

Just Change

Strategies for Increasing
Philanthropic Impact

PASSION

LEADING CHANGE

PERSONAL VALUES

PHILANTHROPY

DASTING RESULTS

GREATER DIRECTION

OPPORTUNITY

SOCIAL JUSTICE

SUSTAINABILITY

POLITICAL WILL

Diana Leat

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*'You cannot live a good life
in an unjust society' (Aristotle)*

Acknowledgments

This work was a collaborative venture. I would like to thank the collaborating funders: Barrow Cadbury Foundation, Big Lottery Fund, City Bridge Trust, Carnegie UK Trust (CUKT funded initial thinking and the main study), Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, and Northern Rock Foundation; and the members of the advisory committee: Fiona Ellis, Sarah Mistry, Stephen Pittam, Paul Roberts, Lenka Setkova, and Clare Thomas, for their constructive guidance and support.

Without the generosity of the many people associated with the projects studied the report would have been impossible. They were always patient, welcoming and willing to share their wisdom, experience and reflections – thank you.

Please contact ACF for information about further copies of this report: acf@acf.org.uk

Published in November 2007.

The Woburn Place Collaborative

The Woburn Place Collaborative was established in 2006. It is a forum for grant makers and foundations concerned to more effectively promote social justice, sustainable development, human rights, and democracy.

The objectives of WPC include:

- Understanding better the ways in which philanthropy can more effectively and creatively influence social change;
- Developing and supporting practical research and development initiatives that address issues of common concern and interest;
- Representing best practice and models for working collaboratively.

For further information on WPC, please contact Charlie McConnell, Chief Executive Carnegie UK Trust charlie@carnegieuk.org

Foreword

The notable record of philanthropic achievement in Britain has often been undervalued, not least as a consequence of the modesty of many of the donors. But in consequence, too often funders remain unaware of the lessons of successful practice which they might have employed to good effect. So I therefore celebrate this demonstration of the ways in which foundations can contribute to widespread sustainable impact. Without the record of proven experience, it is hard to make progress.

I also welcome the collaboration between a group of funders that has made this record possible. Of course, sometimes change happens only because a determined foundation or individual sticks with a project consistently over a long period. More often greater change becomes possible through some form of collaboration between multiple funders who share resources, knowledge or connections. But having those resources to give at the outset is itself a privilege as well as a joy. It brings with it some responsibility to employ effectively the money, skills, experience, independence, knowledge, risk appetite, contacts, leverage, and more, that comprise the unique collection of assets of a charitable grantmaker. The text that follows admirably illustrates the variety of potential roles for foundations, and is a powerful demonstration of how those attributes may be properly harnessed to achieve longer term systemic change, with impact beyond immediate grantees.

Notably, amidst all you will learn of the many recurring themes in foundations' work; the suggestions for achieving wider and sustainable change; and the lesson that sometimes to achieve social justice, grantmaking really does mean manning the barricades; there is a further and simpler message at the heart of Just Change. This is that achieving impact is primarily an attitude of mind, and one that can be delivered through small

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but well chosen significant change. Thus we all may have the potential to make a difference, and it doesn't need us to be large scale, or long in the philanthropic teeth to do so. At a critical time for society, when so many of us doubt whether we alone can have any impact upon the dominant climatic, economic and political trends, here is powerful evidence that yes, indeed, we certainly can make a difference. It's a practical, positive and ultimately uplifting message that I warmly embrace.

David Emerson

Chief Executive

Association of Charitable Foundations

November 2007

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Just Change

Strategies for Increasing Philanthropic Impact – A Summary

This report is for those who spend private money for public benefit – established philanthropic foundations and new donors – who want to increase the scope and duration of their impact. It aims to encourage discussion of how philanthropy can contribute to achieving longer term systemic change with impact beyond immediate grantees, and inspire practice.

The report was funded by a small group of funders participating in the Woburn Place Collaborative (WPC). WPC is a self-selecting, inclusive gathering of foundations united by a desire to explore ways in which, individually and together, they may more effectively contribute to the creation of a more just and environmentally sustainable society.

The book briefly outlines the thinking behind the study; the need for a new approach to foundation funding and the obstacles. This is followed by discussion of some important issues about assessing foundations' contributions to change.

The vignettes and case studies are the centerpiece of the book. The case studies tell the stories of how foundations contributed to longer term change in the rights of looked after children, land reform in Scotland, the training of imams in Europe, disability rights, whistleblowing at work, and working for peace in Northern Ireland. The stories illustrate a variety of roles for foundations and analyse methods and factors in success. They entail different levels and types of risk and tell very different stories, but also reveal that while increasing the scope and sustainability of impact is not rocket science it is also not 'business as usual'.

The case studies (and the wider research literature) demonstrate that there are no golden rules or magic bullets in achieving change with impact beyond immediate grantees. But there are some recurring themes in how foundations work and what they need to look for, and fund, in grant recipient partners if they want to contribute to achievement of wider, longer term impact. These include the importance of:

- ≈ Flexibility, opportunism and luck (and implications for core funding)
- ≈ Passion
- ≈ Creating an evidence base/credible knowledge
- ≈ Telling human stories
- ≈ Reframing and relating to other agendas
- ≈ Working on different fronts
- ≈ Dissemination and tailoring communications to audience needs
- ≈ Providing 'easy'/'smart' answers
- ≈ Focusing on the positive/constructive
- ≈ Presenting clear and simple messages
- ≈ Focus on the message not the messenger
- ≈ Going to where the power to effect change lies
- ≈ Building legitimacy, anticipating obstacles and recruiting champions
- ≈ Focus on the outcome
- ≈ Persistence
- ≈ Key individuals

Drawing on these themes and the literature on diffusion of innovations and policy entrepreneurship, the report concludes with 12 questions/suggestions for achieving sustainable change with impact beyond immediate grantees:

- ≈ Think about how widespread social change happens – who or what has to change and how that can be achieved.
- ≈ Question assumptions that ‘change just happens’ and/or that change can always be achieved from the bottom up. Distinguish between rooting suggested change in the experience and views of those disadvantaged and leaving it to them to achieve change alone. Go to where the power to affect change lies.
- ≈ Acknowledge that foundations have resources other than money and identify and build those resources. Invest time and effort in networks and convening; don’t underestimate the power of the foundation invitation. Build up and on reputation.
- ≈ Invest in research and evaluation to understand problems/ issues, identify solutions and provide credible knowledge of what can be achieved; and make issues human – tell stories.
- ≈ Invest in timely and tailored dissemination to ensure that messages reach those with the direct and indirect power to influence change; tailor messages and recommendations to provide policy makers with what they need when they need it.
- ≈ Reframe issues by seeing things from a different angle and recruiting counter-intuitive supporters.
- ≈ Keep the focus on the message not the messenger. Focus on policies not politics, build cross party support.
- ≈ Recognise the value of luck, and make luck by positioning; keep scanning the environment for debates and issues related to your work and be flexible enough to take advantage of opportunities; hitch rides on other related issue and policy bandwagons.

- ≈ Stay with an issue long term if necessary – this is one of your unique advantages
- ≈ Recognise the importance of passion and charismatic individuals and facilitate ways of ensuring that they infect others. Recruit champions to spread the word and gain support.
- ≈ Accept that success has many parents – don’t expect to be a lone heroine; value the importance of small roles that may be crucial to the plot (or accept that although you can’t make a cake with baking powder alone, a teaspoon or two of baking powder is crucial in making the cake rise successfully). Work collaboratively – begging and borrowing skills, resources and support.
- ≈ Be prepared to take a leadership role if appropriate.

Diana Leat

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background and purpose

This book is written for those who spend private money for public benefit – whether established philanthropic foundations or new donors – who want to increase the scope and duration of their impact.

The book has two aims: to encourage discussion of how philanthropy can contribute to achieving longer term systemic change with impact beyond immediate grantees, and to inspire practice.

The study on which the book is based was funded by a small group of funders participating in the Woburn Place Collaborative (WPC). WPC is a self-selecting, inclusive gathering of foundations united by a desire to explore ways in which, individually and together, they may more effectively contribute to creation of a more just and environmentally sustainable society.

How to use this book

The book is divided into chapters and sections. Some may wish to read the whole book. Others may prefer to dip into particular sections. Some may want to read only one or two of the case studies; others may want to go straight to the final summary chapter.

To aid navigation: the rest of this chapter briefly outlines the thinking behind the study; why we need a new approach and the obstacles. Chapter Two discusses some important issues about assessing foundations' contributions to change. Chapter Three presents the vignettes and case studies. The seven case studies tell the stories of how foundations contributed to longer term change in the rights of looked after children, land reform in Scotland, the training of imams in Europe, disability rights, whistleblowing at work, and working for peace in Northern Ireland. The stories illustrate a variety of roles for foundations and analyse methods

and factors in success. They entail different levels and types of risk and tell very different stories, but also reveal that while increasing the scope and sustainability of impact is not rocket science it is also not 'business as usual'. Each section within this chapter may be read as a story in itself. Chapter Four draws out some of the lessons and themes from the vignettes and case studies, setting these in the context of findings from other studies.

Why Do We Need a New Focus?

While many individuals and governments throughout the world are (re)discovering the power of private action for public good, many established philanthropic foundations are increasingly questioning their own achievements and their proper roles in modern democracies. Much of the public policy, and the wider non-profit sector, agenda is focused on how to encourage more giving, getting more private money into the pot for public benefit; very little attention is paid to how the (existing or additional) money in the pot can be used most effectively to maximise public benefit in the immediate and longer term.

Current efforts to maximise the public benefit derived from private giving of both money and time tend to be focused on increasing the capacity of the voluntary sector to deliver public and other services. In recent years large, and increasing, sums of money have been devoted to this end via Change Up, Capacity Builders, Futurebuilders, and so on. 'The public service agenda' and associated practices of developing (managerial) capacity, strategic planning, performance measures and so on have become the order of the day for non-profit organisations.

Foundations in the UK have traditionally seen their roles in terms of service provision – providing immediate help to the needy/disadvantaged. A smaller number have adopted a 'scientific approach' searching for the causes of problems (in the hope that understanding the causes would lead to adoption of appropriate solutions). But neither provide a unique role for foundations today; both roles could be, and are, played equally well by others.

In the recent past foundations generally worked on the more or less explicit assumption that their limited projects and programmes would be taken up by (local and central) government. Government, having been shown the need and the way, would replicate and fund foundation generated projects. In other words, foundations would influence policy and practice by the back door of quiet example.

Today that strategy is rarely available. Foundations may 'demonstrate' all they like but demonstration alone is no longer enough to ensure wider change and impact. Unless foundations follow 'innovations' through they are unlikely to achieve significant impact.

Why Focus on Social Change?

Dissatisfaction with Old Approaches

A recent study (Anheier, H. and Daly, S. (2007) *The Politics of Foundations*, London: Routledge) of roles and visions of foundations in Europe found that foundations in the UK were looking at ways in which they might adopt new roles and increase their effectiveness. Social and policy change was seen as one potential role but some staff were concerned about potential trustee resistance and about the foundation's resources and skills for the role (Leat, D. (2007) *United Kingdom in Anheier and Daly, op cit*).

Dissatisfaction with old ways of working has a number of elements.

Same Old Thing

Some foundations have become concerned that they are spending money year after year on the same problems; demand continues to exceed supply; old mantras about 'pump-priming' are of little relevance if there is no water in the well; there is little point in 'innovating' if no one is prepared to take forward those innovations; 'doing what the state doesn't do' becomes more and more problematic as it becomes increasingly difficult to identify exactly what the state does do.

'Capture of the Non-profit Sector'

As non-profit organisations increasingly adopt the role of service delivery on contract to government some foundations are becoming concerned that wider, longer term issues of public benefit are being lost sight of. These concerns have several elements.

Sources of Innovation

For some the concern is that subsuming the voluntary sector within the public service agenda (and its associated characteristics and constraints) is short sighted in that it risks damaging an important mechanism for change, renewal and innovation in society. This, it might be argued, is particularly important at a time when old approaches to enduring problems are not working, new ideas are in short supply and new, and more complex, problems are constantly emerging.

Rights not Charity

For some the concern is a matter of morality and values. Existing service provision is by no means equal, and some actually exacerbates the inequalities it seeks to redress. In any case, it might be argued, service provision is no substitute for basic human rights and justice. Public benefit requires benefit for all as a matter of right not discretion or charity. Furthermore, public benefit involves consideration not only of current but also future generations.

Maintaining Democracy

For others the concern (also) has a political dimension. The pursuit of public benefit in a democracy requires properly functioning democratic institutions, including the conditions for expression of a variety of viewpoints and lively public debate. Insofar as political parties, business and the non-profit sector all speak the same language, and are driven by demands and constraints of customers and constituents, where do alternative information and viewpoints come from?

Appreciating the Role of Government

In the past many foundations acted as though they could somehow ignore government (while, at the same time, implicitly relying on government to provide on-going maintenance for projects fathered by foundations). In all the emphasis on the importance of a strong voluntary sector it is easy to lose sight of the fact that only government has the power to reduce the need for endless charity by regulating the way both public and private institutions operate.

Getting Real About Resources

Private giving and foundation formation is growing – but relative to the problems it seeks to address it is, at the same time, diminishing. Foundations are beginning to question how they can make a real difference with what are, in effect, diminishing resources.

The conventional answer has been that foundations' resources may be small but by using these resources to experiment and demonstrate they can nevertheless have a major impact on society. While this may be true it requires considerable thought and effort to move a small experiment to a major impact – high hopes and good intentions are not enough. In most cases, major impact requires widespread acceptance and that in turn requires public and political will. Only government has the resources and capacity to achieve and sustain widespread replication and change.

A Troubled Society

Questions about the role and effectiveness of philanthropy, and its proper relationship with government, have assumed a new urgency for many in an increasingly troubled society. Issues of religious and racial tolerance, integration, civil rights, democracy, social justice, and the environment have become increasingly contentious.

In the past many foundations have been wary of making their values explicit. Of course, they operated with values, expressed in what they chose to do and not do, but they did not 'take stands'. Today, some are beginning to question this approach and one leading commentator (Gerry Salole) has suggested that foundations need to find 'a moral compass'.

Addressing the Challenge

The issues outlined above have led some foundations to start to re-examine their roles and relationships. How can they have impact beyond their immediate grantees for wider public benefit? How can they work to achieve longer-term or sustainable public benefit? How can they ensure that the needs and rights of those who fall outside, or are disadvantaged by, current public policy or attitudes are recognised? And how can they do all of this with very limited resources and without a democratic mandate?

Philanthropy faces the challenge of:

- ≈ Finding ways of turning weaknesses – lack of democratic mandate and insufficiency – into strengths. Without addressing this question grantmaking becomes something like a game show in which foundations award prizes to the lucky few and leave others empty-handed.
- ≈ Contributing to rather than being in tension with democracy.
- ≈ Identifying unique roles that cannot be played by government, market or fundraising non-profits.
- ≈ Given the paucity of its financial resources, finding ways of contributing to sustainable change in the way in which people, organisations, policy makers, and so on, think and behave; and promoting change that goes beyond their immediate grantees.

For some foundations, now and in the past, the solution to the problems above has been to focus on long term social change rather than short term charity. This was the thinking behind the creation of the large philanthropic foundations in the US and in the UK in the early 20th century with their emphasis on discovering root causes.

