

Name of your Organisation:	Hear Me Out (previously Music In Detention)
Name of the project TFN funded:	Digital Breakthrough
Date Funded by TFN:	13/11/2019
Were you able to undertake your project as planned?	Yes
If no, please outline how the project has changed.	
Can you describe and/or demonstrate the specific impact that TFN funding has had against your initial objectives?	<p>In November 2019 the Strategic Funding Group of TFN gave us a grant of £15,089.06 to help us build a new website and develop our digital story-telling capabilities. We wanted especially to improve users' experience of our music archive and donating process, and put at the front and centre the personal stories of people we work with. Subsequently we also identified the need to streamline our communications objectives, and consider whether our public facing functions could be assisted by a name change. So the project became larger and longer. By June 2021 we had conducted a full communications overhaul.</p> <p>A Board decision in Dec 2019 to consider a name change led us to postpone the website project. Our first Radio 4 Appeal in Feb 2020 used the old website but gave us good experience in creating and promoting a personal, emotionally resonant story (and raised £20k). Then the coronavirus made us pause for a bit to regroup.</p> <p>In summer 2020 we reviewed our communications strategy and narrowed down our priorities, bringing more focus and a clearer sense of purpose by identifying three primary objectives: raising individual giving, promoting the music, and broadcasting attitude change. Subsequent work has been shaped around these aims. The strategy is to support individual giving by raising awareness - through media coverage, music media partnerships, celebrity ambassadors etc. - and then using strong, engaging content across our website, email and social media to build interest and support. To better promote the music and extend our reach, we've started to operate more like a promoter, using marketing and media to support album releases and events, and to establish a consistent pattern of output across all our channels. We're now adding Instagram and LinkedIn to our social media channels, to increase our output and audience.</p> <p>We also held a team "Story & Content" workshop to work out our storytelling approach, leading to concrete steps to embed story gathering processes into our programme, strengthen relationships with participants, and create high quality content. This work provided</p>

a valuable introduction to the substantial task of developing content for the new website, which we commissioned in July 2020 from brand and digital agency, Wiedemann Lampe. The brief set out three key objectives: converting donations, driving plays of the music, and generating email subscribers.

Meanwhile research into our name and brand told us people found our existing name confusing ("detention" is a broad term and few have heard of immigration detention): thus it was a descriptive name but not a very good one! We decided to look for a more emotionally resonant name that would strike a chord with our target audiences and help us engage them. A careful selection process brought us to "Hear Me Out". We then asked Wiedemann Lampe to create a new visual identity, before returning to the website build. They costed this extra work at £13k but did it for £2k, providing design options which offered not just eye catching representations but also a choice of strategic tools. We made our selection in November. The new logo has a static "H", symbolising confinement in detention centres, surrounded by ripples that resonate like soundwaves outwards: a visual representation of the voices and music of people in detention, sounding out to the world.

The next stage was the website content, a major task held up by the second lockdown. We engaged a brilliant copywriter to help with the main text, and worked with her to interview three people with personal experience of detention. The process was emotionally taxing for all involved, leading us to think more about how to develop trauma-informed practices and ensure that the people we work with, and the staff involved, are properly supported.

The new website (www.hearmeoutmusic.org.uk), name and visual identity all launched in late March 2021. The website features a new music player, which plays seamlessly and continuously as users navigate elsewhere. Content includes those full-length, feature stories of detainees, along with strong photography and linked micro-stories for use on social media. We're nearly through the snagging stage now and are about to implement some extra improvements, including to make the player more intuitive.

Finally, our comms manager left us to relocate in February. Her replacement, who started in late May, has brought new skills and experience into the staff team and, with the help of our new comms toolkit, is taking the work to the next level.

