

A broad range a good fit

Main Fund – Strength in diversity

The Main Fund is Esmée Fairbairn's primary channel for grants. It supports work that focuses on the UK's cultural life, education and learning, the natural environment and enabling disadvantaged people to participate more fully in society. In 2008, Main Fund grants responded to the nation's changing needs.

These projects give some idea of the range of nationally, regionally and locally significant work we supported.

Featuring six projects:

1. The Opera Group
2. Chem Trust
3. Lost Chord
4. Change Ashby Now!
5. ECPAT
6. Inspiring Scotland

Main Fund – A broad range a good fit

1. The Opera Group

“An inclusive approach to contemporary opera that takes in everything from Kurt Weill to the Enchanted Pig”

When a small opera company can attract an audience of 32,000 for a new work and plans to collaborate with the Institute of Psychiatry in commissioning a piece on Alzheimer’s disease, it is worthy of note. For Esmée Fairbairn, it is also worthy of support.

In 2008 we agreed to provide £48,592 to pay for the company’s executive producer. During her previous two-year tenure the organisation increased performance and audience numbers significantly. Under her leadership, and working with colleagues, the Opera Group developed creative partnerships with organisations such as The Young Vic, Buxton Festival and Anvil Arts Basingstoke. It also experimented with performances in unusual, easily-accessible settings including an Oxford Street department store and launched an incubator scheme to support the development of new commissions.

Today, The Opera Group is acknowledged as one of England’s foremost exponents of contemporary opera. Current projects include working with the London Sinfonietta, ROH2 at the Royal Opera House and Birmingham Contemporary Music Group.

2. CHEM Trust

“Establishing an essential link between research scientists and policy makers”

Over time, toxic chemicals can cause long-term damage to wildlife and humans – even when no immediate harm is readily apparent. To shorten the time lag between pollution and the chemicals policies to deal with it, there is a need to link scientists, often working in isolation, with policy makers. The Chemicals, Health and Environmental Monitoring (CHEM) Trust was set up in 2006 to do precisely that.

In recognition of the importance of this, Esmée Fairbairn is helping CHEM Trust by providing a total of £113,700 over three years to fund half the cost of the organisation’s chief executive’s salary and to support the first two annual projects.

The Trust’s initial focus is on hormone disruptors. These primarily originate from the use and disposal of everyday products such as televisions, computers, cars, construction materials, toys, toiletries and cosmetics. Their impact on wildlife populations can be devastating; particularly in terms of decreased fertility and behavioural abnormalities. To increase understanding of what hormone disruptors are doing to humans, CHEM Trust has also prioritised bringing the medical community into the debate.

3. Lost Chord

“An innovative – and effective – approach to lessening the tragedy of dementia”

Nearly one million people in the UK suffer from dementia. For many of them, mental stimulation is typically confined to hours in a chair before a television screen. But not for those participating in the Lost Chord programme. This innovative approach reignites mental processes through hour-long music workshops led by promising, specially-trained young musicians who have been enlisted onto the scheme after being auditioned at the National Opera Studio. Strong evidence suggests that these sessions, which reach areas of the brain that tend to remain undamaged, can trigger responses from those who had previously shown little or no reaction to any other stimuli.

Lost Chord started in 1999 as a three-year pilot. It now offers over 800 interactive sessions a year that focus on playing percussion, dancing or singing. Participants include residents of 77 residential homes and visitors to day centres throughout Yorkshire. Two pilots are also underway in Cardiff and London.

Esmée Fairbairn’s support for Lost Chord is helping to cover the costs of workshops in 20 Yorkshire homes – all of which have proven success with the programme. Specifically, our £75,000 over three years is towards the costs of the musicians, their travel and subsistence and volunteer travel, and contribute to the overall sustainability of the organisation.

4. Change Ashby Now!

“Helping a town to help its young people help themselves”

The Leicestershire town of Ashby is home to three of the most deprived wards in the county. As is the case with many similar towns in Britain, some of Ashby’s youth feel alienated from their peers and from the rest of the community. Though previous efforts to establish social and community venues were destroyed by vandalism, a central location called the The Hub has survived.

Run by an organisation called Change Ashby Now!, The Hub benefits from a central location and facilities that include a community café and internet access. The Hub attracts a substantial number of regular users and even more occasional visitors from the town and surrounding villages. Local police have noted a reduction in anti-social behaviour, under-age drinking and juvenile crime among young people using The Hub.

Clearly, whatever The Hub is providing seems to work. Which is why we decided to provide £40,250 over two years to help fund its first full-time paid project manager. Responsibilities will include developing new programmes and establishing relationships with schools and youth offender programmes, initiating contracts with adult education providers and making the best use of the building so it can provide wider community benefits and generate additional income.

5. ECPAT

“Putting the law to work to stamp out child sex trafficking in the UK”

There are no children more disadvantaged or marginalised than those who have been victims of sex trafficking. That is why we are supporting the UK’s only charity with a specific mandate to work against this trade: End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT).

ECPAT made a major contribution to the successful introduction of the Sex Offenders Act in 1997. Now, the charity wants to appoint a full-time parliamentary officer so that the UK’s lawmakers continue their focus on the problem. We are contributing a total of £88,852 to the salary of that officer for a three-year period.