More recently, some foundations have moved beyond 'discovering root causes' to seeking structural or systemic change with a particular focus on change which corrects social disadvantage. This approach is often referred to as 'social justice' or 'social change' philanthropy (for further discussion of definitions of 'social justice' philanthropy see Appendix 1).

While this approach is growing in the US it is not widely discussed in the UK. The problem in the UK is not so much that foundations do not 'do', or intend to do, social change or social justice in parts of their work but rather that there is little critical debate about what this involves and conditions for effectiveness; as a result, many social change initiatives fail to achieve the results intended, trustees may lose heart and decide that providing immediate, short term help is a safer and more satisfying role.

The Obstacles to A Social Change Approach

Lack of Will and Courage?

Some have suggested that one major obstacle is not lack of resources but lack of will and courage (see, for example, E. Carson quoted in Milner, A. *Change not Charity*, www.allavida.org/alliance/sept03b.html). This explanation may be true in some cases, but for many grantmakers the obstacles are undoubtedly more complex.

Problems of Terminology

The first, and perhaps the most important, obstacle to wider discussion of and engagement with social justice approaches is the label itself. One problem with the label 'social justice philanthropy' is that it is not clear what it includes and excludes. Another is that the term 'social justice' may alienate many foundations/trustees who have programmes that would be accepted by 'social justice' foundations as coming within the category. In wider Europe the term 'social justice' has little resonance among foundations even though some would subscribe to the principles and have programmes that would fit within the category.

In short, one problem in encouraging foundations to consider an approach that is different from conventional charitable service provision is not so much lack of awareness of the limitations of existing dominant practices, but rather one of finding a terminology that highlights the difference, includes the variety and does not deter.

Problems of Legitimacy

There is another problem with talking about 'social change' philanthropy (and, less directly, with social justice philanthropy). Private foundations do not have the mandate or the power to direct social change in a democracy. To adopt that role, or to be perceived as adopting that role, is arguably a recipe for regulation and backlash. Anxiety that foundations do not have the mandate to direct social change is almost certainly why many foundation trustees shy away from describing their work in this way – even if much of what they do contributes to social change and differs very little from what self identified 'social change' foundations do. Foundations may also be deterred by the fact that they don't know what the 'right' solutions are.

Lack of Models

One major obstacle to engaging in change oriented work is undoubtedly the sheer pressure of demand for immediate service provision/charity. But without wider social change, the work of foundations is restricted to short term benefit for a lucky few grant recipients.

In the UK there are few high profile role models for foundations wanting to take an approach that is different from the conventional charity approach. A number of foundations do take a creative social change oriented approach on particular programmes but these tend to be one or two among other programmes/grants and get overlooked in the foundation's wider work – possibly by design. Foundations that build a creative change approach into all, or most, of their work are in a minority and tend to be seen as idiosyncratic exceptions (as in 'Well, that's Rowntree').

More recently, the fashion for business metaphors and, closely related, capacity building have diverted attention away from foundations' roles in increasing social impact and achieving widespread, sustainable change. Whereas businesses typically focus expansion efforts on organisational growth foundations have other ways of achieving greater impact that involve letting go or spreading ideas rather than holding onto them. Businesses make

money by retaining ownership of ideas and practices; foundations achieve impact by broadcasting ideas and encouraging others to take them up (Kramer, M. (2005) *Scaling social impact, Foundation Strategy Group Perspectives for Private Foundations*, Winter). While improving the management and capacity of non-profit organisations undoubtedly has a role to play in achieving widespread and sustainable change it is only a means; focussing on means should not lead us to lose sight of ends.

Lack of Awareness of Needs and Opportunities

Another obstacle may be lack of awareness of the opportunities. Foundations' horizons tend to be bounded by what nonprofit organisations apply for, and nonprofit organisations tend to apply for what they think foundations will fund.

One reason why organisations engaged in social change oriented work may be reluctant to apply to foundations, or may fail to get funding when they do, is that work for change sits uneasily with the current cult of performance measures, outputs and outcomes. As the vignettes and case studies below illustrate, change work requires luck, favourable circumstances, flexibility to adapt and to be opportunistic, and its directly attributable outcomes are often difficult to measure and pin down to specific timetables. Change work often requires a very high level of trust in grantees, allowing them to make adjustments and diversions as they go along; again this sits uneasily with the current emphasis on clear 'contracts' between funder and funded.

This creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. To a large extent foundations live in worlds presented to them by (self-selecting) grant applicants.

Lack of Understanding of the Law

For many foundations the greatest obstacle to work designed to promote sustainable change may be the fear that this is against the law. It is a myth that working for change – even campaigning – is prohibited by charity law; there is ample space within the law for foundations to contribute to public policy.

Lack of Peer Support

Foundations have an understandable desire to see 'results' and a fear of having all of their funds tied up for years to come. Change generally requires time spans that are longer than many foundations are prepared to commit to. Again this may create a vicious circle in which foundations are reluctant to embark on, say, 10 year commitments; or, when they do engage with change projects, fund for too short a time and are then disappointed with the lack of clear results.

Foundations need the encouragement of their peers to persevere – and to know when to exit. They need to be able to share support and advice, and to have inspiring examples of success (and lessons from 'failure'). They need to be able to remind each other that achieving change may be difficult, uncertain and slow but if it achieves wider, more sustainable impact then it may be no more uncertain, slow and costly than year after year of grantmaking to achieve short term assistance which is constantly in need of renewal.

It's Too Hard

Foundations that recognise the need to engage with widespread sustainable social change may conclude that this is 'just too hard'. But as the case studies below illustrate, achieving widespread sustainable change may require different practices but these are not too hard for many foundations.

Lack of 'How to' Knowledge

Even if they are inclined to adopt a change oriented approach foundations may be deterred by lack of knowledge about where and how to start.

Lack of Models and Stories

Underlying this study was an assumption that in order to promote discussion of, and engagement with, this type of approach we need inspiring models and stories showing what is involved in practice and what can be achieved.

Philanthropy provides a wealth of stories that illustrate the range of actions open to those who seek to achieve a more just society – and some may serve to quell some of trustees’ fears. For example, when the Oak Foundation decided to fund legal representation for Guantanamo detainees it considered this a very risky undertaking until it found that 500 top US lawyers were supporting this.

Most of the available stories are from the US. The funders of this study wanted stories from the UK and wider Europe (for some examples see de Borms, L.T. (2005) *Foundations Creating Impact in a Globalised World*, London: John Wiley and Sons; Anheier, H and Leat, D. (2006) *Creative Philanthropy*, London: Routledge). This book starts to provide some of those stories.

CHAPTER 2

Assessing Foundations’ Roles in Change

Where to Start?

Illustrating foundations’ roles in achieving longer term change is not as easy as it might seem. The first problem is where to start – with examples of social change, or with foundations? We decided to combine the two approaches by looking for examples of successful social change in which foundations had been involved in various ways. This approach has several implications. First, these are retrospective ‘edited’ stories. In other words, what people tell us about important events and activities may be incomplete, and may be selected in ways that ‘make sense’ in terms of how and why they understand change to happen.

Focus on Success

Another implication of the approach adopted is that in the real world things go wrong or do not work out as planned – but here the focus is on success. This was deliberate. We wanted to illustrate what could be achieved. Nevertheless we also need stories of things that ‘go wrong.’ We often learn more from failure than success, and, in any case, if we learn then nothing is a complete failure.

What Counts as Success?

There is also an issue about what counts as success. Success was defined broadly to include more interest and awareness about an issue, policy change and effective implementation. Clearly, measuring/seeing policy change is easier than measuring interest and awareness, and effective implementation. We were also conscious that it would be all too easy to focus on policy change and to neglect the less tangible, less dramatic, equally important, longer term matter of effective implementation of policy.

In thinking about success we were also conscious that success is relative. Intervening near the end of a process when an issue is already firmly on the public agenda is quite different from getting an issue onto the agenda in the first place. Getting an issue onto the public agenda also depends on its 'unpopularity'. But unpopularity has at least two dimensions. An issue may be unpopular in the sense of being neglected or it may be unpopular in the sense of attracting hostility. In some respects it may be easier to work with issues that are contentious because it is likely that at least some people will feel passionately for the issue; working in the corridors of indifference can be a disheartening process. Success is also more or less hard depending on who or what has to change. Some 'industries' are notoriously resistant to change, some less so. And success is also relative in terms of its scale. How do we compare work that has high impact on grantees with work that has lesser impact way beyond immediate grantees?

Understanding Causes

Assessing the roles of foundations in change clearly involves issues of causality. A foundation may do or fund some activity designed to achieve some end and sometime later that end is achieved. Can we then say that the foundation's intervention caused that end to be achieved? The obvious answer is that we cannot. In the real world change is rarely achieved in one heroic gesture by one actor. All we can do is make some informed judgements about how the foundation's intervention related to other actors and factors in the environment to achieve the change sought.

Causality has another dimension in the case of foundations. When we look at an example of change in which a foundation was involved whose impact are we looking at? Who or what made the difference? Who gets the credit? Again we have to accept that in most cases of change there is more than one actor, factor and foundation involved and it is rare to be able to separate out or quantify x or y's contribution. Foundations may do nothing more

than provide the baking powder that makes change arise – but although baking powder requires other ingredients and conditions to work it is still an essential part of the mix. The case studies and vignettes below do not present foundations as white knight heroes and heroines. Foundations play different roles and may, in some senses, only be bit players but nevertheless may be crucial to the plot. Instead of quibbling about the size of the foundation's role it may be more instructive to consider what role the foundation played that could only have been played by a foundation.

Time Scales and Sustainability

In assessing foundations' roles in achieving change we also need to think about time scales. As already noted, there is an issue about starting points – the stage at which the foundation became involved. It is also important to consider when impact is assessed. Some interventions may have considerable impact in the short term but that impact then diminishes, or the change achieved fizzles out. Other interventions may have very little impact in the short term but considerable impact in the longer term.

Time scales raise the issue of sustainability. There is an argument that systemic change always leads to sustainability. This is not always true and not always desirable. As circumstances change policies and practices may also need to change.

Assessing foundations' roles in achieving change has to take into account the possibility of unintended effects for good and ill. In some cases a well intentioned and in many ways successful intervention may deliver collateral damage that needs to be put on the balance sheet of foundation achievements.

Different Roles in Change

When people talk about foundations – and often when foundations talk about themselves – money is likely to be the first consideration. But providing funding is only one of the ways in which foundations

can contribute to change, and funding may have a variety of immediate purposes. A paper written for Community Foundations of Canada's social justice programme identifies a range of ways in which [community] foundations can engage in social justice grantmaking.

- ≈ Strengthening the capacity of those most affected
- ≈ Building capacity for mobilisation around social justice issues
- ≈ Advancing learning about social justice work and issues
- ≈ Supporting advocacy and awareness initiatives
- ≈ Providing leadership to contribute to the social justice and advocacy work of others
- ≈ Promoting awareness of social justice issues
- ≈ Building understanding of policy making and its impact
- ≈ Assuming a lead or collaborative role in advancing social justice work
- ≈ Spearheading advocacy initiatives on broad-based community issues
- ≈ Promoting the need for advocacy with the broader public

(Hanzl, B. and Hunsaker, J. (2004) *Building Capacity for Social Justice The Social Justice Spectrum: Seeing our work through a social justice lens: A Perspective for Community Foundations*, Jan. Community Foundations of Canada: 3-6. www.community-fdn.ca)

As the vignettes and case studies illustrate foundations may do more than fund projects – important though that is. Foundations may act as convenors, risk takers, knowledge entrepreneurs, issue entrepreneurs, and advocates. The role of foundations in contributing to change is about much more than money.

These were some of the issues we grappled with in embarking on the study and in selecting the case studies and vignettes. We do not have easy answers to these issues and readers need to take them into account when assessing the case studies and vignettes presented in the next section.

CHAPTER 3

Case studies of change

While some of the other cases in this collection concern issues that were unpopular in the sense of being controversial or challenging conventional opinion, the following two stories are about an issue that was unpopular in the sense of being neglected. The needs of looked after children were hardly radical or contested – they were simply ignored.

These two stories also illustrate roles of foundations that go beyond providing funding.

1

The Frank Buttle Trust

Introduction

The first of these stories is that of The Frank Buttle Trust's efforts to improve the opportunity and experience of higher education for young care leavers. The Trust actively sought funding from others, as well as using its time, experience and networks to change policy and practice at a national organisational level, to ensure implementation of existing legislation, and to influence further legislation, and the quality of support provided for care leavers in higher education.

The Issue

The Frank Buttle Trust aims to 'launch children and young people into a brighter future'. One aspect of this work involved seeking to improve the opportunities for and the experience of higher education for care leavers.

Under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 local authorities have a statutory obligation to provide financial and personal support up to the age of 24 for young people formerly in care who are in full-time education. The Act places an obligation on local authorities to provide financial support, but there was no systematic evidence about the opportunities and experiences of care leavers entering university other than a limited amount of research indicating that care leavers may be at a disadvantage in both getting to and staying at university.

What Changed

By early 2007, six years after commissioning a five-year action research project, *By Degrees: From Care to University*, undertaken by Professor Sonia Jackson at the Thomas Coram Research Unit of the Institute of Education, University of London, the Trust:

- ≈ had raised awareness about the needs of care leavers;
- ≈ recruited significant support from a range of bodies in the further and higher education sector to a statement of commitment to supporting care leavers in higher education;
- ≈ launched a Quality Mark for Care Leavers in Higher Education (for which a growing number of universities are applying);
- ≈ had the Quality Mark endorsed in Clause 7.35 of the Green Paper *Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care*, presented to Parliament in October 2006;
- ≈ the Quality Mark is cited as a case study in the subsequent White Paper *Time for Change*.

Background

The environment in which the Trust started this work was not so much hostile to the issue as indifferent. The needs of young care leavers were largely unknown and ignored; the assumption being that once they 'graduated' from care they could, by and large, take care of themselves. For the unknown number who went from care to higher

education, the assumption was that these young people entered a supportive environment in which they were no better or worse off than any other student and were, as the law required, supported by local authorities. However, by 2001, it had become clear to the Trust through its applications from care leavers in higher education, that such students faced challenges very different from the majority of students.

The first step was to gather some systematic evidence that went beyond impression and anecdote. The second step was to act upon that evidence to improve opportunities for and experience of higher education for young care leavers. As outlined below, the Trust faced both obstacles and opportunities.

The Organisation

The Frank Buttle Trust was founded in 1937 by an Anglican priest who went on to work in the East End of London. It became operational in 1953 after he had raised a £1 million endowment. The aim of the Trust has always been 'to ensure that children and young people in desperate need are given a brighter future.' In 2006, the Trust's total income was £3.09m, of which £1.89m was investment income and the balance, £1.2m, was donations and grants. The Trust employs 13 full-time equivalent staff members.

The Trust is relatively unusual, first, in combining giving grants to meet the needs of individual children, young people and families, with raising funds to supplement its endowment income; second, in acting as an 'agent' for other grantmakers; and third, in working in collaboration with a wide network of referring agencies, educational trusts and other grant making trusts and charities in delivering its grant aid programmes.