	<p>Our new public face has been widely praised. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am pleased and excited about all the positive steps and progress. Thank you for your outstanding work in helping people connect through music and arts (former detainee) - I do like your new name! Much more modern too (detention centres/services director) - I think this is a BRILLIANT name for you! (comms/migration NGO director) - That is a great rebrand name, not too long, easy to say and meaningful too. Look forward to the new chapter of MID may bring (artist) - Woah, I love this website. No nonsense, gets straight to the music. Hopefully the featured artists will get the attention they deserve. Just great (detention campaigner) - We absolutely love the new website and name. The musical opportunities to inspire and educate about the purpose and impact of your work are brilliant on the website. Brilliant job (donors). <p>We're already seeing benefits from this digital transformation. In the first 5 months after the new website launched we saw 4500 unique visitors (compared to 1050 in the whole of 2020), including 1950 to the donate page and 750 to the 'real stories' page (featuring stories of people who have experienced immigration detention). Six notable new Twitter followers have brought us additional reach of 66000. The Big Issue and NTS Radio have run stories about our participants.</p> <p>Turning to fundraising, at the end of April we launched a new "100 Club" campaign, mainly on social media (and at https://hearmeoutmusic.org.uk/donate), to increase regular giving. The campaign uses a powerful video interview with former detainee Pilo, whose story is also featured on the website. So far it has brought us 14 more regular donors, raising a further £1130 pa. These are small numbers, but to put them in context, we've only achieved growth on that scale twice before, over a full year, and with heavy reliance on signing up trustees and/or the wide reach of the Radio 4 Appeal. By contrast these 14 recruits have come to us in 5 months through our own channels, and 13 of them were previously unknown to us. This suggests that the new brand and website are starting to extend our reach as intended.</p>
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TFN Impact Report

What portion of the project did TFN fund?	45% of the project as a whole including the rebrand as well as the website and story-gathering
How many direct beneficiaries did the TFN funded project reach?	3 (former detainees interviewed)
How many indirect beneficiaries did the TFN funded project reach?	4500 (visitors to new website since launch)
Were you able to leverage further funding as a result of TFN support?	Yes
If yes, how much were you able to raise?	We raised £6698 from the Network for Social Change as match funding for the project. In addition we allocated £9000 of a grant from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to the rebrand work, and £3000 of a grant from the Ernest Hecht Foundation to the website and story-telling work.
Did you receive any pro-bono support, volunteer offers or introductions as a result of the event?	Yes
If yes, please can you provide details of the support you received?	As mentioned above the website developers discounted the cost of the new visual identity by £13,698. In addition a combination of reduced day rates and donated days from comms freelancers saved us £9,075.
Has the training you received from TFN better prepared you in pitching your organisation to potential funders?	Yes
Has TFN increased your capacity to raise further funds?	Yes
How important was TFN funding in helping you achieve your objectives?	We wouldn't have been able to achieve our objectives without TFN funding
Since presenting at TFN, has your organisation undergone any other significant changes?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name change - see above! 2. The detention system has gone through significant changes in the last 18 months and we are engaged currently in devising new programmes for people held in it, so as to respond to those changes.

<p>Do you have any other comments or feedback on the experience of the TFN process?</p>	<p>Presenting was nerve-racking but a good discipline! I think the nature of the process creates a risk that applicants may overplay their case to make a striking story, but I think we managed to avoid that.</p>
<p>Can you tell us any personal stories to highlight the value of the project?</p>	<p>Here is one of the personal stories we featured on the new website. Without the grant we would not have gathered or told O'Neil's story. Since telling it we have facilitated a further interview with him by NTS Radio:</p> <p>I was born in East Jamaica. My mother was the poorest person in the district. We lived in the countryside, which give me more advantages than if I was born in Kingston because it is more dangerous there and you can lose your life in a day. And growing up, I was an academic person, probably the most academic person in my village. So even though I was the poorest, I had a gift of education, and I was in the country, the safest place to be. But there was no opportunity. And my mum was murdered. She was young, and I was very close to her. So when I was 30 years old, I came to the UK to better myself and to help my family. I came here on a Virgin plane to Gatwick Airport on 26th May 2014.</p> <p>My first job in the UK was a cleaning job, until I got a job in McDonald's in customer care. And I remember one night, seven men and a woman came for me at my home. I was in my bed, I was going to be working at nine the next morning. But it was when the Windrush thing was going on. And they were scraping up everyone.</p> <p>In all, I spend seven months in detention centre. The longest seven months ever. First, they put me in Morton Hall in Lincolnshire. I spent three months there. Then they bring me to Harmondsworth. At Morton Hall, I remember there was this youth named Lari. He tried to jump off the building and they had put him in my cell. And when I woke up in the night he was ripping out all the hair in his head, he was just rooting out his hair. They lock you up with anyone, and anything can happen.</p> <p>So, you see, I started learning - what am I going to do to survive? That's why I come up with music, it is always the music. I started singing and people just started to come by my room and we get a big crowd. I was there just 10 or 20 minutes. And then they said I was becoming a gang leader. But I was just doing the music. I was finding a way of survival - because there's nothing else. I was just singing.</p>

