

# International Free Expression Project

## Executive Summary

### Community Partner

Greg Victor

### Student Consulting Team

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## Background

The International Free Expression Project (IFEP) is a relatively new non-profit, established in 2016, which aims to promote the creation of the arts, with a focus on lifting voices that are suppressed by governments and political extremists around the world. By providing performance spaces, funding, and educational materials, IFEP works to facilitate the freedom of expression and to showcase a multitude of artists both locally and internationally. Their four main initiatives include building a home for free expression in their 'Marketplace of Ideas,' erecting the world's first work of public art symbolizing free expression, developing interactive educational tools, and supporting artists by exhibiting their work. Planning and execution of these initiatives, including fundraising, outreach, and event planning is primarily carried out by their core staff of eight, led by founder and CEO Greg Victor.

## Project Description

### Project Opportunity

As a newly formed nonprofit, fundraising will be a major activity for IFEP to ensure that their projects, such as the Marketplace of Ideas, can be developed into their vision. In the past, IFEP has found donors by approaching foundations and individual connections, but has not held any fundraising campaigns to the public. Fundraising for nonprofits is an involved process including identifying potential donors, processing donations, and engaging constituents with the organization. As IFEP's reach, activities, and financial needs grow, and as they start looking to the public for additional funding, their manual process of tracking contacts, engagements, and processing donations will be unsustainable for their small staff.

### Project Vision

Our vision for this project was to research, select, and implement a CRM system for IFEP. A CRM would address IFEP's fundraising needs by providing a centralized place to manage constituent information and interactions, and automating tasks pertaining to donation processing. This would save staff a lot of time which could then be spent on promoting their mission and initiatives. Furthermore, donor retention would improve as engagement could be documented and reporting tools could provide details on the success of any fundraising or email campaigns. Overall, a CRM could reduce the time and effort required to fundraise, while increasing constituent engagement with IFEP and the outputs of fundraising efforts.

## Project Outcomes

The primary outcome for this project was the implementation of the third-party CRM, NeonOne. In order to properly utilize this new software within IFEP, our team configured several processes within the CRM. We set up the contact database through extensive cleaning and filtering of old contact data, established a mass-email and segmentation process for categorizing constituents, and created a centralized space for managing donations, linked to the book-keeping application, QuickBooks. Lastly, key members within IFEP attended 1-on-1 training sessions hosted by the team, to ensure that they could proficiently navigate the CRM independently and maximize the value added by Neon.

## Project Deliverables

Aside from the configured Neon CRM, our primary project deliverable was passing on our Google Drive from this project to the IFEP staff. The drive includes all of the research, documentation, notes, training resources, and other materials that were used and developed over the duration of the project. The most prominent deliverables within the Google Drive include training manuals for IFEP to reference as they navigate learning how to effectively operate the CRM, a list of implementation questions to address during future one-on-one sessions with Neon professionals, and a fully cleaned file of IFEP's contact data.

## Recommendations

Our recommendations center around how IFEP can continue to improve their ability to use Neon CRM for their most current pressing needs, as well as being able to develop their usage of the CRM to accommodate future needs following this engagement. We recommend that the IFEP staff take specific concrete measures to alleviate the difficulties that come with managing a learning curve following the introduction of a new system, and to build a culture surrounding the use of the CRM that consistently references the relevant resources when necessary. The specific steps we would recommend to achieve these goals include setting weekly meetings for discussion and questions regarding the CRM, a google form or another channel of communication for questions to be addressed at any time, and a required training period for any members of the organization who are new to using Neon.

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## Student Consulting Team

**Sabrina Chua** served as Project Manager. She is a 4th year Information Systems student with an additional minor in Human Computer Interaction. Following graduation in May 2022, she will join EY as a Technology Consultant under their Data & Analytics practice .

**Jonathan Nottingham** served as CRM Relationship Manager. He is a 3rd year Information Systems student, graduating in May 2023. This summer, he will be working as a technology consultant in Palau through CMU's Technology Consulting in the Global Community program.

**Megan Qiang** served as Client Relationship Manager. She is a third-year Information Systems student, graduating in May 2023. She is interested in working within the intersection of art and technology, and creating user-experiences that are both impactful and accessible.