For this Trust, 'taking on a role in influencing policy development with government should not be seen as an 'add on', but should be an integral part of a grant-making trust's overall strategic plan' (McAndrew, G. (2006) *Trust and Foundation News*).

As the largest UK charity providing grants solely to individual children and young people across the UK, the Trust was in a potentially strong position to draw attention to the needs of care leavers in higher education. In addition, its newly appointed Chief Executive, Gerri McAndrew, had a background in both social services and the voluntary child care sector and knew the field well. Another strength was the Trust's close 'ear to the ground' – it had become aware of the problems facing care leavers as a result of its overview knowledge derived from grant applications.

On the other hand, the Trustees were very clear that their primary business was giving grants to individuals to relieve immediate hardship; they did not see their primary role as influencing policy and practice and were averse to 'campaigning'. Furthermore, the Trust had little experience or track record for policy influence and few networks in higher education.

The Story

As noted above, in 2001, in the light of anecdotal knowledge from applications, and some earlier research, the Trust (under its previous Director) embarked on a five-year action research project to evaluate the experience of those who had moved from care to university. To ensure credibility and sound research, the project was conducted by Professor Sonia Jackson at the Thomas Coram Research Unit of the Institute of Education, University of London (for further details of the research project and its findings visit the Trust's website: www.buttletrust.org). In order to ensure that the research project did not reduce the Trust's ability to give grants to children and young people in need, the Trust raised funds from other sources to cover the costs of the research. The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, The Grand Charity, KPMG Foundation, The Pilgrim Trust and the Department for Education and Skills all funded the research which led to the final report: *Going to university from care*.

When McAndrew took up post, she was very clear that the findings should not simply 'sit on a shelf, like far too much research'. It was agreed that the principal aim of the project was to use the evidence gathered to advise government, local authorities, universities and colleges in order to:

- ≈ increase the numbers of young people in care going to university;
- ≈ enable them to make the most of their time there and to complete their courses successfully;
- ≈ help local authorities to fulfil their obligations as corporate parents;
- ≈ raise awareness among social workers, teachers, foster carers and residential workers' (Jackson, S., Ajayi, S., and Quigley, M. (2005) *Going to University from Care*, London: Frank Buttle Trust).

The research was the first step in both understanding the issues and providing systematic evidence to draw attention to the issues and identify recommendations for action. Once the research was completed, considerable time was spent on clustering the recommendations to target different groups. It had become clear to the Trust that if the needs of care leavers entering university were to be addressed, a number of audiences at various levels and in different sectors needed to be influenced to change. These included local authorities, residential units and foster carers, as well as institutions of higher education and the government.

The Trust's second step in achieving change was a major conference to launch the report in May 2005. McAndrew says: 'I was just lucky. When we were launching the research report I realised that it fitted with the Government's policy agenda of widening participation. So I invited key people from the major agencies to speak at the conference and asked Ruth Kelly (then Secretary of State for Education and Skills) to write a foreword to the report'. Then McAndrew did not have any prior relationship with these people but says: 'I just went to the top'. The aim of 'going to the top' was not merely to make key players aware of the issue but also to gain maximum media coverage.

The effect of the conference was far greater than the Trust had anticipated. McAndrew says: 'I think people were so humbled by the story we told - and it was the care leavers themselves who really sold it. I think everyone was shocked by just how extreme the findings were. These really were young people struggling against all the odds.'

The Trust knew that a conference was not enough – however prestigious and however much media coverage was achieved. The Trust had mounted a widespread dissemination programme (funded by KPMG Foundation) to raise awareness of the educational needs of children in and leaving care and to encourage local authorities and higher education providers to recognise and meet the financial and other support needs of care leavers entering higher education.

The conference had produced an influential, insider, champion in the person of Geoff Layer, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Bradford University, who was a key speaker. Layer recalls that he arrived at the conference ready to give a presentation on participation, but before the presentation he had lunch with some of the care leavers present: 'Hearing them talk was embarrassing. I was ashamed that I understood so little. My presentation was inadequate'. McAndrew recalls: 'He said to me "so what are you going to do? You've got to do something". And I said to him "I can't change the whole of higher education on my own". Again, as in other cases in this collection, the 'what next?' or 'so what?' question.

Layer suggested the idea of a Quality Mark. This led the Trust to embark on a further initiative: the *Higher Education Commitment to Care Leavers*. With the help of Layer and others, the Trust convened key institutions and organisations in higher education to discuss the idea of a quality mark. The result was the *Commitment and The Frank Buttle Trust Quality Mark for Care Leavers in Higher Education*.

Briefly, the *Commitment* is a charter through which higher education providers can demonstrate their commitment to supporting care leavers, linking this to other schemes such as the government's Aimhigher programme (to widen participation by under-represented groups in higher education). Having signed up to the *Commitment*, further and higher education providers may apply to be awarded the *Quality Mark*.

Again, the Trust ensured publicity and high level support for the *Commitment* and the *Quality Mark*. These were launched by the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning at a reception in the House of Lords hosted by Lord Dearing in 2006, and both were endorsed by Ministers as important initiatives in encouraging aspiration and opportunities for care leavers. The launch was accompanied by a concerted and targeted media campaign to generate interest in the issues facing care leavers entering higher education, clearly linking these issues to the government's social inclusion policy.

At the time of writing (May 2007) 15 universities have been awarded the Quality Mark, and 20 are in the process of applying, with expressions of interest every day. One unforeseen issue is that, as McAndrew says, 'our little Quality Mark is testing all their (universities') systems and processes. It's a much bigger change than we realised'. An initiative initially designed to benefit care leavers may yet benefit all students, especially those who are in some way vulnerable.

Meanwhile, the Trust was continuing to work with civil servants with whom it had previous links via McAndrew's previous experience and networks. When the government launched its "Every Child Matters" initiative, the Trust was ready and willing to help civil servants make suggestions for activities around the needs of care leavers.

One result was that the *Quality Mark* was included in the Green Paper *Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care*, presented to Parliament in 2006. In addition, the Green Paper makes various other recommendations suggested by the Trust, including a national bursary for care leavers going to university, training for key staff in understanding the needs of young people who have been in care, mentoring support from older to new undergraduates, and greater outreach work to encourage children in care to consider university and to access information on financial support. McAndrew suggests: ‘We got everything we asked for in the Green Paper, largely I think because we had ideas and knowledge and we were willing to share them with civil servants.’ These developments were carried forward to the government’s White Paper “Care Matters: Time for Change.”

There are two other seemingly small but important achievements. First, the Quality Mark will be on the UCAS website, thus enabling care leavers to take this into consideration in deciding to which institution they wish to apply. Second, UCAS have agreed to include a box care leavers may tick on the application form; this means that for the first time there will be some statistics on care leavers applying to university. National statistics are an important basis for subsequent consideration of support needs both pre and during university.

Methods

The Frank Buttle Trust’s methods included:

≈ Building on grantmaking

‘Grantmaking isn’t a sideline, it’s the core of what we do and the base from which we learn, spot emerging issues and anomalies, and identify areas for change.’

≈ Re-framing the issue internally to get Board support

For reasons discussed above it was important to re-frame the issue internally to highlight the clear link between the Trust’s mission and the activities undertaken. McAndrew says: ‘The Trustees realised that if they could sort this out for care leavers (i.e. better support from others and full implementation of existing statutory policies on provision and support for care leavers) they would not only be fulfilling part of the mission of the Trust but also, hopefully, reducing subsequent calls on our resources.’

As outlined above, the Trust employed a range of other methods, including:

- ≈ Building an evidence base
- ≈ Telling human stories
- ≈ High profile targeted dissemination
- ≈ Playing into other agendas
- ≈ Recruiting an insider champion
- ≈ Convening to ensure implementation
- ≈ Providing constructive suggestions to insiders
- ≈ Working with others to extend resources, skills, networks and credibility

Funding

Over the 6 years of the project, the total cost of the research, including its dissemination and the subsequent development of the Quality Mark was £680K.

As noted above, one of the challenges for the Trust was to ensure that this programme did not reduce its ability to meet the needs of individual children and young people in need through grant aid. This was achieved by raising the costs of the research project from other sources, as well as by working collaboratively to extend the impact of the project and its findings and recommendations.

McAndrew reflects that collaboration has many benefits, and some costs: ‘Collaboration enables you to get information and skills you couldn’t provide on your own; and it allows you to punch above your weight. But it’s really hard to manage, it takes time and energy and requires constantly focusing on the outcome. And it’s hard to keep to a timetable and to keep partners involved over the longer term.’

Factors in Success

Success Factors In Brief

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| ≈ Building an evidence base | ≈ Beyond the ‘usual suspects’ |
| ≈ Building credibility and reputation | ≈ The message not the messenger |
| ≈ Focusing on the positive | ≈ Going to the top |
| ≈ Focusing on the outcome | ≈ Following through |
| ≈ Passion, persistence and drive | ≈ Staying non-aligned |
| ≈ Harnessing others’ agendas | ≈ Providing ‘bite sized’ recommendations |
| ≈ Time for constructive lobbying | ≈ Leadership |
| ≈ Working collaboratively | ≈ Telling stories |
| | ≈ Believing in the issue |

Those involved attribute the success of the project and the dissemination programme to a variety of factors including:

≈ Building an evidence base

The Trust was willing to spend time and resources gathering evidence through commissioned research. McAndrew points out: ‘Anecdotal information isn’t sufficient. There’s no point in going to a Minister without your research’. From the viewpoint of government: ‘It was powerful that this was a five-year research project. The DfES couldn’t have done an in-depth five-year study of such a particular group – there would always be competing priorities.’

≈ Building credibility and reputation

The Trust spent time building expertise in the area it was working in. McAndrew: ‘You’ve got to know what you are doing and you’ve got to have street cred – or build it’. It built a reputation for sound knowledge. ‘We’re not a household name. We needed good evidence to establish us as knowledgeable informed contributors’; and it ensured its research was robust. ‘We’re not research experts. We chose experts and we bought that expertise in’. One commentator notes: ‘The research took five years but it, and their later efforts, brought a lot of credibility. It’s worth noting that the Quality Mark only took about a year – people listen to you when you’ve built that sort of credibility.’

≈ Focusing on the positive

One commentator from within government suggests: ‘The Frank Buttle Trust research was so important because instead of looking at failure it was looking at resilience, success and achievement. It turned an old problem on its head, focusing on the conditions under which looked-after children do well.’

Later ‘Buttle’s message wasn’t so much critical, but rather made the case that if authority x can do something, then authority y should be able to do so too. It was about encouraging local authorities to raise their game.’

≈ Focusing on the outcome

This had at least two strands. First, it meant managing the research carefully. ‘Managing the research was complicated partly because we had raised money to commission the research from a variety of sources, but we were the grantholders and accountable to the funders. We also needed to be clear about what we wanted from it.’ Second, it meant being willing to work collaboratively. This included working with the project funders and working with civil servants and Ministers to inform and support their aims and interests. It also meant using the skills, expertise and networks of partners. McAndrew says: ‘What kept us together, and kept me going, was to keep on focusing on the outcome. Collaboration is about focusing on the outcome – not getting caught up in egos.’

≈ Passion, persistence and drive

‘We could have stopped at various points. You need passion and determination, strong leadership and drive.’ One civil servant commented: ‘Buttle’s role was partly about being able to maintain focus – not getting diverted to other priorities. That’s hard for government – and it seems for some other funders.’ ‘There was a real value in the fact that Buttle was always there as a reference point – even though a range of people were involved. I dip in and out, this issue is only part of my job. I might not think about the issue for two months but when I do Buttle is there.’

≈ Positioning to link to other agendas

The Trust quickly realised the way in which its particular concern – in this case, the needs of care leavers – could be linked to wider government policy concerns to do with opportunity, exclusion, and participation. The Trust explicitly made those links and positioned its issue clearly within an existing agenda to which government was already committed.

≈ Time for constructive lobbying

This involved putting in time and effort to lobby Ministers, writing to them, insisting on meetings with civil servants, demonstrating the need for change with tangible, practical suggestions. It also meant taking time and effort to build networks, ‘getting people into position and bringing people with you’.

≈ Beyond the ‘usual suspects’

McAndrew explains: ‘The trust expanded the issue and awareness by using its ability to bring in all the key stakeholders – local authorities, DfES, schools, universities and so on.’ ‘Buttle added particular value by bringing in agencies who wouldn’t normally think about this. For example, care leavers are only a very small group within universities so they tended not to be a priority.’ A civil servant commented: ‘It was the move from a research base to widening participation that was so powerful. The Trust used its position to make appropriate connections. Civil servants can’t do that so easily – we had to go through the right channels.’

≈ Sharing – focus on the message not the messenger

Being willing to share knowledge and help. McAndrew says: ‘One of the keys in all this is to be willing to spend time helping and sharing knowledge. Some people seem to be quite protective of their knowledge. We wanted to share it with others so that it got used.’

≈ Going to the top – identifying problem solvers

‘Change can’t happen unless it’s led from the top’, explains McAndrew. ‘I just went to the top and asked for Vice-Chancellors and Pro-Vice-Chancellors. This is the most satisfying work I’ve ever done because I was working with problem solvers.’

≈ Taking the next step – following through to implementation

McAndrew is certain that: ‘There’s no way the research would have gone anywhere if we hadn’t run with it, publicised it, made sure the recommendations were spelt out – and then followed through on getting them implemented. Often trusts and foundations fund research but then don’t follow it through to implementation’. (It’s worth noting here that this, in effect, involved a whole new initiative and round of funding).

≈ Staying non-aligned

McAndrew stresses: ‘It was important that we as a Trust had no party political alignment, and we very carefully didn’t seek any. And we had no axe to grind in terms of other rivalries’.

≈ Luck and opportunism

McAndrew acknowledges that the initiative was well-timed and, in that sense, was lucky. It fitted with the wider government agenda Every Child Matters and with university agendas to meet expectations of participation and inclusion. But, as in other cases, in this connection it was the Trust that made these links and positioned itself to catch a wave of interest.

≈ Taking a leadership role

One interesting point made by some external commentators was that the Trust took a leadership role, bringing people and agencies together unhampered by the protocols to which civil servants would be required to conform.

In addition, the Trust and others involved attach significance to:

≈ Providing recommendations in bite sized chunks

≈ Telling stories to generate emotion and passion

Making statistics mean something in human terms;

≈ Believing in the issue

McAndrew says: ‘If you have an issue you so believe in, then not knowing people isn’t a problem. I didn’t know anyone in the higher education sector. I just looked at who I needed to reach and I phoned them’.

In Retrospect

What, in retrospect, would have been done differently?

≈ More resources to manage collaboration

‘We should have put more dedicated resources into managing the partnerships. You underestimate the time it takes’, says McAndrew.

≈ Avoiding becoming type-cast

McAndrew points out that this is very important: ‘Success has a life of its own and it affects your work and your profile. Care leavers are just a small part of our work but, if we hadn’t spotted it in time, we could have been type-cast as ‘the care leavers’ trust’.

≈ Continuing coverage

The Trust employed a media company to work on the launch of the Quality Mark. ‘We got a lot out of that but we didn’t continue because of resources’, McAndrew concludes. ‘Maybe we could have carried on longer to further raise the profile of care leavers’ successes’.

Vignette

Another example of a Trust working to combine awareness raising with system and practical change comes from City Bridge Trust.

