through workshops, seminars and mentorship programmes – all

without paying fees. Now with support, founder Alaa Minawi wants to create further structure in the organisation and formalise as an NGO.

The Impact Grants place a special emphasis on socially driven projects. In this category, prison arts programme **BLOOM Onlus** works across Douala and Cameroon, notably creating the first recording studio inside an African jail. The initiative was previously funded by Dione Roach's own money, now they are already planning to start a new studio in another prison. Dione has said: "If their voice gets heard, the lives of these people can change and how society sees them."

Cube Space is a Midlands-based music development agency for music creators and professionals, focusing on minority and local talent. The grant has allowed them to think in a longer timeframe, while they've also found having the backing of the Supporting Act has meant other potential partners take them more seriously.

Process



Group shot of Cube Space.

A truly open and fair process

Each of the three specially tailored programmes – Creative Bursaries, Community Grants, and Impact Grants – launched in September 2022 with a lightweight open call, all of which were evaluated by three independent juries according to inclusive criteria.

The final selection of the 26 grantees reflects the Supporting Act Foundation's confidence in the potential of these individuals, initiatives and organisations to create meaningful impact in their diverse spheres.

The budget breakdown

- Creative Bursaries (€10,000 each, allocated monthly) for 10 art students from marginalised backgrounds.
- Community Grants (€20,000 each) for 10 artist-led initiatives creating networks for emerging artists, particularly those from underrepresented communities.
- Impact Grants (€50,000 each, over two years) for six grassroots arts organisations focusing on social, intersectional, or environmental justice.

Recipients

Creative:

- Feven Eyob
- Seonah Chae
- Daniela Commey
- Alcide Breaux
- Joe Tatton
- Malab Alneel
- Shandrick De Cuba
- Roggi Black
- Ezra Berrnico
- Anna Shaida Shoul

Community:

- Magical Women
- Esea Music
- Refuge Worldwide
- Deya
- Commons · Art

- Cinelogue
- Daddy Magazine
- Xacara
- Como Você
- Beirut Summer School

Impact:

- Spit It Out
- Shado Mag CIC
- BLOOM Onlus
- The Need for Legacy
- Cube Space
- Afield

Notes to editors

For more information about the Supporting Act, please contact sabine@zetteler.co.uk.

The Supporting Act

Through a series of grants and bursaries, WeTransfer's Supporting Act Foundation aims to provide a helping hand to artists at the beginning of their careers, with a particular focus on underrepresented groups and community-centred initiatives. Prioritising diversity, equity, and inclusion, the Supporting Act strives for social, intersectional, and environmental justice, using the power and reach of the arts to make a difference for everyone.

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