When you enter detention, they bring you to an introduction room. That's the first process. The immigration officers come and visit you, and they give you this paper to sign to go home. And you either sign it, or you don't sign it. Many people tried to go for asylum. Many people tried to fight the case. Some people just go back. I know people that go back and die.

I remember when they gave me my first solicitor. I reasoned my case with him, and he told me I should go home. He was a black man like me. But he wasn't listening. So I tell them I don't want him for my solicitor because he wanted me to go back. He might as well be working for the immigration that locked me up. So I start to represent myself, and when I go to the court, I would go by myself.

But they also give me a case worker. She was Asian and she was telling me that I should go home too. Now, I had learnt that deportation is different from removal. Removal is when they just want to move you from the country, probably because your visa is up, or you have no more sponsorship. Deportation is where you have committed a crime, or you have done prison sentence and they don't want you in the country no more.

I couldn't understand why she, my own caseworker wanted me to be deported so bad - when I have done nothing wrong, I've never been convicted. Never, ever in my life. So I said to her, "Maybe you need to go home too? If I am to go home, maybe you have to go too." She said to me she was going to end the interview. And I've never seen my case worker since, never talked to her apart from that interview.

I was introduced to Hear Me Out when I was inside. We did a song called When the Music Stops. When I met these artists, they already had the music right and everything. I just drop it in my unique style and my culture. So even if you're not writing the music, you can still get a vibe from it, because it's the word, and I'm the one just singing the word - you're gonna feel it. So I get vibes from the song that I write and sing in the detention centres.

All my life man, music is my thing. At that Hear Me Out session, it was like coming together with so many musicians who have different qualities. To be honest, it was a great experience. When you are out there and you have your craft in music and you meet five or six people who have a different craft, that song is yours - or even better than yours. It's always a blessing to meet other artists in the detention centres.

	<p>So sometimes even in the worst place, you find good people. Like Zoe, you know, Zoe always encouraged me too.</p> <p>And with Hear Me Out we could express ourselves and get admired - it make us feel like we're somebody, because you feel like you are nobody in detention. I mean, you went around and people admire you - they admire your singing and they admire that you can draw and you can paint. And that just bring you up, build your spirit. You're in this place, but you meet people that see something in you - and you know that it's there - but then you discover it again. And that alone can save you.</p> <p>The day I leave detention centre, they gave me a ticket to London. And that was it. The first thing I want to do is go and look for a friend I met inside. And I remember at the station, I asked 17 people for a phone call. No one even looked at me. But the seventeenth person gave me that call and I call my friend. And we link up - and it's back to life, back to reality. My face was just smiling and I felt so happy.</p> <p>But they, the Home Office, said I must not work. They said I must not study. They said I must not claim no benefit. Nothing, no recourse to public funds. Because they said that my visa was curtailed in the court. So I'm not eligible for nothing.</p> <p>I'm a distinction student in accounts, and I end up living a life of taking. You never can show people that help you, that you respect them because you're never in a position to give to no one. It's the worst position to be in only receiving and not giving. And that's where they put me now.</p> <p>But I still have music.</p> <p>I went on the Hear Me Out tour - it was called Music After Detention. And I remember meeting Oliver and the team in Dover. They have such positive energies and I feel that musical connection and I went into it and it was like magic and I could sing, I feel good. It was with Oliver and a few other artists, musicians and instrument players. It been a very long time before I'd felt that vibe - it was one of them good times after coming from detention.</p>
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