Children and Young People Abused Through Prostitution

In 2003 City Bridge Trust was funding a number of locally based services for young people abused through prostitution in London. It was clear to the Trust that services were patchy and child protection policies and practices were variable. The Trust decided that research was needed to establish the nature and level of current need, highlighting service gaps and promoting best practice. Rather than waiting for a grant application, the Trust commissioned Barnardo's, as a body with credibility with key agencies, to undertake this research. The report of the research 'Meeting the needs of sexually exploited young people in London' was launched in July 2005 at a conference at which Cherie Booth QC and Baroness Scotland spoke and key policy makers attended. The report provoked a national debate.

On the basis of the findings of the research the Trust invested a further £295,000 to enable Barnardo's to develop a new service for young people in South London (an area identified in the research as containing high levels of risk). Through partnership working with Children's Services, three boroughs and the Met, 50 children have been rescued. A successful partnership bid to the Home Office's 'Invest to Save' programme has enabled Barnardo's to recruit a special detective sergeant police officer, a senior worker and a missing child worker.

Although it is too early to establish the overall impact of the work, much has been achieved in system changes and recognition that child sexual exploitation is a serious and more widespread problem than previously realised.

(adapted from City Bridge Trust Annual Review 2007).

2

Paul Hamlyn Foundation: Right to Read

Introduction

This story about putting into practice children's rights is again about an issue that was 'unpopular' in the sense of being neglected. Like the Frank Buttle Trust, in the previous story, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) played a very active role, going beyond funding, in achieving the change it sought. Apart from playing an active role PHF also played a somewhat unusual role: working directly with local authorities as those with the power to effect change.

The Issue

Most Looked After Children (LAC) achieve well below their potential in education. This may be due to low expectations, lack of motivation, or simply lack of books and support for informal learning. Libraries, providing free books and other learning resources, are one obvious, and widely available, potential source of benefits for LACs and their carers. But PHF discovered that in reality libraries were doing very little in this regard. Social services, education and libraries rarely talked to each other; library rules inadvertently deterred LACs and their carers from using libraries; and residential homes and foster carers might, or might not, encourage book ownership and library use.

'The Paul Hamlyn Foundation set up the Right to Read Fund to change all this: to get looked after children and their carers excited about books and to ensure that libraries were reaching out to LAC and providing them with the tailored support they needed' (Viv Griffiths, Right to Read evaluation report, www.phf.org.uk).

What Changed

After four years PHF succeeded in encouraging libraries to work in partnership with Social/Children's Services and Education Departments to develop long-term, sustainable strategies for engaging LAC with books and reading. Libraries are working more flexibly with LACs and their carers; social services have a better understanding of what libraries can offer to LACs and have encouraged residential and foster carers to become more aware of the importance of reading and access to good quality reading materials; and Education departments have a better understanding of the role of libraries as informal learning environments. For the children themselves there have been a variety of benefits from increased confidence in reading and better communication skills to improved SATs scores.

The Right to Read checklist including training of library staff, involvement of library services in training for carers and social workers, library membership as part of children's personal learning plans, and earmarking of funds to buy books for children in care was incorporated into the Green Paper *Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care*.

Background

All this was achieved in the face of a number of obstacles. As the evaluator's report notes: 'Sometimes it has been an uphill struggle. We have learned that foster carers and residential workers are often ill-equipped to support the reading of those in their care. And the scheme has highlighted some of the barriers to LAC accessing libraries and shown how difficult it can be for Libraries, Social Services and Education within local authorities to work together'. The scheme was trying to influence entrenched hierarchies and a lack of understanding of the potential of libraries, as well as front-line staff with little decision making power and sometimes under-developed skills to relate to children and their carers.

The Organisation(s)

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation was established as an independent grant-making foundation in 1987 by Paul Hamlyn the publisher and philanthropist. In 2001 Paul Hamlyn left the bulk of his estate to the foundation thus substantially increasing its assets and income and making it one of the larger UK independent foundations. In 2005-06 PHF spending increased by 46% to £12.8 million.

The foundation's mission is to maximise the opportunities for individuals and communities to realise their potential and to experience and enjoy a better quality of life, now and in the future. The foundation is particularly concerned with children, young people and those who are disadvantaged.

The foundation describes itself as 'strategic – wanting to make changes to policy and opinion; enabling – giving opportunities and realising potential; courageous – fighting prejudice and taking risks; focussed and flexible – through targeted and open grant schemes; supportive – giving advice to applicants who need it; fair – clear application processes, equality of opportunity; value for money – controlling costs and expecting money to be well used' (www.phf.org.uk).

Although the foundation is primarily a grant maker it is willing to spend money doing things itself if this will help it to achieve the outcomes it seeks.

At the time of the birth of the Right to Read programme, PHF had previously funded schools through a small grants programmes but had never funded local authorities directly.

The Story

In 2000 PHF began exploratory conversations with the Who Cares? Trust about improving the literacy of looked after children. These conversations led the PHF to develop a one-year pilot in 2001 to improve access to books and reading for LAC in five local authorities. The pilot, which was coordinated by the Who Cares? Trust and the National Literacy Association, initially focussed on involving education and social services departments as the lead agencies in relation to LAC.

The experience of these 5 pilot schemes highlighted the complexity of the issue, as well as the isolation, and difficulty of involving libraries. The pilot schemes also confirmed that libraries, education and social services were not working effectively together in relation to LAC. In order to address this issue PHF decided to create the Right to Read fund to promote the literacy of LAC within the context of a broader programme to secure lasting change to improve access to libraries for disaffected/disadvantaged young people. The Reading and Libraries Challenge Fund was born, with the Right to Read fund, focussing on LAC as one strand within that.

After the initial pilot, and with the formal creation of the overall Reading and Libraries Challenge Fund, PHF took charge of the Right to Read programme rather than working through others. This was done for several reasons. The programme was central to the Foundation's wider strategy of improving access to libraries; the Foundation felt that this programme would provide valuable, more generally applicable, knowledge about working with local authorities, and the PHF trustees believed that local authorities held the key to achieving longer term sustainable change.

PHF's first step was to mail all Chief Librarians with details of the Right to Read fund's aims and application procedures. Preference was given to collaborative projects involving, for example, libraries, social services and the local education authority, and which could continue after PHF funding came to an end. Grants were normally for up to £50,000 and for no more than three years. Applicants

could be not-for-profit organisations or local authorities. The guidelines required that applicants must 'be able to demonstrate their commitment to the project by covering at least 25% of the total project costs. Some of this support can be in kind. Priority will be given to partnership projects. A strong commitment to the project from senior management in each of the partner organisations is required'. There was no standard application form but applicants were asked to provide certain categories of information.

This led to a poor response and the first two funding rounds were under-subscribed. At this stage it was felt that one obstacle to applications was that an application might be seen as an admission of weakness in current services for LACs, or that local authority structures were not well-suited to taking risks.

To encourage applications PHF then put considerable effort into promoting the fund via training days for libraries, social service and education departments as well as funding The Network (specialists in training for libraries and museums) to develop a training programme for libraries working with LAC. In addition to encouraging awareness of the issues and application procedures these training initiatives were designed to promote networking between departments and authorities. PHF also worked through the National Literacy Trust's website to promote projects in libraries working with LAC, highlighting best practice and 'how to' guides.

PHF regards this sort of additional input as an important ingredient in its special initiatives. In this programme PHF also provided more support to applicants than it would normally do in thinking through the problems and how to address them.

This need to help people think through the nature of the problems and how to address them seems likely to be a common characteristic in working on neglected problems. Lack of understanding of the problem – and what to do – may be both a cause and effect of a neglected problem.

In total 50 local authorities received grants, and by the final funding round PHF received four times the number of applications it could support. But the story does not end there.

PHF had heard that a Green Paper on the needs of looked after children was being produced. They saw this as a real opportunity to expand the impact of the programme way beyond the participating local authorities and thus benefit all looked after children. PHF made contact with DfES and with DCMS and provided both with the latest evaluation reports from the programme and a set of recommendations for all libraries 'very much with DfES requirements in mind'. The initial response to this contact was 'a fair degree of enthusiasm; we probably hit them at the right time when they were looking for something around out of hours learning, and the costs of this were fairly modest so it fitted'. Conversations then continued over months, aided by various champions including Estelle Morris (a PHF board member) and the Who Cares? Trust who 'helped open doors for us', as well as support from DCMS.

The result was a small but significant section in the Green Paper recommending dissemination of the lessons of the Right to Read programme to all authorities, support of a Right to Read checklist including training of library staff, involvement of library services in training for carers and social workers, library membership as part of children's personal learning plans, and earmarking of funds to buy books for children in care.

Funding

PHF contributed £2 million in grants with a further £125,000-150,000 spent in support costs. Twenty five per cent of funding for each project was supplied by the local authority as a condition of the grant in order to demonstrate commitment.

Methods

≈ Going where the power lies

The decision to work directly with local authorities was described as 'unusual, but surprisingly uncontroversial'. In the light of the above, trustees were convinced that this was where they needed to work to achieve long term change. Working with voluntary organisations would have run the risk of 'losing' valuable experience and knowledge of how to work with local authorities, and merely postponed the issue of how to influence local authorities. Whereas some foundations are restricted to funding charities, PHF was able to work with local authorities because its constitution allows it to fund charitable activity.

≈ Allowing for local circumstances and diversity

PHF was not prescriptive about the sorts of schemes that would work best in the particular local context. The important point was that schemes were designed to bring LAC to libraries, involving both children and carers.

≈ Ensuring high level support

Applications with high level local authority support were favoured. The minimum support required was the Head of the Library Service, together with support from social services and education as well as plans for an inclusive steering group. 'If in doubt we did some digging around to make sure that this was more than a paper exercise. One result was that some people were speaking to each other for the first time'. It is worth emphasising that this may be seen as a positive achievement, irrespective of whether a grant was actually given.

≈ Persistence, promotion and networking

When the response to the first call for applications was low PHF persisted, investing more time and effort in promotion and networking to encourage awareness of the scheme and applications.

≈ Providing support and information

PHF funded training programmes, as well as working with others to highlight best practice, to encourage libraries and others to realise the needs and the potential. In the later stages of the programme PHF also worked to supply timely and relevant information to inform drafting of the Green Paper.

≈ Thinking beyond grants

Sometimes foundations can have an important effect in changing awareness and thinking simply by encouraging applications around a particular topic. Rejected applications – for whatever reason – are often seen as a waste of everyone’s time. But as PHF points out: ‘As we developed the good practice bank we were able to use that so that now even local authorities who do not receive a grant can and do benefit just from the process and the information and the thinking encouraged.’

≈ Maintaining focus on system change

‘Experiments’ are one thing. Sustainability is another. By deliberately focusing on changes in policy and practice using the (time-limited) programme to raise awareness and bring agencies and departments together, PHF appears to have achieved significant change. Although PHF believes there is still some way to go: ‘It is particularly gratifying to note that virtually every project states that sustainability will be achieved by fundamental changes in the ways in which the library service operates for looked after children and their carers and by their commitment to sustaining the powerful partnerships which have been created during the lifetime of the project. In fact, 47% of authorities said that the project had either been mainstreamed, including in a few cases the project worker’s post, or that additional funding had been promised to sustain the main aspects of the work, which bodes well for looked after children’s Right to Read.’ (Evaluation report).

Building an evidence base

Through its grantmaking to projects and by careful on-going evaluation PHF built an evidence base demonstrating both how to achieve change and the effects of that. This proved invaluable in subsequently getting its recommendations incorporated into the Green Paper.

Factors in Success

To what does PHF owe its success?

Success Factors in Brief

- | | |
|---|---|
| ≈ Investing in getting through to those with power to affect change | ≈ Involving key individuals with credibility and networks |
| ≈ Dissemination | ≈ Involving young people themselves |
| ≈ Tailoring information to audience needs | ≈ Encouraging partnerships between services |
| ≈ Opportunism | |

≈ Investing in getting through to those with the power to affect change

‘It was a slow process. We had to win over authorities who were probably suspicious of this large grantmaker – a suspicion that we had some strange agenda. We had to understand that local authorities are fed up with chasing bits of project funding while feeling financially beleaguered at the centre.’

Later PHF invested time and effort in conversations with DfES and DCMS, to ensure wider change with impact beyond immediate grantees.

≈ Effective dissemination

PHF spent the majority of the support costs on evaluation and dissemination at various stages in the life of the project. Evaluation reports proved to be a powerful tool in demonstrating the worth of the programme and encouraging take up in the Green Paper.

≈ Tailoring information to audience needs

When attempting to influence the content of the Green Paper PHF made sure that the material supplied was geared to the needs of the DfES.

≈ Opportunism

Although not part of the original plan, when PHF learned of the impending Green Paper it seized the opportunity to increase the impact of the programme via a series of recommendations in the Green Paper.

≈ Involving key individuals and organisations with credibility and networks

PHF recruited key individuals and organisations with high credibility and wide networks to spread word about the programme, encourage applications, disseminate findings and get recommendations embedded in policy.

≈ Involving young people themselves

Projects involved young people as 'reading champions' getting them to say what books they wanted.

≈ Encouraging partnerships between services

When projects worked well it was where there was real input and real partnership between services within the authority. PHF had encouraged this as a condition of the grant.

In Retrospect

≈ More time

'In an ideal world we possibly would have given it another two or three years.'

≈ Change in the mainstream

'I've always felt slightly uneasy that funding was frequently used for external staff brought in for the purpose of the project. In retrospect it might have been better to insist that existing library staff should run the project. I believe we could also have done more earlier on to equip libraries and their partners with the tools to mainstream the work.'

Vignette

Northern Rock Foundation's work on domestic violence is another example of a foundation engaging with statutory bodies to change awareness and practice.

Providing information and promoting partnerships to change processes for dealing with domestic violence

When the Northern Rock Foundation decided to make domestic violence one of their special initiatives, it was already well known that only a proportion of domestic violence incidents were being reported to the police. What was less well known was the fact that only a very small number of those cases reached court or resulted in a conviction.

The Foundation commissioned some initial research into why this was. The research report identified several weaknesses in the system: the statutory agencies (including police and social services) were not being as thorough as they could be in following up reported, or suspected, cases; they were not working well together; and there was insufficient support for the victims in bringing a prosecution. On the basis of this research, the Foundation joined forces with other interested parties, including the police, social services, voluntary sector organisations and academics, to design a £4-million initiative to influence policy at national level.

Following an invitation to bid to take part in the initiative, the Foundation awarded one grant to Gateshead Domestic Violence Partnership, to build on an existing service called Safer Families. The other went to Cumbria Domestic Violence Strategic Management Board, a more recent partnership of public and voluntary sector agencies, which has subsequently taken on staff to deliver a new service (Let Go) in the Eden Valley and rural hinterland of Carlisle.

The Foundation notes: 'Historically, police handling of domestic abuse cases was seen as part of the problem but now they are allies in taking a direct and positive approach'; furthermore: 'The view used to be that cases should be victim led. The person experiencing domestic violence had to take the lead in deciding whether or not to prosecute. Cumbria Constabulary has agreed that it will refer all cases of domestic violence to Let Go, unless the victim specifically says that she (it is usually a woman) does not want it to. And now the police are able to prosecute on the victims' behalf. Let Go workers are able to offer intensive advocacy to victims, supporting them throughout the criminal justice process'.