The project will hopefully protect more children in the future. The practical results should include better-informed parliamentarians and increased pressure on the government to uphold the rights of trafficked victims with greater protection for those who manage to escape. Specific duties will include servicing the relevant All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) and coordinating meetings between the APPG and other voluntary sector organisations.

6. Inspiring Scotland

“Working with other charities and donors in a new way, to further a common cause”

Esmée Fairbairn is interested in new ways of funding. To extend our reach, and to benefit from the experience of a funding partnership that brings together charitable trusts, private individuals and central and local government to work with charities in a new way, we have joined forces with the Inspiring Scotland initiative.

This programme is providing significant, sustained support for a number of Scotland’s charities to focus on a common issue. By putting in place long-term funding for these charities and encouraging the delivery of clear, measurable objectives, we hope to see some significant improvements in specific areas of Scottish life.

Inspiring Scotland’s initial focus will be on the 32,000 young people between the ages of 14 to 19 who have not been able to make a successful transition between school and further education, training or work. These are young adults who are already disengaged – or at risk of disengaging – from society but who have not yet been affected by unemployment or become involved in serious substance abuse or criminal activity. Areas of operation will include Glasgow City, Dundee, West Dunbartonshire, North Ayrshire, Inverclyde, Edinburgh City, East Ayrshire and Clackmannanshire. Our contribution will be a total of £750,000 over three years.



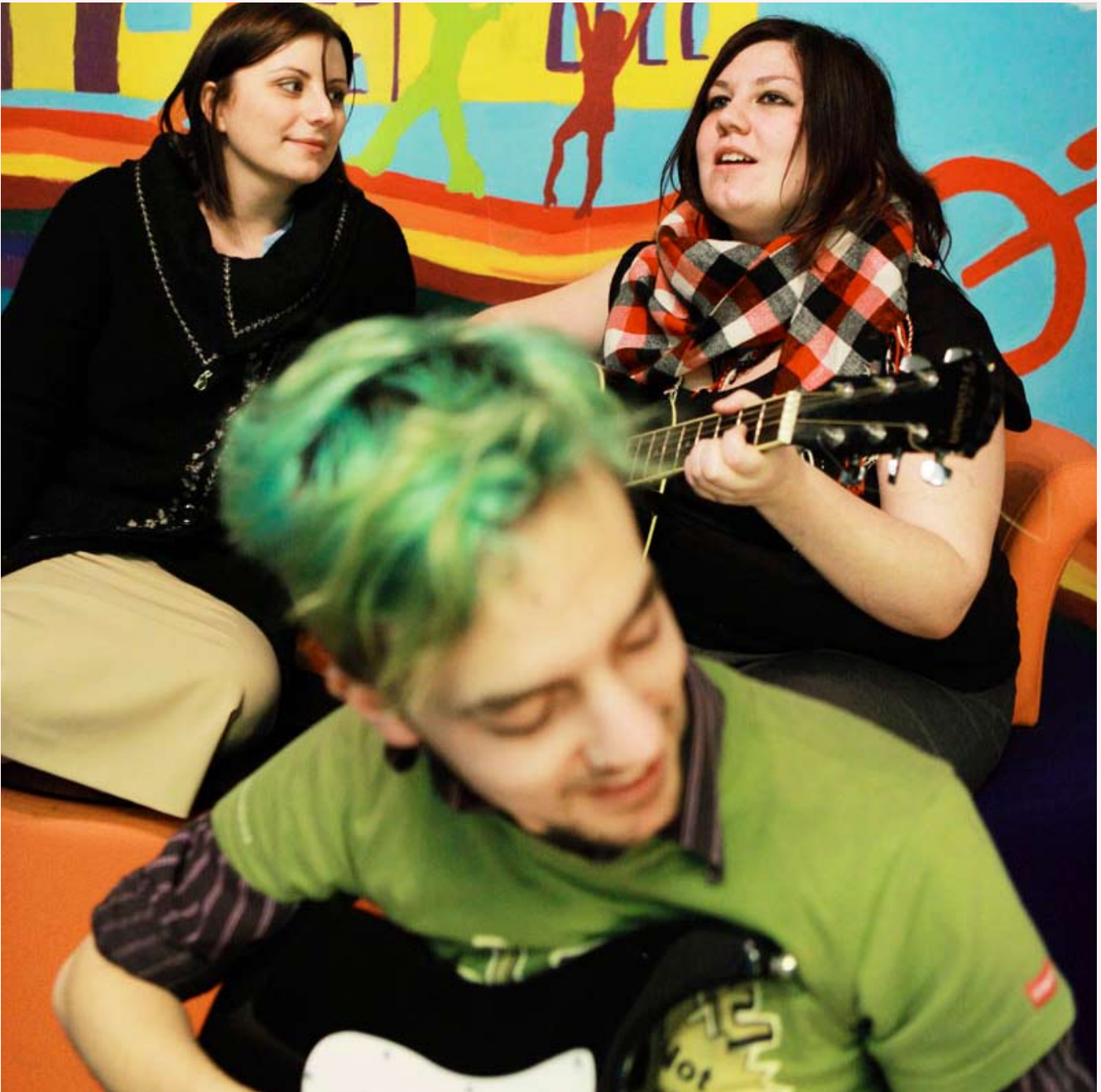
The Opera Group



CHEM Trust



Lost Chord



Change Ashby Now!



ECPAT



Inspiring Scotland