

The Edith M Ellis 1985 Charitable Trust

Friendship Lab

#3BRWHV8BWB submitted on 12 March 2024

1.1 Please summarise what you are seeking from us

To launch the Friendship Lab. We are seeking project costs to film and edit our course material to empower adults with the wisdom and skills to make their friendships thrive. We achieve this purpose by providing evidence-based courses and training, to directly address society's most pressing crises: escalating loneliness and decreasing mental health. For those who enrol, part of the course content is resolving and preventing conflict and seeking reconciliation.

Tell us more about your project and the impact it will have on those it aims to help, and how it will bring about significant change

Adult friendship is society's most undervalued relationship and its neglect is creating a wellbeing crisis. The research is startling: people with close friendships have lower levels of anxiety and depression, higher levels of meaning and happiness, decreased risks of dementia and heart attack, and longer lifespans. And yet more than 20% of British adults have no close friends, a figure echoed across the world. We at Friendship Lab have created a powerful solution to this 'friendship recession': an evidence-based course that is already gaining interest from city councils, the BBC, and the NHS.

As a charity, Friendship Lab's mission is to empower adults with the wisdom and skills to make their friendships thrive. We envision a day when every adult has at least three '2am friends' - people they can call at 2am when everything's gone wrong - and our ultimate goal is to see adult friendlessness reduce from 20% to 15% by 2034. It's an exciting vision that we seek your partnership to fulfil. While numerous charities exist to support romantic, marital and family relationships, there is no organisation focused on adult friendship - a tragedy given friendship's proven wellbeing benefits. Friendship Lab rectifies this imbalance.

We will launch Friendship Lab publicly on International Friendship Day, 30th July 2024. Our immediate goal is to launch the course in two formats, with a third to follow soon after:

1. An On-Demand video-based course for self-paced learning
2. A Live-Online course run several times each year
3. A Small Group curriculum for use in churches, workplaces and community groups (launched in 2025 after further testing)

We are confident of seeing over 2,200 course enrolments through all formats by the end of our 2024-26 launch period (a 2.5 year timespan). With your partnership, we expect to achieve the following outcomes during this phase:

1. At least 2,000 participants (90%) reporting that their social confidence has been significantly positively affected by the course
2. At least 1,300 participants (60%) having developed at least 1 brand new friendship as a result of the course, and at least 1780 participants (80%) having rekindled or deepened at least 2 dormant or existing friendships
3. At least 100 participants moving forward to become Small Group facilitators of the course

Friendship Lab as a whole, and its courses in particular, are innovative in a variety of ways:

1. Meeting an unmet need. While there are numerous charities dedicated to helping people with their marriage, romantic and family relationships, there is no organisation focused on adult friendship. Friendship is, in fact, our most overlooked relationship, which is a tragedy given the wellbeing benefits it's been proven to bring.

2. Empowering the individual. We can be grateful for the helplines, befriending services, better transport access and other needed projects funded since 2018 to reduce social isolation. These 'outside-in' approaches empowering the community to help the lonely individual are essential. But there are few, if any, 'inside-out' projects to empower individuals to confidently reach out to others.

3. Evidence-based solutions. While there is a small but growing body of books and other media on the topic, we know of no other evidence-based course on adult friendship development.

4. Financially accessible to all. A small number of friendship courses are available online, provided by entrepreneurial people looking to attract a financially flush clientele. As a non-profit enterprise with a mission to fulfil, we provide our courses at a price point accessible to all, with an additional 'pay-what-you-can-afford' option.

The course is already gaining interest from City Councils, the BBC, the NHS, and numerous community organisations.

1.3 Which grant-giving categories does your project fulfil?

B - Peace-building and conflict resolution

1.3b Peace-building and conflict resolution

In our course, a whole session is given to conflict resolution. Course participants become more intentional at friendship building (including with people who are different to them) and learn needed conflict resolution skills. Part of the course content is resolving and preventing conflict and seeking reconciliation as this is an important part of solving the contemporary friendship crisis.

1.4 Which country is the project based in?

United Kingdom (GB)

1.5 Will the project continue after initial funding has ended?

Yes

1.5b Please give details of how you plan to continue after initial funding has ended

Once we have launched the course, a main source of income will be course participants and group fees. This gives the project sustainability and will be fully self-sufficient by our third year of operation. Once the course is available online, it will be accessible for the long-term future. We will then create a small group curriculum to reach even more people.

1.6 How will the project be monitored and evaluated?

Recording and evaluating quantitative data about course enrolments will provide us with the information to see the reach the course is having. Wanting to also measure impact, we ask participants to fill out qualitative questions on a number of wellbeing measures. This information is reviewed by the trustees as part of monitoring and evaluation so changes can be made based on participant feedback.

2.1 Expenditure

EXPENDITURE ITEM	AMOUNT	NOTES
Filming and editing	£15,000	
Course materials	£3,500	

Branding & marketing	£163,000	
Salaries	£49,600	
Utilities	£8,950	
Contingency	£5,000	
TOTALS	£245,050	

2.2 Income

INCOME SOURCE	TARGET AMOUNT	AMOUNT RAISED	NOTES
Participant fees	£16,000	£0	This is for year one and we can only ask for fees once the project has been launched. For year two we are expecting £60,000
Crowdfunding Launch Project	£20,000	£0	Launching in April and running to include the launch date
Public donations	£1,000	£1,000	
Grant Funding	£37,000	£0	We have several applications being considered and will keep applying until we raise the full amount
TOTALS	£74,000	£1,000	

2.3 What is the total amount (in £ sterling) your organisation is requesting from The Edith M Ellis Trust?

£2,000

2.4 Has your organisation made an application to The Edith M Ellis Trust before?

No

2.5 Please state your organisation's annual turnover (in £ sterling)

£

2.6 Do you wish to upload your audited accounts or financial statement?

No

2.7 Please tell us where payment should be made if your application is successful

Friendship Lab
00035982
40-52-40

3.1 Your name

Sheridan Voysey

3.2 Your contact telephone number

07503 929 994

3.3 Your position within the organisation

Founding Director

3.4 Your email address

sheridan@friendshiplab.org

3.5 Organisation name

Friendship Lab

3.6 Please state the status of your organisation

UK Charity

3.7 Please summarise what your organisation does

Our mission is to empower adults with the wisdom and skills to make their friendships thrive.

Our aims are:

- Raising awareness of friendship and its wellbeing benefits
- Promoting being a friend as a sacred identity
- Developing social confidence through skills

3.8 UK correspondence address for organisation

9 Earl Street

Oxford

Oxfordshire

OX2 0JA

3.9 UK telephone number

07503 929 994

3.10 UK charity number (if applicable)

1206905

3.11 Year established

2024

3.12 Website (if applicable)

<https://www.friendshiplab.org/>

3.13 Social media accounts (if applicable)

<https://www.facebook.com/sheridanvoysey>

<https://twitter.com/sheridanvoysey>

<https://www.instagram.com/sheridanvoysey/>

4.1 How did you hear about The Edith M Ellis Trust?

Directory of Social Change/Funds Online