As a direct result of that, in Cumbria, there was a 22% increase in successful prosecutions in one six-month period. In Gateshead, the police have made a similar agreement and referred 98 people to Safer Families in just one month.

(Adapted from Northern Rock Foundation review 2003–2006).

3 Scottish Land Fund

Introduction

The Scottish Land Fund (SLF) was established by the Big Lottery Fund (then New Opportunities Fund – NOF) in 2001, and administered by Highlands and Islands Enterprise in partnership with Scottish Enterprise. The case is an example of an ambitious attempt to ensure structural, systemic, economic and social change via alteration of the pattern of feudal land ownership in rural Scotland. The case study highlights the role of independent funders in contributing to effective implementation of legislation by providing both funding and support to encourage and sustain local action.

This programme is not only one of the most ambitious of the case studies in the scale of its aims, it is also one of the youngest. Begun in 2001 its effects are still unfolding and will probably take at least 10 years before they become fully apparent.

The Issue

SLF's aim was to contribute to sustainable social and economic development in rural Scotland by assisting communities to acquire, develop and manage local land or land assets, and to ensure effective implementation of the (then) proposed Land Reform (Scotland) Act.

What Changed

Originally set up with £10 million (increased in 2003 by £5 million), by 2006 SLF had helped to bring 173,000 acres of land under community ownership or management in small, rural communities (up to 10,000 people). SLF made awards to 188 groups, helping to create or sustain 186 full-time and 219 part-time jobs in rural Scotland.

SLF's highest profile achievements have been land buy-outs in Gigha, North Harris and Glencanisp and Drumrunie in Assynt. Gigha, for example, was bought by islanders in 2001 for £4 million, of which £2.5 million came from SLF. In addition to these high profile examples, SLF helped many communities take control of local woodlands, buildings and other assets.

The Fund's chairman claims that the Fund has 'helped build more confident and self-reliant communities and reverse declining population in remote parts of Scotland'. (quoted in *The Scotsman* 21st July 2006).

Background

This change was achieved in the context of both obstacles and opportunities. The obstacles included some degree of anxiety and hostility from some landowners, lack of awareness of the opportunities for land acquisition among communities; and legal complexities and difficulties in obtaining funding. The opportunity, however, was cross party support for the proposed legislation. In the event the legislation was delayed until 2005 – four years after SLF began and a year before it was due to close.

The Organisation

Big Lottery Fund (then, in this case, NOF) is a multi-million pound grantmaker spending funds generated by the National Lottery, and is accountable to Parliament. Its aim is to provide long term benefit for the most disadvantaged communities.

The Story

In the late 1990s key individuals at the then Scottish Office led the move to reform Scotland's feudal land laws in order to give communities what some saw as their inheritance and others saw as a means of creating greater employment and prosperity via, among other factors, removal of the obstacles presented by absentee and poor landlords. This movement had cross party support and in 1999 was taken up by the Scottish Parliament with a proposal for legislation giving communities the right to buy land for sale. (The legislation was complex but basically gave communities the right to register an interest in purchasing land for sale. If the community has registered their interest then the seller can only sell to the community; if the community does not register an interest the owner may sell to whoever they wish).

The Scottish Office, and later the Scottish Executive, had held discussions with NOF regarding ways in which NOF might contribute to successful implementation of the proposed legislation. Given the fit with its own goals of assisting disadvantaged communities, NOF had agreed to create a £10 million programme to help communities acquire land.

As in other major initiatives, NOF created a programme committee to oversee the programme. The SLF committee was composed of two NOF board members plus other members recruited by public advertisement, drawing in a range of knowledgeable participants. SLF began life in February 2001 and, due to the scale of demand, quickly allocated its full £10 million which was then increased by £5 million.

SLF's objectives were to:

- ≈ Improve opportunities and reduce disadvantage both for communities and individuals in rural areas.
- ≈ Encourage community involvement and participation in land ownership and management.
- ≈ Enhance the environmental diversity and quality of rural Scotland.
- ≈ Facilitate positive use of the land reform legislation on the community right to buy.
- ≈ Diversify the pattern of land ownership in rural Scotland.

SLF could be used to support projects for:

- ≈ **Technical support** – planning and preparation of bids to acquire or manage land and land assets. This could include undertaking feasibility studies, legal advice, valuations, business planning and community consultation.
- ≈ **Acquisition of land and other resources** – this could include large areas of land on which communities intend to undertake a range of management and development projects, smaller plots of land for environmental and recreational use, or development purposes such as social housing, recreation and other building-based activities.
- ≈ **Post acquisition support** – including initiatives to undertake land development projects, investment in management of natural resources, infrastructure developments to meet local servicing needs, and the provision of facilities with clear economic and social benefits.

Realising that all three strands of work above would be necessary, SLF contracted with Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and Scottish Enterprise (SE) to stimulate awareness and applications, and support applicants both before and after bids to SLF. The SLF committee considered all applications and made all funding decisions as delegates of the NOF board. SLF gave grants up to 75% of the total cost. Communities in the catchment area of Highlands and Islands Enterprise had the benefit of usually receiving a further 19% of funding from HIE.

Demand for applications was high, despite the fact that the legislation was delayed. When the Land Reform (Scotland) Act came into force in 2005 there was no significant increase in applications for SLF funding. Interestingly, this is attributed to the fact that the knowledge of impending legislation, rather than the legislation itself, was sufficient, along with the funds and support available from SLF, to encourage willing sellers and willing buyers.

SLF's emphasis on the need for on-going support was confirmed by events. Many of the communities that acquired land or buildings needed further financial support and advice to make the most of them. Following acquisition communities had ambitions to take forward plans, and in some cases this led to further activity. But there were sometimes delays in moving forward usually related to securing funding and where changes in the proposed project were necessary.

The Year Two Progress Report (SQW Limited 2006 Evaluation of the Scottish Land Fund Year Two Progress Report, Big Lottery Fund) revealed that direct engagement by communities in some projects had fallen slightly but in other cases had risen. Falling involvement generally related to delays but development officers also reported that 'communities had become more discerning, engaging only with the elements that affect or interest them ... The community grows to trust the community body to take decisions.'

Evaluators note that SLF has not just led to direct transfer of ownership of assets but also acted as a trigger for building up a range of community led services. For example, Iomairt Chille-Chomain on Islay used the initial land acquisition to develop a range of community led projects including plans for an Island Centre and proposals for low cost housing.

However, there were also issues regarding ongoing dependence on public and charitable funding. To be sustainable projects have to find alternative sources of income and some projects have plans to generate revenue including tourism and recreational facilities, sale of timber and wood-related products, wind turbines etc. The final results have yet to become apparent.

Another equally tricky issue was the sale of publicly held assets to communities.

Would the same outcomes have been achieved without SLF? The evaluators suggest that in all but three cases the projects would not have gone ahead without funding – but the counterfactual position can be more complicated. It cannot be assumed that without funding nothing would have happened. For example, in one case the Trust believed that the building purchased might have been developed as backpacker accommodation rather than as a social centre. The evaluators raise the question of whether the former might have created more economic benefit.

In 2006/7 the most immediate benefits have been social – capacity building and strengthening social networks and quality of life. The process of securing funding has acted as a catalyst for engagement and participation, and developed negotiating skills and knowledge. Economic benefits have with some exceptions been limited to date – but this is early days and there are some promising signs of tangible benefit. Furthermore, NOF's emphasis was on sustainable development requiring economic, social and environmental benefit working in tandem (i.e. rather than focusing on only one of these factors).

Methods

≈ Providing funding

Most obviously SLF provided funding to enable communities to take advantage of the [impending] legislation on community acquisition of assets. But crucially SLF did not merely give grants.

≈ Providing pre and post grant support

SLF provided pre and post grant support not only in giving funding for technical assistance and subsequent asset development but also via its contracting of HIE and SE to supply roving, local advisors. SLF were aware of the danger of underestimating the challenges projects faced as voluntary bodies and reliant on volunteers. Volunteers not only lacked some of the skills necessary but also did not have the time to devote to the processes involved. This could, and did, create frustration which development officers were able to work through. In addition, projects needed to be encouraged to look beyond acquisition as the beginning not the end of the process.

≈ Networking and convening

Although in the event SLF did not do as much of this as it had hoped (largely due to the speed and level of demand), it worked via development officers and others to create networks and to bring interested parties together for learning and mutual benefit. There was a strong element of project to project peer networking. Although not directly supported by SLF, the Scottish Community Land Network has also developed significantly during the life of the programme.

Funding

As noted above, SLF spent just under £14 million between 2001 and 2006. It typically gave grants of up to 75% of the total cost of the acquisition with another 19% coming from HIE for communities in that region. Acquisitions were fewer and slower in the region covered by Scottish Enterprise which did not have ‘top-up’ funds to give. But there is also an argument that in that region there was less appetite (for a variety of reasons) for transfer to community ownership.

Factors in Success

Although, as stressed above, the full effects of SLF will not be seen for perhaps 10 years, or more, it has clearly already achieved some significant changes. What factors have contributed to its success?

Success Factors In Brief

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| ≈ Access to relevant funding | ≈ Shared goals |
| ≈ Simplicity | ≈ Active interventionist partner |
| ≈ Cross party and media support | ≈ Energy, credibility and networks |
| ≈ Flexibility | ≈ Focusing on the outcome |
| ≈ Quality of knowledge and the decision process | ≈ Observability |
| ≈ Passion | ≈ Opportunism and luck |
| ≈ Ready made infrastructure | ≈ Win-win |

≈ Access to relevant funding

Clearly, a key factor in SLF's success was that it provided relevant and timely funding.

≈ Simplicity

To describe the operation of SLF as simple is in many ways misleading: the issues and the process were complex. But the message was simple: 'The basic message was: there's legislation coming in, if we put up some money we can change the pattern of land ownership. Pretty simple, pretty obvious.'

≈ Cross party and media support

Although there was some opposition to land reform, it had cross party support and 'the media were very sympathetic to the idea of re-populating rural Scotland, and, of course, they loved the "local people acquire x" stories.' 'The land reform movement had a lot of cultural and practical as well as political weight behind it.'

≈ Flexibility

'We were incredibly flexible in what we would and would not fund. In our guidelines we used the words "normally" and "usually" a lot. We considered each case on its merits.'

≈ Quality of knowledge and the decision process

SLF drew on a considerable pool of knowledge in the committee members, the NOF staff and the HIE and SE staff. 'We had the best people as committee members with a wealth of knowledge in various fields. Because this was something new and innovative we could attract the best. HIE brought huge knowledge and experience in dealing with rural communities, they knew the communities that were at the edge, and they knew who to go to. They knew the issues and they knew their patch.' And 'those involved at NOF brought a lot of incidental knowledge of rural development, politics and so on. In a way that was just luck.'

Interviewees commented on the very high quality of discussion in the committee. 'People didn't come with rigid views. There were some really good discussions. People on the committee were prepared to be convinced by the arguments.' 'This was Rolls Royce decision making partly because of the quality of the committee and partly because we were considering a relatively small number of applications at any one time.'

≈ Passion

'There was a sort of passion about this because it was new and a golden opportunity, and some people involved felt very passionately about land reform.'

≈ A ready made infrastructure

The fact that HIE in particular provided a ready made infrastructure on which SLF could draw was regarded as very significant by many.

≈ Shared goals

HIE not only provided a ready made infrastructure to assist in delivery of SLF, it also shared the goals of SLF. 'The beauty of HIE was that part of their agenda was community sustainability so we were all working to the same end and they were also prepared to commit funds to that via the Community Land Unit.'

≈ An active interventionist partner

'HIE had an active, interventionist development approach. It didn't just act as a funding intermediary.'

≈ Energy, credibility and networks

Shared goals and an interventionist approach were combined with HIE's energy, credibility and established networks. 'They [HIE] really really worked it. They had the credibility and they had all sorts of networks to tap into. The only flip side was that they saw their job as getting things funded, whereas we [NOF] sometimes challenged that.'

≈ Focusing on the outcome

One downside of the point above was that, arguably, SLF came to be publicly seen as an HIE project rather than ‘belonging’ to NOF. ‘But we [NOF] didn’t get too hung up about that. It was about the outcome.’

There was an interesting twist to the notion of ‘outcomes’ in this case. ‘In a sense because SLF was seen as a way of enabling the legislation, the legislation was the outcome. That sort of took the pressure off and we were freer to pursue longer term outcomes without worrying too much about getting immediate results.’

≈ Observability – success breeds success

‘Because we had some practical real life tangible examples fairly early on – and these were widely reported – that generated more interest, and showed what could be done.’

≈ Opportunism and luck

In an important sense SLF was based on opportunism – land reform was going to happen and NOF took the opportunity to step in and provide funds to facilitate implementation. In the event, the legislation was delayed but, for reasons noted above, this did not materially affect the programme. ‘The timing was hugely important. Without the threat of legislation we probably couldn’t have done this.’

≈ Win-win

‘What SLF did was to enable transactions at market value. Everyone wins. It gave people and organisations a solution.’

In Retrospect

In retrospect were there things that would have been done differently?

‘Maybe we could have used a mix of loans and grants more often.’

‘Maybe we should have challenged more and earlier the notion that social and economic development would automatically follow from community ownership.’

‘For some of the bigger projects maybe we should have put in a five year rather than a three year revenue funding tail.’

Vignette

Another very different example of funding and support for local action to achieve social and economic change comes from London Citizens.

London Citizens

London Citizens is a diverse alliance of active citizens and community leaders organising for change. Members include faith groups, schools, student organisations, union branches and residents groups who share a commitment to action for the common good, and to nurturing leaders from all backgrounds. The London Citizens community includes West London Citizens, South London Citizens, TELCO East London Citizens, and the Citizen Organising Foundation.

When London's bid to host the 2012 Olympic games was announced TELCO realised that, if successful, this would have a profound effect on East London communities. The Olympics Action Team was formed and met continuously in the lead up to the bid. Having studied the effects of Olympic games in other countries, the team concluded that promises about regeneration flowing from an Olympics are meaningless, unless there are written guarantees included from the beginning of the bid project. After much negotiation, Lord Coe, Ken Livingstone and the Chair of the LDA signed a five page statement of economic guarantees at City Hall in front of 40 London Citizens leaders and the national press.

Guarantees include payment of the London living wage of £6.70 an hour to all workers on Olympic projects, a construction training academy in east London, and allocation of land for affordable homes and the Community Land Trust. TELCO's work was funded by Carnegie UK Trust, and City Bridge Trust among others.

(www.londoncitizens.org.uk)

4 The Training of Imams – King Baudouin Foundation

Introduction

This case study focuses on a project undertaken by the King Baudouin Foundation (KBF) in Belgium. However, the issue taken up is relevant in many European societies – the training of imams. The story illustrates the unique ability of foundations, standing outside and above the fray, to do what no government, single non-profit or research institution could or would do. Although KBF did spend money commissioning and disseminating research this was, arguably, much less significant than its role as a convenor and knowledge entrepreneur around a controversial and sensitive issue.

