**Purple Guide grant report** ****

**EIF – 6-month update (September 2023)**

## **Background:**

The Loop has previously offered training to organisations and events, many of them outdoor events and music festivals, but has been limited in its time and capacity to offer or develop this in a significant way. As a volunteer-led charity we often struggled to meet capacity to widen access to our training for the outdoor events industry, and the cost of training could be a barrier for outdoor events, with many struggling for money post-Covid and the cost-of-living crisis. We have always been of the view that training is a critical way to reduce drug-related harm in the outdoor events industry as it informs and equips management staff and others working in the industry on an overarching approach and practical measures to use. In early 2023, The Loop was awarded a grant from EIF to support us in developing our training programme, ensuring the following:

* furthering our charitable aims of expanding knowledge and application of a harm reduction approach towards drug-related issues,
* this aspect of our charitable activity is sustainable in its delivery going forwards,
* training is accessible and affordable for the outdoor events industry.

We are pleased to report our progress so far, and that we believe we are on track to meet the aims and objectives of the received grant.

## **Development and systems of our training programme:**

One of the first steps taken by the charity was to recruit a part-time training coordinator, to manage the enquiries, bookings, and promote our training courses to a wider audience, expand our training capacity, and develop and quality assure our training offer. In March, Adam Waugh was recruited to the role, who is both a longstanding volunteer with the charity and had professional experience managing NTE training programmes. The following has been completed:

* All our courses have now had their content reviewed and updated, slide format changed for consistent branding, and a training brochure designed to include a summary of all courses. Flexibility to deliver online (Zoom) or in-person, and to individuals or groups, has been further considered and developed.
* We have developed our internal systems, such as booking forms, a database of confirmed bookings, a spreadsheet of interested clients, and streamlined other systems (invoicing, website enquiries) which allow us to manage a growing number of bookings.
* Press release completed and engagement with multiple partners to promote and widen the knowledge of our courses and their benefits, and with use of social media and Eventbrite.

## **Increasing capacity to deliver:**

Our training coordinator was tasked with leading on the recruitment of freelance trainers to increase our capacity to deliver, with a target in this first 6-months to increase by 8 trainers, taking us to a team of 12 trainers. We internally advertised the role to join our volunteer pool and received 30 applications for the 8 spaces to which we were recruiting. All applicants submitted an application, undertook an interview, and were required to provide a reference alongside a DBS and proof of right to work in the UK. The majority of the new recruits attended a ‘Train to Trainers’ Day in May in Manchester, led by our Training Coordinator, along with a further member of our existing training pool and our CEO. A further 2 recruits received online training/on-boarding. The trainers are all freelancers, and have a high knowledge of harm reduction and drugs alongside a background in training (for example, teaching qualifications), and all were recruited and inducted by the end of May.

Kira Watson, who had previously worked at the Scottish drugs charity, *Crew 2000*, had this to say about the role:

*I've worked in the field of nightlife harm reduction for mo re than 10 years across the UK and mainland Europe. I recently joined the Loop as a freelance trainer to offer essential training courses, including to people working in the outdoor events industry. The course content offered is a highly sought after area of focus and one which without subsidised finding, many companies in the outdoor events industry would struggle to attend. The dynamic drugs market intersects existing issues of wider society such as mental health, sexual and domestic violence and often these manifest in nightlife and event spaces.*

We now have capacity to deliver multiple training sessions per week, and as example, in the last week of August delivered 4 training sessions in 4 days; notably, this is more than we delivered during the whole of 2021.

## **Increase in bookings and training delivered:**

We have seen a steady increase in the numbers of bookings we have received, and have now delivered 14 training sessions since we received the funding and we are expecting to deliver at least another 12 by the end of the year. This will mean that by the end of the year, since receiving the funding, The Loop will have delivered more training sessions in a single year than we had in the previous decade.

**Impact for the Outdoor Events Industry**

The Loop has delivered 8 training courses so far which were directly subsidised by the grant. Six of these have been delivered to particular organisations/events, and representing a range of outdoor events and organisations working in the industry and across a number of suppliers who make up the team for that event. The further 2 courses were online sessions where individuals could buy individual tickets, and attendees consisted of a range of people working in the outdoor events industry and provided a further reach into training and equipping the workforce. Our ‘Autumn programme’ with a further 6 online courses has now been publicised using social media and through direct contacts within the industry.

Across our training we have so far reached 115 attendees, and these have included event management, control and organisers, security, medical companies, welfare providers, freelancers. Many of whom work across a wide number of events throughout the year.

## **Financial update:**

So far, we have used £3600 of the grant to subsidise the costs of the training to organisations and individuals working in the outdoor events industry. Our training income, excluding the subsidy has grossed £6,043. As things stand, our training is making money without the subsidy (£1,050 after costs to the trainer) and we now need to expand our delivery to generate income to sustain our organisational infrastructure and delivery model for training. We continue to project and model these costs to inform budgeting for 2024/25.

Further information and clarification can be provided by:

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