Purple Guide - EIF final report.

Background:

The Loop received a grant from the EIF (Purple Guide grant) in March 2023 to assist in the expansion and development of The Loop’s training offer across the UK, and specifically to those working and operating in the outdoor events industry.

The grant has enabled the employment of a Training Coordinator and subsidy of our training costs for 2023-4 for organisations and people working in the outdoor events industry. We outline below the successful application of this funding and activity for the latter and final 6 months of the grant, enabling an external training offer to be firmly embedded in our organisation and to further ensure the sustainability of this for the future.

## Developments in the 6 - 12 month period of the grant:

## Online and accessible training

In the 6 - 12 month period of the grant there were some significant developments in The Loop’s training offer and the planning, marketing and development of a regular programme. By utilising the Eventbrite platform, we have been able to scale up the frequency and reach of our courses, with us offering 10 courses in 2023/2024. The importance of our delivery in this way has meant that individuals can access courses and training, rather than there being a reliance on a company or employer to host The Loop’s training. This has therefore extended access to freelancers, and a broader range of events, and bringing people together who work in the sector.

Generally speaking, the Eventbrite courses can be put in 3 groups:

* The initial two exploratory sessions: July and August 2023
* The next six sessions, announced September 2023 and running October - December 2023 (Autumn programme)
* A further ten sessions, announced January 2024 and running February - July 2024.

All 18 courses, delivered and planned, have subsidised/lower cost places for people working with the outdoor events industry, due to the Purple Guide grant.

Across the 18 sessions, we have run 9 different courses, ranging from a basic introduction to drugs (“drugs awareness”) to more specialist training sessions on particular drugs like MDMA and ketamine as well as providing updates on the UK drugs market, and changes we see within this. We have thus been able to use the Eventbrite programme, and the Purple Guide subsidy, as a means to develop our training offer, both in breadth and depth, for the benefit of the outdoor events industry as well as wider stakeholders.

Across the 18 sessions, hosted on Eventbrite, the income from this training programme, will be approximately £8,000 with an additional £4,500 subsidised by the EIF grant to give half price tickets to people working in the outdoor events industry. These sessions have trained over 160 individuals working in the outdoor events industry on half day or full day courses to date.

This online training programme provides a sustainable model to both deliver at an affordable price and an accessible mode, and also acts as a marketing and publicity tool for more bespoke and in depth training courses to stakeholders and partners.

### Other training courses

Our other training courses, which are delivered direct to organisations, have on twelve occasions been subsidised by the EIF grant, generally speaking subsiding a £1000 course to £500, totalling approx £6,000 in EIF subsidised courses to individuals working across the outdoor events industry. These courses averaged approximately 15 delegates per course, training an additional 180 people working in the outdoor events industry.

Thus, across our whole EIF subsidised training programme we have trained around 330 individuals working in the outdoor events industry and representative of many events, and with many individuals in a freelance capacity working across multiple events and able to cascade their knowledge and learning.

### The legacy of the course and the future

The Loop’s training will continue now that the grant period has come to an end. The initial phase of the grant was invested, as planned, in the capacity building of The Loop’s training team, and both the employment of the Training Coordinator and the further training to create a team of freelance trainers in order to deliver more regular training all year round. The grant has very much allowed us to grow our training offer, overseen and planned by the training coordinator, delivered by freelance trainers and putting in place quality assurance and marketing to expand our offer and reach.

At year end, we have an underspend on the grant and this will continue to be utilised to provide subsidised and affordable places on our courses, and on the Eventbrite platform, for people working in the outdoor events industry. As we continue in the delivery of our training, our intention is to replenish this subsidy, and ensure that the training is self-sustaining in it’s delivery costs, but also enables re-investing some income to continue to provide training at varied rates to remain accessible to people working in different capacities, sectors and environments, but in relation to harm reduction.

We are starting to see more training requests from stakeholders such as police, public health and local authorities, who are generally better able to afford full and market rates for training. This ensures our training offer remains financially viable for the organisation, and by creating a cost model affordable and accessible to a greater number of people and organisations, we further the understanding and implementation of drug-related harm reduction in the UK.

Purple Guide – EIF – 6 month update – The Loop.

## Background:

The Loop historically offered training to a number of organisations and events, many of them outdoor events and music festivals. However, 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 allows to train management staff and others working in the industry on what they can do to make their events safer. In early 2023, The Loop were awarded a grant from the EIF to support us in developing our training programme, making it sustainable for the charity going forwards, and to subsidise training 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 subsidy we received.

## Development and formalisation of our training programme:

One of the first steps taken by the charity was to recruit a part-time training coordinator, to manage the bookings, recruit freelance trainers and promote our training courses to a wider audience. In [insert date], Adam Waugh was recruited to the role, who is both a longstanding volunteer with the charity and had professional experience managing NTE training programmes. Our courses have now had their content updated, slide format changed, and a summary of their contents put together in a training brochure. We have developed our internal structures and systems, such as booking forms, a database of confirmed bookings, a spreadsheet of interested clients, and other systems which allow us to manage a growing number of bookings.

## Trainer recruitment

After the employment of the training coordinator, one of the key steps to increasing trainer capacity was the recruitment of a larger training pool. We internally recruited the role to our volunteer pool, and received 30 applications for the 8 spaces we were recruiting for. 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 trainers attended a training day in Manchester, with 2 receiving an online catch up. The trainers are all freelancers, and have a high knowledge of harm reduction and drugs alongside a background in training.

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 more 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 in the last week of August delivered 4 training sessions in 4 days; more than we delivered during the whole of 2021.

## Increase in booking numbers.

We have seen a notable increase in the numbers of bookings we have received, having delivered 14 since we received the funding and we are expecting to deliver 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 than we had in the previous decade.

## Impact on the Outdoor Events Industry

The Loop has delivered 8 training courses so far which were subsidised by the grant. These have been delivered to 6 organisations, consisting of a range of outdoor events and organisations working in the industry. 2 of the sessions were delivered online, where individuals could buy tickets, and attendees consisted of a range of people working in the outdoor events industry.

Our training courses have been delivered to approximately 115 attendees. Attendees have included event management, control and organisers, security, medical companies, welfare providers, freelancers and more.

## Finances

So far, we have used £3600 of the subsidy to subsidise the costs of the training to organisations and individuals working in the outdoor events industry. Our training sales, excluding the subsidy have grossed £6,043, thus including the subsidy we have brought in £9,643. After taking into account trainer costs (£4450), our gross profit has been £5,093. Thus, as things stand, our training is making money without the subsidy (£1,050), however this would not be enough to cover on-going costs, such as the training coordinator salary. Thus, we need to continue getting more bookings to ensure that by the end of the subsidy the training is largely self-sufficient.