The Issue

In 2003 when the overall programme was adopted by the KBF board there were estimated to be 400,000 Muslims living in Belgium. It was recognised that the presence of a large Muslim population had created some problems of cohabitation due in part to lack of mutual knowledge and understanding. The overall aim of the programme was to enhance knowledge and ways of living together among the various groups within Belgian society. Starting with this aim the Board considered how the programme might have greatest impact and decided to address various issues including health, schools, dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims, and the needs of imams and leaders in the Muslim community.

This decision to focus on the training needs of imams arose, in part, from their key leadership role within the Muslim community and, in part, from a perception in the media that imams were coming from the most radical sections of the Muslim community and were therefore 'dangerous'. In fact no-one knew where imams were coming from or how well integrated into Belgium society they

were. What were the real roles of imams, what knowledge and skills did they need and what did they already have? Although there was some sort of implicit consensus that 'something needed to be done' there were no clear suggestions for what or how; the Muslim community was itself divided and was not talking with government or with educational institutions.

What Changed?

By 2007 there had been change at a number of levels. There was solid information available about the training of imams in Belgium and other countries, and as compared with training of leaders of other religions/cults. The key stakeholders from the Muslim community, education and government had been brought together and were continuing conversations. The issue was higher up the political agenda. The issues and the options had been clarified and there was acceptance that the Muslim community needed to take responsibility for agreeing ways forward. There were concrete propositions for moving forward. Two small experimental training courses had been developed at the University of Louvain and at CIfOP (the Inter-University Centre for Continuing Education); and there was wider international interest in developing training programmes recognised across countries.

In June 2007 the Walloon government recognised the first mosques, and the Flemish government will do the same by the end of 2007. For each recognised mosque one or two imams will be paid.

However, those involved see the overall aim as yet to be fully achieved. The foundation brought people together, corrected misperceptions and created practical options for the future. But the case illustrates yet again that change is often slow, requires a favourable external environment, and often depends on the actions of others over whom the foundation has no control. KBF will continue to advocate on this issue with the Ministry of Justice.

Background

In addition to media fears of radicalism, the programme was influenced by the fact that in Belgium government pays the salary of priests/leaders and running costs of buildings of recognised religions/cults. Islam had been recognised in Belgium since 1974 but in that time local mosques had not received financial support, due partly to government criteria and arrangements for agreeing funding and partly to issues in the Muslim community. Government had made various attempts to overcome this problem but these had been complicated by divisions between Muslims of different origins, overlaid with Flemish/French language divisions. One commentator described the representation of the Muslim community as 'a complete mess' until at least 1994 when new elections were held for the representative body. However, divisions continued and have only recently been resolved.

This then was the environment in which the project started: a perception in the media that imams were 'dangerous', a lack of real knowledge about the origins and integration of imams, the inability of local mosques to gain access to the financial support to which, as a recognised religion, they were entitled, and a lack of any one representative Muslim body commanding widespread legitimacy with all sections of the Muslim community.

The Organisation

KBF was established in 1976 on the 25th anniversary of the accession to the throne of King Baudouin. Its aim is to promote a better society by supporting projects and citizens working to this end. Its key values are stated as justice, democracy and respect for diversity. The foundation spends each year around 40 million Euros from its own endowment, from the proceeds of the National Lottery, and from gifts of individuals, associations and businesses. KBF has around 30 programme officers. Although the foundation is based in Belgium it sees its role as covering Belgium, Brussels, wider European and international issues.

The foundation combines a range of methods of working. It runs its own programmes; it makes grants to others; it develops its own projects; it organises round tables with experts and citizens often with very different points of view; it stimulates and convenes discussion of current and future issues; it promotes and funds both action and research and it disseminates the results widely in free publications. Perhaps more unusually, KBF sets out to collaborate with public bodies, as well as with researchers, non-profit organisations, businesses and other foundations. Recently it has entered into a strategic partnership with the European Policy Centre based in Brussels (for more detail on the work and approach of KBF see www.kbs-frb.be and Tayart de Borms 2005).

The Story

Having recognised that there was a perceived problem around the integration of Muslims in Belgian society the Foundation quickly realised that various factors underlay this situation. Information was lacking, it was difficult to identify the right questions and there was very little dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims and between other interested agencies, including government. The Foundation embarked on a programme of work designed to provide hard information, to explore good practice and to organise a forum for dialogue in the long term, with the overall aim of identifying ways forward towards solutions.

In 2003 the Foundation brought together an advisory committee composed of religious leaders, academics, business people, public sector representatives, the media and non-profit bodies concerned with race and religion. The programme officer at the time recalls that finding the right people to involve from the Muslim community was not easy but 'luckily perhaps I didn't fully understand the divisions at the time so we invited a range of people. Maybe if I had understood fully it would have been paralysing'.

The first step was to gather some hard facts. In 2004 the Foundation published a report setting out the numbers of mosques and imams and professors of Islam in Belgium. This was the first time there had been any survey of how many mosques existed and how many imams there were, where they came from and how they were trained. Following publication of the report the Foundation convened two round tables involving a wide range of people including Muslims, French and Flemish speaking government representatives, the Diyanet, and representatives from other religious organisations and from higher education.

These gatherings produced a strong consensus that it was necessary to provide for training of imams in Belgium. The roundtables also highlighted the lack of information about both how training is organised in other religions and secular movements recognised in Belgium, and lack of information about the way in which imams are trained and recognised in other European states. The conclusion was that it was necessary to look at both issues in order to make proposals for the training of imams in Belgium.

The Foundation then commissioned a research report from Jean-Francois Husson, an academic with a track record of research on relationships between churches and the state, and coordinator of Oracle (Watchdog for Administrative Relations between Religious Groups, Organised Secularism and the Government) and Secretary general of CIFO (Inter-University Centre for Continuing Education). This report focused on arrangements for training leaders in other recognised religions and cults in Belgium and on the training of imams in France, the Netherlands, England, Germany and Sweden.

The report – *'The training of Imams: the Search for information useful for reflection'* was published in November 2005. The research had found that all religions had a greater or lesser proportion of foreign ministers/leaders and that this could create problems of language and of lack of knowledge of Belgian society. In this respect Islam is no different from other religions in Belgium. As the author

of the report pointed out: 'There are similar problems for other religious groups in various European countries. Because of the countries of origin of European Muslims and the size of the Muslim population, the problem is considered more acute for Islam in our countries.' (KBF Newsletter Autumn/Winter 2005 p4). In addition the report suggested, what makes the case of Islam more complicated is the number of foreign imams and the lack of 'correctives' in the form of the embeddedness of the church and congregation members in local life and society. The research also revealed that in most religions there are clear definitions, often written down, of the role of ministers/leaders and of the arrangements for becoming a minister/leader; although these are not generally legal obligations they are built into internal organisational constitutions. For Muslims and evangelical Christians these definitions and rules did not exist in any clear form.

The report identified two key elements of training for religious leaders: knowledge of the language, culture and society, and theological knowledge. Different religions organise and fund training differently, and there are different relations between the Church and State in the different countries studied.

On this basis the report went on to outline some possible structures for training of imams in Belgium. One suggestion was for a Faculty of Islamic Theology similar to the Faculty of Protestant Theology. This would have the advantage of clarity but would not be easy and would require good internal support from within the Muslim community. An alternative suggestion was to allow existing Muslim institutions to give diplomas; the difficulty here would be to identify appropriate institutions, to ensure stability and to take in the different trends within Islam. Yet another suggestion was to follow the Dutch example and call for projects for imam training from universities and from Muslim institutes and high schools. The advantage of this approach would be responsibility and mobilisation – the disadvantage would be difficulties in establishing selection criteria and the danger of ill feeling from those rejected. Whatever approach were adopted, the report concluded, it would

be necessary to enlist the support of existing Muslim leaders – there is no point in establishing training which no one takes up (for further details on the research report see KBF Newsletter Autumn/Winter 2005 p4).

The round tables and the subsequent research report led to various other initiatives. One result of one of the round tables was that the representative from the office of the Minister for Schools and Higher Education for the French speaking community went back to the Minister and, in effect, pushed the issue higher up the political agenda; this in turn led to an offer from the Minister to co-finance with KBF a small further piece of work focusing on identifying existing Muslim education centres and programmes. As a result of this piece of work the Minister gave a small grant to the University of Louvain to launch a training session for Islamic leaders (this was not entirely acceptable to the Muslim representative body who wanted recognition of an existing programme). Meanwhile, the Minister for the Flemish speaking community adopted a different approach arguing that the first step was for the Muslim community to identify the roles of leaders as a basis for discussion of training needs and provision.

Another result of the KBF programme was that the research findings were fed (prior to publication of the research) into a Committee of Experts convened by the Minister of Justice in 2005 to review the status of ministers of religion and humanism and to harmonise arrangements and funding quotas. The report of this committee relied heavily on the findings of the KBF funded research, and had an effect in encouraging the Muslim community to come forward with their own proposals.

In 2006 KBF organised a press conference and made a presentation to the European Parliament. With the European Policy Centre, KBF organised a seminar for EU decision makers. These initiatives generated considerable interest in Belgium and abroad and led KBF to commission a short summary of arrangements in various EU countries to be circulated in 2007 to all members of the European Commission, Parliament etc.

Methods

As the account above illustrates KBF employed a variety of methods in pursuing this issue:

≈ Research

Providing hard facts where there had previously been only rumour and speculation. Setting the arrangements for training of imams in Belgium in the context of arrangements in other countries and in relation to arrangements in Belgium for training of ministers of other religions/cults.

≈ Convening

Bringing together around a succession of tables key stakeholders from a variety of sectors who had not previously had discussions with each other on this issue. KBF sees one added value of foundations as the ability to bring people across sectors together in an atmosphere in which discussion (rather than or prior to negotiation) is the aim.

≈ Flexibility

‘We started out with the issue and took it from there. We didn’t start with a clear strategy that mapped out this, then this, then this. The point was to clarify the issue and identify ways forward, and in that way one thing led to another.’

≈ Involving government

KBF was clear from the outset that this was an issue that crucially involved government and that, in many aspects, government support was crucial to change. Apart from involving government in the discussions, KBF also deliberately sought to co-fund a later study with government.

≈ Constructive options

At no point did KBF tell people what to do – but it did work hard to ensure that recommendations from the research and round tables were ‘smart’ –that they were clear, succinct and feasible.

≈ Dissemination

KBF was very clear about the audiences for the research and the need for the research reports and recommendations to be adapted to the needs of those audiences. Dissemination took a variety of forms from reports, to press releases and conferences, as well as presentations at the European Parliament and individual meetings with key stakeholders.

Funding

KBF spent a maximum of 100,000 Euros in total on the programme plus around 10% of the time of one programme manager. Although the vast majority of the programme was funded by KBF alone, a small later piece of work was co-funded with government. KBF regards co-funding as a useful tool in not letting go of an issue, continuing to emphasise its importance, but at the same time encouraging ownership by the partner funder. ‘Co-funding is a powerful tool in advocacy – if you had to find a budget than you’re much more likely to own the results.’

Factors in Success

Success Factors in Brief

- ≈ Use of reputational capital for convening
- ≈ ‘Playing the innocent – the power of naivete’
- ≈ Clear, repeated messages
- ≈ ‘Smart’ recommendations
- ≈ Co-financing
- ≈ Championing by committee members (bonding trips)
- ≈ Creating opportunities

≈ Use of reputational capital

Only an independent foundation could have done this. Government could not have done it and nor could any one educational or non-profit organisation. But, as several commentators remarked, KBF's reputational capital as a respected, solid and independent foundation with a sound track record in commissioning research and convening was crucial to the success of this programme.

≈ 'Playing the innocent – the power of naivete'

One commentator noted: 'Sometimes things are so complicated that being a bit of an outsider enables you to ignore the complications and do something – you can play the innocent'.

≈ Clear, repeated messages

KBF was not satisfied with academic research that provided information however interesting. It constantly pushed researchers and others to ask 'so what?' 'what could we or should we do?'. 'You've got one minute to make the case – what will you say?'. 'That push from research to message' one person said 'was one huge added value of KBF'.

≈ 'Smart' recommendations

As in other cases in this collection, KBF made sure that its recommendations were carefully formulated to be actionable.

≈ Co-financing

As noted above, KBF engaged in one piece of co-financing with government to bring government in and act on the results.

≈ Championing by committee members

KBF enlisted the support of champions in the form of its advisory committee. One person commented that the committee's trips abroad, over several days, played an important part in 'bonding' the members and securing their full commitment to the issue.

≈ Creating opportunities

KBF acknowledges that in some respects the environment was ripe for intervention, but as one person involved noted: 'Yes, KBF intervened at the right moment – but it was KBF that helped to make it the right moment by intervening'. KBF also published and disseminated a short report for EU decision makers in English; thus with a small amount of extra money for translation, summary and dissemination KBF was able to extend its reach on an issue of interest to all European countries.

In Retrospect

The programme officer reflects that unlike some programmes he has worked on, this was not one where more time was an issue. KBF has now in effect ended the programme but recognises the need to go back over programmes and recommendations to consider whether it is worth investing a small amount of extra work (for example, revisiting dissemination) in the light of changed political or other circumstances. In this case KBF will seek to discuss the recommendations of this programme with the newly appointed Minister of Justice.

Vignettes

Two other examples of the power of research and convening are BAN Waste and Tides Canada.

BAN Waste

Millfield House Foundation was established in 1976. Its income in 2004 was £0.14 million per annum. The Foundation ‘works to tackle poverty, disadvantage and exclusion and to promote social change in the North East of England, particularly Tyne and Wear.’

In 1996, MHF decided to change radically its approach moving from service delivery to policy influence. It did so on the grounds that ‘public policy disposes of vastly greater resources than a small charitable trust, and can tackle the causes of deprivation, not just alleviate their effects’ (Funding Policy Change, *Trust and Foundation News*, Summer 2004, p 18).

One example of the Foundation’s work is support to a group (BAN Waste) bringing together local residents, City Council officers and others concerned about an incinerator at Byker. BAN sought a consensus on issues affecting people in the neighbourhood of the incinerator and beyond. Local politicians were ambivalent about the effects of the incinerator so BAN organised three series of ‘Select Committee’ hearings at which visiting experts and local representatives were cross-examined. It also produced reports that attracted local and national media coverage, and community events. Despite some tensions the group remained broadly based and achieved its goal of ending incineration in the area and a review of the City’s targets for recycling.

(adapted from Anheier, H.A. and Leat, D. 2007 *Creative Philanthropy*, Routledge, London).

Funding Research and Convening to Reduce Poverty

Tides Canada Foundation aims to increase the flow of philanthropic funds for social and environmental justice philanthropy. When a donor approaches Tides Canada wanting to support a cutting edge project, the foundation and donor discuss and clarify which area of social justice is most important to the donor. Tides Canada then conducts a search to find appropriate projects.

In this example, the donor wanted to support a project in Toronto that could have a long-term impact on poverty. Tides Canada found the St. Christopher House project, originally funded by the Atkinson Charitable Foundation. St. Christopher House Community Undertaking Social Policy (CUSP) attempts to create a different view of poverty, by bringing a policy theorist together with low-income people and front line workers at St. Christopher House.

As a result of this eight-week exchange front line workers learned how the tax and income-support systems work; the policy researchers learned how they do not work in practice – including, for example, the fact that over 350,000 low income older people were not receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement payments they were entitled to from the government – and the unemployed, elderly, and welfare recipients served by St. Christopher House learned that change is possible.

