

Open Call 2023

WeTransfer's Supporting Act Foundation promises strings-free funding to emerging artists and community-driven initiatives



Theatre workshop, image courtesy of Beirut Summer School.

Following on from its first funding round, which gave €600,000 to artists and initiatives, WeTransfer's The Supporting Act Foundation is about to announce its second open call – once again aimed at emerging artists from marginalised backgrounds and arts organisations with a strong community-driven approach.

50k per non-profit, 10k per artist

Impact Grants help artist-led grassroots organisations with community-driven approaches towards using arts for social change, particularly those offering support to emerging artists from underrecognised groups. This programme will offer 6 unrestricted two-year grants of €25,000 per year, totalling €50,000 per organisation.

Creative Bursaries support students from marginalised groups who are experiencing financial hardship, and are looking to develop practices focusing on arts for social change. This programme will offer 10 unrestricted bursaries of €10,000 per grantee.

New juries have been announced, with full biographical information on the Foundation's website, and include former foundation grantees alongside impressive industry figures. For Impact Grants, the panel includes: Richard Akingbehin; Daniele Carlini; Hannah Robathan; Amahra Spence; Abi Tariq; and Nandita Vasanta. The Creative Bursary panel includes: Malab Alneel; Seonah Chae; Lara Costafreda; Elijah; Meryem Meghraoua; and Marco Palmieri.

Trust-based philanthropy

Back in 2021, WeTransfer established The Supporting Act Foundation with a pledge of 1% of its gross annual income to support emerging artists and artist-led grassroots organisations with a strong community-driven approach. Today, the Foundation is continuing its commitment to the arts and doubling down on their bold 'trust-based philanthropy' approach – providing unrestricted funding, all through a lightweight and accessible application process.

"Sometimes the most impactful way is to find out who's already making a difference, and just help them do it. It can be as simple as that."

– Jenne Meerman, director, The Supporting Act Foundation

In comparison to other funding bodies, the foundation's application process is notably easier and stress-free, and is part of its wider agenda to make the art world more inclusive to everyone. Payments to successful grantees are prompt and there is no requirement to complete time-consuming reports.

"We believe philanthropy should work differently. The Supporting Act Foundation is a manifestation for a different kind of future for funding the arts – one that puts artists and non-profits first. Our blueprint begins with trusting the creatives we support. As a team, we love nothing more than watching others grow."

– Damian Bradfield, co-founder of WeTransfer and chair of The Supporting Act Foundation board

Here are some incredible grantees that the foundation is currently supporting:

- Italian visual artist Dione Roach, the founder and director of Jail Time Records, gained funding for her prison arts programme, notable for creating the first

recording studio inside an African jail. Dione says: “If their voice gets heard, the lives of these people can change and how society sees them.”

- Artist and bioethicist Alcide Breaux 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 in Amsterdam, Rijksakademie.
- Through the Beirut Summer School, practitioners in Lebanon share their experiences via 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 a non-profit.
- Magical Women is a non-profit founded by UK-based visual artist Elinor Rowlands in 2020 to provide a safe space for neurodivergent women and non-binary artists to gather and make art.
- The Berlin-based community radio station Refuge Worldwide provides mentorship in radio and broadcasting to underrepresented groups, such as those experiencing homelessness and young people fleeing domestic violence.

The Impact Grant and Creative Bursary programmes are open to organisations and students registered in the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy and Spain. Please check the website for full eligibility criteria.

Notes to editors

For more information about The Supporting Act Foundation please contact Yuki Sumner at yuki@zetteler.co.uk.

Key Information

- **Creative Bursaries** are granted to undergraduate students (18+), offering 10 bursaries of €10,000, paid as monthly instalments of €1,000 (December 2023–September 2024).
- **Impact Grants** are awarded to non-profit artist-led initiatives, offering 6 grants of €25,000 per year, paid over a two-year period (commencing December 2023), adding up to a total of €50,000 per organisation.

Key Dates

- **22 August:** Programme info and guides available on website
- **29 August:** Open call is launched
- **18 September:** Deadline for submissions (11.59AM CET)
- **Mid-November:** Announcement of 2023 grantees

The Supporting Act Foundation is on Instagram and LinkedIn:

[instagram.com/thesupportingactfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/thesupportingactfoundation)

[linkedin.com/company/the-supporting-act-foundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-supporting-act-foundation)

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 underrecognized 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.

thesupportingact.org