The longer term result was that the Federal government started the process to ensure that eligible poor seniors will begin receiving over half-a-billion dollars.

(adapted from CVSRD *Potential and Limitations of Social Justice Grantmaking* 12-13 www.community-fdn.ca)

5 Disability Rights

Introduction

This case study again highlights the complexity of social change, the many players potentially involved, the many layers of 'truth' and the difficulty of attribution of change to any one player. It also illustrates the way in which foundations working at different levels and from different angles in different ways, together (knowingly or unknowingly) with other funders, may achieve fundamental change. To add to the complexity, the case study highlights the ebb and flow of change and the potential significance of when we assess what has been achieved.

A large part of the study focuses on the work of Charity Projects/ Comic Relief, telling the story of how a grantmaker attempted to move from being part of the problem to part of the solution.

The Issue

The overall change sought was to overcome prejudice and discrimination against disabled people and to achieve recognition of their rights to be treated as equal citizens. One strand in this was to move away from a view of disabled people as those who have things done to them and toward a view that disabled people are capable of deciding, organising and doing things for themselves.

For Comic Relief the internal change sought was to move from being seen as part of the problem to contributing to a solution in terms of equal rights for disabled people; and to be accountable to one group of people in whose name they raised money (J. Morris *Funding for Change*, Charity Projects, 1994)

What Changed

The Disability Discrimination Act was passed in 1995. Prior to (and after) passage of the Act, some foundations played an important role in strengthening and building the capacity of organisations of disabled people; changing attitudes and assumptions regarding organisations run by disabled people; contributing to the support of key individuals who later became active in the Disability Commission, and changing the funding landscape for organisations of disabled people.

Comic Relief's specific achievements, suggested in the course of this study, included influencing the way in which other funders thought about funding disability organisations. In addition, and more importantly, some suggested that the 'thing Comic Relief did above all else was to change the way in which the media portrayed disabled people. Anthony Minghella's film *The Wall* (broadcast as part of Red Nose Day programming) was probably the first and still a powerful statement of disabled people as able to do things for themselves.' As one observer commented, this was powerful not least because it took the issue beyond the pages of *the Guardian* to millions of 'ordinary' people.

Comic Relief's specific achievements have to be seen in the context of an environment in which 'the idea that disabled people could and should run their own organisations was just not considered'. 'The very fact that Comic Relief funded them, the very fact that Comic Relief recognised the civil rights agenda, the very fact that Comic Relief provided support for strong organisations sounds very simple, but it was major'. Another commentator suggested: 'There's no linear progression from the 1960's to now with everyone growing up – some started earlier, some haven't even started yet'. Some also suggested that funding from Comic Relief was crucial in raising a generation of activists. But: 'Comic Relief as a kindergarten for activists? Maybe – but many had already left primary school by then'. However, as outlined below, Comic Relief's contribution has to be seen in a wider and longer term context.

The Organisation(s)

By 1991 when this story begins Charity Projects was one of the top ten grantmakers in the UK, but it did not, and does not, have an independent endowment. Charity projects was set up in 1984 with the aim of raising money to 'help disadvantaged people' in Africa and the UK. More specifically, it sought to raise new money; to inform, educate, raise awareness and campaign for social change; to allocate money responsibly and effectively and to cover all fundraising costs through sponsorship. Comic Relief, Charity Projects' fundraising arm, was best known for its Red Nose Days and associated television and radio broadcasts raising money from both business and the general public. By 1993 Comic Relief had raised £80 million.

In brief, Charity Projects was a highly successful organisation dependent largely on its capacity to energise the public to give, with no endowment of its own, and known for its work helping 'disadvantaged' people in both the UK and Africa. Charity Projects was also known for its responsiveness to smaller organisations and for its efforts to entertain-and-inform.

At the same time, however, Charity Projects had always been clear that raising awareness about inequality and changing attitudes was a major factor in reducing disadvantage. This had been further underlined by work in Africa where 'unless you change attitudes you change nothing' (quoted in Morris op cit p5). The bottom line, however, was that Charity Projects' fundraising was dependent on being able to appeal to the sympathies and goodwill of the general public.

The Story

Although various organisations of disabled people had been created in the 1980s, it is probably fair to say that in 1991 disabled people were still widely viewed as objects of sympathy/pity, and worthy of charitable support. The 'problem' was then seen to lie with disabled people rather than in the society in which they live; medical conditions, rather than social attitudes and denial of civil rights, were the root of the problem. Charity to enable disabled people to adjust to society was thus seen as the solution, rather than vice versa. Traditional charities serving, or doing things to or for, disabled people were generally happy to raise and receive funds on this basis.

From the late 1960's, things had begun to change. Movements for independent living, inclusive education, and direct payments developed; the link between disability and poverty as well as the sexual needs of disabled people began to be recognised. In Parliament Jack Ashley and Alf Morris, among others, championed the rights of disabled people. Joseph Rowntree Foundation played a major part in highlighting independent living issues and direct payments; the Kings Fund highlighted living options; and ILEA, and the GLC played major roles in a variety of initiatives.

Nevertheless 'charity' and 'pity' remained well-entrenched. The rise of popular television fundraising appeals, while raising more money for charities, was seen by some as exacerbating the problem for disabled people. Some disabled people and organisations controlled by disabled people began openly to protest against the whole charity ethos, demanding rights as citizens instead of charitable handouts. Charity, they argued, was part of the problem portraying disabled people as perpetual children, as longing to be able bodied, as separate groups divided by medical conditions, as needing discrete items rather than basic rights to income and employment, and so on. Crucially, these organisations argued that charities do not have or seek disabled people's permission for their activities, are not accountable to them, and do nothing to change public attitudes or to acknowledge disability as a political issue.

BBC Children in Need and London Weekend Television's Telethon – both similar to Charity Projects in raising money via television – were subject to angry public demonstrations by disabled people.

In 1991 Charity Projects held a Working Day on the UK Grants Programme to which disabled people known to be critical of charity were invited. At this meeting a representative from the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People challenged Charity Projects to say how it could help disabled people achieve genuine integration and equal opportunities via access to seven basic human rights – housing, education, employment, income, public facilities, social relationships and influence.

The challenge was to move from a medical and charity model to a social and rights based approach to disability. In fact this fitted well with Charity Projects basic ethos of seeking to change attitudes and Red Nose Day in 1991 had already started on this process with a short film called *The Wall*. *The Wall* had been made in consultation with disability activists and provided powerful images of strength and unity of disabled people rather than the usual pity-provoking images of weakness and isolation.

The Wall was in many respects an important achievement in itself and generated considerable interest from disabled and non-disabled people. Disabled people working as Disability Equality Trainers approached Charity Projects for permission to use the film as a training aide. In response, Charity Projects went a few steps further to disseminate and promote the social model by funding both training for disabled people to become Disability Equality Trainers and a training pack to be used in schools.

Despite its ideal of being responsive to smaller groups Grants Officers were reporting that many of those in the disability movement believed that it was easier for larger organisations for disabled people to get funding from Charity Projects than smaller organisations of disabled people less experienced in writing grant applications and raising funds.

From late 1991 Charity Projects made a concerted effort to ensure that its UK grants Committee was representative of groups and people applying to the organisation. To this end it recruited two people with personal experience of disability, with contacts with small groups and with a disability rights perspective. While in theory these perspectives should have fitted into the organisation relatively easily it turned out to be more difficult for all concerned. Staff found it challenging; the two committee members found that they were rejecting a much larger number of projects than under other headings and felt that they were seen as 'obstructive and difficult', as well as being expected to have wider knowledge than in fact they had; and Grants Officers naturally felt undermined by rejection of projects they had recommended. As one grants officer remembers: 'The committee gave us a hell of a time if we came with applications that weren't from a civil rights perspective.'

Despite the divisions and discomfort this created within the organisation, in retrospect one person involved at the time says that: 'All the arguments gave more coherence and unity to our approach. It made us more dynamic.'

As a result of these experiences, the Grants Committee decided to set up a Disability Review Group to review previously funded work and consider ways forward. One of the Trustees chaired the meetings and membership of the Group was widened to include people with experience of learning difficulties and sensory impairment. There was also an unsuccessful attempt to include the experience of BME people and people with mental health difficulties. The Group employed a disabled consultant to obtain views and feedback from the disability field. Questionnaires were sent to a wide range of organisations including those funded by Charity Projects. The questionnaires revealed that the majority of organisations funded were service organisations whose greatest concern was the future of funding. By contrast, responses from organisations of disabled people revealed that their greatest concerns were wider equality issues and issues related to independent living.

Those involved in the Group admit that it was an uncomfortable experience. Instead of being told how good the organisation was it was being told that it had not gone far enough, it had not practiced what it preached in terms of user involvement. The result of the review was a new set of grant making policies and criteria. In addition to a change in age limits, the new policy stressed encouragement of applications from organisations/projects: which promoted disabled people's self-determination, self-representation and autonomy and their active participation in all aspects of life; where 51% of the managing body are disabled people or where the organisation has a proven commitment to achieve this; which promoted equal opportunities; and from a much wider range of groups/areas of disability.

Having a policy is one thing; getting applications is another. The characteristics of applications did not change overnight and applications did not flow in. Recognising that it was not enough to change guidelines, Charity Projects worked with networks of organisations of disabled people to promote and encourage applications. 'We came out and very positively said that we would fund work that was radical. We used the language of civil rights and entitlement. We were one of the only funders to come out and say that. We were really challenging the status quo.'

Charity Projects continued to grapple with the problem of whether and how charities can contribute to furthering the rights of disabled people. One obvious role for grantmaking charities is to fund self-help and campaigning organisations. As one of the Charity Projects Grants Committee members noted: 'You can't give people power but you can give people the resources to do it for themselves' (quoted in Morris op. cit 12).

For Charity Projects the additional challenge was to find images that would convey a rights not charity message and at the same time encourage people to give. One of the issues was 'You can't see empowerment but you can see a wheelchair. Fundraising for something tangible is much easier'. Another person commented: 'It was risky. We could have lost a lot and some people saw the money as the measure of success. We were lucky in having a Director who was prepared to take that risk and stand up for a civil rights perspective'. Nevertheless images continued to be an issue and in some cases items were televised to which grants officers – and committee members – objected.

In the event Charity Projects funded a number of emergent organisations to support work on key issues. For example, organisations working for educational inclusion were funded leading to reform of the educational system toward greater integration of disabled children. Another first was funding a group of abused women with learning disabilities to create the first refuge for women with learning disabilities.

In addition to funding specific projects, Comic Relief's approach had two other less easily measurable but equally important effects. First, by recognising and strengthening organisations of disabled people Comic Relief indirectly influenced the large, established organisations for disabled people to take up a civil rights agenda. Second, by changing assumptions and by showing the way Comic Relief created a new benchmark in approaches to funding that other large funders later adopted.

Methods

≈ Taking risks on new groups – breaking the circle of ‘poverty’

‘These types of groups found it very, very hard to get funding anywhere – not least because the way they talked alienated funders. And they were mostly volunteer led and it’s very hard to progress an agenda without staff.’

≈ Providing funding

Most obviously and directly Comic Relief was willing to provide funding for organisations of disabled people – even if they were new, small, and only weakly organised with no, or very little, track record.

≈ Taking a stand

Comic Relief realised the power of example, taking a stand and making a statement of policy regarding committee composition, review and funding guidelines. ‘It was a tough call. Comic Relief is a very populist fundraising organisation – but we were trying to be cutting edge.’

≈ Building credibility of a different approach and newer organisations

‘Just being recognised by a big name national funder was a huge source of credibility for new small groups.’

≈ Awareness raising

Comic Relief spent money and time working with disabled people to support training awareness; developing resource packs; and changing attitudes.

≈ Strengthening organisations to effect change

‘A lot of the national activists were already there but more than that Comic Relief funding enabled people to formalise their organisations – to employ a first paid worker instead of having to rely on volunteers. It made them stronger’.

‘I think the important point is that we were not set on capacity building per se – in the way people talk about it today – it was driven by the need to increase the ability of organisations to effect change for all disabled people. That’s different from capacity building of organisations as a sort of end in itself’.

≈ Providing pre and post grant support

‘Monitoring by Comic Relief was kind of like having your own private consultancy – the individual grants officers were amazing individuals’.

‘Comic Relief put a huge amount of work into getting organisations to a point where they were ready to apply for and get funding – just getting them to a point where they had a constitution for example.’

Funding

Charity Projects spent £17.5 million on disability grants over a ten year period from 1993-2003. Many of these grants were small but substantial grants went to a number of organisations including British Council of Organisations of Disabled People, Greater London Action on Disability and Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust. However, as the story illustrates, the amount given in grants, important though that was, was only one factor in change. For many organisations the real power lay in Charity Projects taking a stand for organisations of disabled people and the way in which that influenced grantmaking more widely in subsequent years.

Factors in Success

Success Factors in Brief

- ≈ Passion and persistence
- ≈ Strengthening the small battalions, building constituencies for change
- ≈ Supporting change agents
- ≈ Listening and learning
- ≈ Flexibility
- ≈ Demonstration
- ≈ Re-framing the issue

≈ Passion and persistence

‘We really believed in this as the right thing to do. So we were going to make it work and stay with it even when it felt really difficult’. Even when a disabled committee member left in protest over some issue or event, Comic Relief kept talking to disabled people’s organisations and critics.

≈ Strengthening the small battalions – building constituencies for change

‘Because Comic Relief strengthened the smaller organisations, the big organisations for disabled people had to listen and change and ultimately get behind the DDA – and Comic Relief undoubtedly paid for some of the buses that took groups to demos and so on.’

≈ Supporting change agents

‘You’ve got to identify the movers and shakers in the voluntary sector who can act as agents for change.’

≈ Listening and learning

‘The most important thing is to get staff to listen to people, to what they want and need. You can’t start with what you as a funder think is best’

≈ Flexibility

‘We said that we demanded control by disabled people in order to fund – it sounded firm but really we always elided user control and disabled people on the governing body. We had to be flexible – the real issue was evidence that they were moving towards control, and that by saying what we were saying we were nudging that process.’

≈ Demonstration

‘It demonstrated that it could be done. Comic Relief was prepared to take a punt on organisations without a track record, often very fragile. They showed you could do it and how to do it – and that the world didn’t collapse.’

≈ Re-framing the issue

‘One of the most far reaching effects of Comic Relief’s policy was its effect on other funders. Up until that point it was really only Joseph Rowntree Foundation that recognised organisations of disabled people. Comic Relief was hugely influential on Lloyds TSB, Camelot and the Lottery. It was about making it feel like a normal thing to do.’

In Retrospect

This is one of the stories with the longest history and that perhaps explains why those involved are less confident of the long term effects. Had this story been told at the time of the passage of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) or at the point when other major funders adopted the policy of funding user-led organisations the judgement might have been more confident. From the vantage point of today, those involved were conscious of the way in which early gains can peter out, and how much remains to be achieved. Several people pointed to the ebb and flow of issues and organisations. 'At the time Comic Relief was probably important in the rise of some organisations but then the issue and perhaps the organisations get mainstreamed and lose some of their edge'. Several people also pointed out that policy change is one thing, changing attitudes is quite another. 'There'll probably be a new rise with a movement to get legislation properly implemented or around a group of people who are still ignored'.

In retrospect: 'I'm not sure Comic Relief built a strong enough head of steam. That was maybe partly to do with the constraints of the disability movement – the divisions within it and the fact that some key individuals are spread very, very thin and sometimes get burnt out'.

The British Social Attitudes Survey 2006/7 (Sage Publications) revealed that 12 years after the passage of the DDA disabled people are still struggling to get rid of the tag of second class citizens. One lesson may be that while efforts go into campaigning to secure legal rights, this is not enough in many cases. Change also requires change in attitudes and having secured legislation it is all too easy to become complacent, thinking that the job is done. In many cases, however, legislation, crucial though that is, is only the beginning. This, in turn, raises some important issues about when a foundation should exit a programme, when its job is 'finished'.

When Comic Relief stopped funding this programme in 2003: 'Did we exit the field prematurely? Maybe...but we didn't duck out because we thought the 'job was done' but rather because we knew that other funders by then were funding along the same disability led lines. This raised a question as to whether having acted as somewhat of a catalyst we should/could use this experience to stimulate activity in another neglected area. Mental health had been pretty spectacularly missed off the early disability agenda, so it was an obvious area to consider. Having done a lot of consultation we are now working with mental health led user groups to 'build a user movement' and alongside this working with the big mental health charities at a campaigning level to change attitudes and people's experience of stigma and discrimination. It's about taking our learning and applying it elsewhere'.

Vignette

Women's Budget Group provides a rather different example of an organisation seeking to raise awareness of a neglected viewpoint and to embed this in policy thinking and making.

Women's Budget Group

The WBG brings together feminist economists, researchers, policy experts, non-profit organisations and others to work towards a gender equal society in which women's financial independence gives them greater autonomy at work, home, and in civil society. It does this by: developing analysis and leading debate to influence and inform government policy, publishing reports and responding to policy initiatives; and working with Treasury to develop a gender budget for the UK .

One example of WBG's influence was in 1997 when the New Labour government floated the idea of paying tax credits to the main wage earner as a means of reducing child poverty. There was, however, a considerable body of research evidence showing that benefits paid directly to the mother produce greater benefit for children. WBG ran a number of seminars involving experts, non-profit organisations and Treasury officials to highlight the potential implications of the government's plans and the emergent policy was dropped. More generally, WBG argues that its very existence and the credibility, focus and continuity of its work means that government is now aware that the effects of policies on women have to be taken into account. 'You have to be constantly inserting gender into the debate. If government knows you're in it for the long term and that you'll be there asking questions they know they have to listen. Gender-budgeting is a phrase that's starting to be used and talked about'.

WBG is a largely volunteer run organisation (although it now has one member of staff). It receives core funding from Barrow Cadbury Trust and from Joseph Rowntree Foundation. It attaches considerable significance to this core funding arguing that it gives the organisation the security and 'clout' of being a long term presence constantly asking questions, as well as the flexibility to respond to a rapidly changing environment. 'Project funding takes away your ability to respond intelligently'.

6 Creating a Culture of Responsibility: Protecting Whistleblowers

Introduction

This case is an example of achieving cultural and legal change around a new issue in an initially hostile environment. The case is unlike others in this collection in at least two ways. First, the case tells the story through the eyes of the grantee organisation; second, the role of foundations was primarily that of funders – but, as discussed below, this conceals a more complex story. The case illustrates risk taking at a variety of levels. The issue was unpopular, the environment was actively hostile; the organisation funded was brand new, with no profile or track record and, on the surface at least, considerable uncertainty; and the issue was complex. This is a story of change initially led by a passionate small group of social issue ‘entrepreneurs’. It illustrates foundations’ roles as risk takers and longer term core funders. A number of foundations were involved although this was not a deliberate collaboration. As one funder remarked this is one of those rare stories where cause and effect are clearly linked: ‘The 2nd Nolan report adopted Public Concern at Work’s recommendations in their entirety and with full acknowledgement’.

The Issue

Public Concern at Work (PCaW) sought to demonstrate the link ‘between whistleblowing and accountability and to signal the need to break with a culture which fostered complacency and cover-ups.’ (www.pcaw.co.uk).

What Changed

In 1999, six years after creation of PCaW, the Public Disclosure Act came into force. The Act provides protection for whistleblowers ‘helping to establish generally, and in the working places of this country, a sense of responsibility to ensure that dangers to health and safety are removed and that wrong-doing is not permitted to flourish’ (ibid). Equally important, perhaps, is the the level of cultural change achieved (illustrated by the difficulty in 2007 of remembering how whistleblowing used to be perceived).

Background

The idea of an independent resource centre on whistleblowing was first raised in 1990. At this time, prior to the creation of PCaW, whistleblowing was regarded as a somewhat dubious activity. The most widely known examples of whistleblowers were public officials who had leaked information to the media and been punished for so doing. Whistleblowing as a socially beneficial activity to be encouraged or supported was not on the wider public, corporate or government agenda. At the same time, inquiries into a variety of scandals, across a range of industries, had revealed that staff within the relevant organisations had been aware of the potential for harm but had not felt able to make their concerns known.

While public inquiries focused on the adequacy of laws and regulatory controls (and where necessary introducing new laws and controls), the founders of PCaW saw the problem as, at least in part, a matter of changing the prevailing culture to encourage people, organisations and government to see whistleblowing as a public and private responsibility worthy of protection and support.

The current director of PCaW describes the early environment: ‘The problem was that in the late 1980s and early 1990s the public debate was completely schizophrenic. On the one hand it was “whistleblowing is a terrible thing, a betrayal of your friends and colleagues, people only do it for bad motives, and if you do it, it will

rebound on you”. On the other hand, people were saying “why, oh why does no-one speak up about things they know are happening before it’s too late”. We were trying to get people to see that the public were being given very confusing messages’.

In summary, the environment was not merely unsupportive but actively hostile, there was lack of cultural acceptance of the problem, combined with a more general culture of confidentiality and secrecy. As one interviewee remarked: ‘From this point in time and given the change PCaW has achieved, it is hard to remember just how unacceptable whistleblowing was. I can’t overstate that whistleblowing wasn’t on anyone’s agenda.’

In addition to a hostile environment, there was no organisation dedicated to raising issues of whistleblowing and little demand for such an organisation because the ‘solution’ was seen to lie in more regulation rather than prevention via cultural change and protection of whistleblowers. It seemed unlikely, given both hostility to the issue and the likelihood that any change could be achieved, that anyone would be willing to fund such an organisation. Furthermore, a new organisation would be starting from scratch, with no profile, no reputation and track record.

At the same time, however, there were opportunities. Evidence was emerging from high profile disasters of the need to get internal information out, and the costs of failing to do so. Although there was no one organisation concerned with whistleblowing, whistleblowing was indirectly tied into the agendas of other organisations concerned with freedom of information, corporate responsibility and accountability and consumer protection. And, there was a small closely knit group of knowledgeable and passionately committed people who were determined to take on the issue. Several interviewees stressed the importance of this group in creation of the new organisation and getting whistleblowing onto the public agenda.

The Organisation

As noted above, there was no organisation initially. This is the story of building an organisation as outlined below.

The Story

In 1989 the Nuffield Foundation gave an organisation called Social Audit a research grant of around £5,000 to investigate the role of whistleblowing in society. The research was conducted by Marlene Winfield, Charles Medawar and Maurice Frankel of Campaign for Freedom of Information (CFI).

The research report was published in 1990 and told the stories of individuals who had blown whistles and often suffered serious personal disadvantage as a result. The Nuffield Foundation persuaded Sir John Banham (then Director General of the Confederation of British Industries) to write a foreword and to facilitate a launch of the book at the Confederation of British Industries. One commentator noted: ‘Getting John Banham to write the foreword and the launch at the CBI was counter intuitive and incredibly important. It made people stop and think: “This isn’t just some kookie idea”’.

Prior to publication, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) has asked to see the draft report and then asked Social Audit what could be done to take forward the findings. JRCT had a long standing interest in corporate social responsibility, and the then Director of the Trust had attended some of the Freedom of Information Awards ceremonies where people who had contributed to freedom of information were honoured. ‘They were about making awards to very courageous people – seeing these heroic individuals were what made me interested’. These experiences led to a report from the Director to trustees of the Trust suggesting that some funding be put into pursuing the issue of whistleblowing. In subsequently deciding to give a grant to take forward the Nuffield Foundation funded research ‘it was important that I (the Director)

already knew the people involved in the research, and that the Trust were already, independently of the research, concerned that there was no support for whistleblowers’.

JRCT initially funded a small feasibility study by a ‘midwife’ group composed of individuals interested in taking forward the research. From 1990 on this group met once a month for about a year to discuss how to take the issue forward. As a result of the feasibility study, and data on how whistleblowing was handled in the US, it was decided that the best model was a legal one focusing on enabling people to whistleblow safely rather than a campaigning approach which might encourage whistleblowing but would not necessarily help people feel safe to do so.

Having decided on a model, the group went back to JRCT with a proposal. JRCT came back with a challenge/tapering grant of £250,000 over 5 years. The fact that the grant had to be matched over a 5 year period protected JRCT from an on-going commitment but also provided the new organisation with some early security. Later on PCaW began drawing in a range of other funders.

One of the original group of individuals said: ‘The next big step was to find a chair. We wanted someone who would, in effect, say: this is a serious organisation concerned with serious issues. We approached Gordon Borrie, and he agreed. We immediately knew that with him as a public face we could go ahead’.

Guy Dehn – then at the National Consumer Council and the only lawyer on the group – was offered the job of setting up the new organisation. ‘Some people thought I was crazy to be even considering it. Remember this was the end of the Thatcher period when whistleblowing was only talked about by the “usual suspects” on the Left’.

Dehn was clear from the outset that the organisation could only work if it involved a range of people with strong reputations across the political and professional spectrum to give it credibility and

legitimacy. Dehn set about building a very powerful board and Advisory Council. Strong governance was seen as crucial to the credibility of the new organisation. ‘We involved a Law Lord, someone from business, an academic and so on. These were very much NOT the “usual suspects”. It was a very considered perspective’. At this stage the emergent organisation was also circumspect in its strategy; ‘at that stage we were still trying to understand why people didn’t whistleblow and what needed to be done’.

The emergent organisation’s first and major obstacle was the general attitude to whistleblowing, but this then contributed to a more tangible obstacle in the form of refusal of charitable status. The Charity Commission agreed to research as a charitable activity but saw no public benefit in giving advice on whistleblowing. Arguably this was merely a reflection of the wider attitude to whistleblowing and an obstacle that might be faced by any organisation attempting to address a significantly unpopular or under-recognised issue. Really ‘working at the margins’ means working at the margins of Charity Commission interpretation of public benefit. PCaW brought its legal expertise to bear, threatened judicial review, and got the Charity Commission decision reversed within a few months (interestingly the Charity Commission later cited PCaW as an example of its flexible interpretation of charity law in a changing environment).

In 1993 PCaW was formally established. However, prior to its official launch the emergent organisation had already been asked by the European Commission and Parliament to report on the role of whistleblowers in controlling financial malpractice in Europe. In 1993 four leading employers offered support to the organisation and in the same year the Audit Commission in effect endorsed the need to consider issues of whistleblowing in the context of probity in local government.

Two years later in 1995 the issue was raised again by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life. In the same year Dr Tony

Wright MP asked PCaW and the Campaign for Freedom of Information to draft a whistleblowers' protection law to raise the issue in Parliament. By 1996 it became clear from consultations that there was wide support for the Bill, and the Nolan Committee endorsed the Bill's proposals. In 1996 a Ten Minute Rule Bill was introduced.

A year later in 1997 Don Touhig MP reintroduced the Bill as a Private Member's bill. It gained unanimous endorsement at second reading but lacked Government support. Tony Blair pledged that, if elected, his Government would legislate. Later the New Labour Government offered to support Richard Shepherd MP's Public Interest Disclosure Bill, and in 1998 the Public Interest Disclosure Act received Royal Assent and came into force in 1999.

For the purposes of this case study the PCaW story ends there even though in reality this was far from the end. As Dehn notes: 'You can put something on the agenda but it's just as challenging to work out how it works in practice.'

After the legislation PCaW evolved into a different organisation. Once the issue of whistleblowing was firmly on the agenda PCaW began to question why foundations should be asked to pay for making organisations work more effectively. At this stage it began to charge legal rates for work with organisations. For the last 3 years PCaW has been self-funding, using its charges for services to subsidise the free help-line, policy and educational work.

Methods

≈ Reframing the issue

The first step was reframing the issue from one that was about privacy, confidentiality, and no one's responsibility to being a matter of morality, accountability, practicality, self protection. Dehn explains: 'Even where the victims of these disasters were compensated, the general view was that nobody was accountable for what had happened. This in turn damaged public confidence,

not only in particular organisations but also in whole sectors and in the law. In addition, the responses to these disasters of introducing new laws and regulations – however necessary and desirable – meant that well run organisations found themselves bearing the burden of changes necessitated by their irresponsible competitors.'

PCaW drew attention to the effects on victims and corporations, the costs of a culture in which employees mind their own business, and encouraged employers to start to support PCaW. In this way they re-cast the argument for protection of whistleblowing in terms that employers and politicians could relate to – in terms of self-interest. This re-framing of the argument was later important in gaining further foundation support from trustees previously disposed to see the issue as an infringement of privacy.

PCaW also linked lack of support for whistleblowing as part of the cause of perceptions of 'sleaze', the perception of possible misconduct attracting as much attention as proven malpractice. Protection of whistleblowers, PCaW argued, would help to protect both potential victims of malpractice and, indirectly, those wrongly accused, or under suspicion, of malpractice. Protection of whistleblowing could increase public trust and confidence in key institutions.

≈ Being consistent

'We always said the same thing 360 degrees – to all people and all interests. I think this helped reassure people there was not a hidden agenda. This was also evident in the fact that when the Conservatives were in government the Bill was run by Labour MP's and when Labour was in power it was run by a Tory.'

≈ Building credibility via 'counter-intuitive' links

In order to ensure that the issue of whistleblowing did not continue to be perceived as a 'radical' issue, PCaW deliberately set about recruiting support and champions from beyond 'the usual suspects'.

≈ Use of existing case law on confidentiality and the public interest

Rather than starting from scratch and adding new principles, PCaW sought to use existing case law to achieve its aims. 'Our tasks were to broadcast these principles beyond the confines of the Royal Courts of Justice, to extend the law so that it protected people whom it found had acted in the public interest, and to provide practical help'. Building on common law was an important practical and legitimating strategy. The message was that this was nothing radically new.

≈ Practical help as end and means

Provision of a legal helpline was central in PCaW's strategy. On the one hand it provided a safe haven for people with whistleblowing dilemmas and, on the other, it enabled PCaW to learn what was stopping people from speaking up, as well as providing further stories illustrating the need for change. In addition, providing free legal advice later gave PCaW legitimacy as a charity. 'If you took away any other part of what PCaW does it would limp but carry on. Without the help-line we would be fatally wounded'.

≈ Role of the media

PCaW used the media to draw attention to the issue and gain support for protection. The media were 'invaluable in promoting our message and publicising our work'. Editorial endorsements 'ensured that the issue received the attention of opinion formers'.

≈ Consultation at regular stages

PCaW used regular consultations with key stakeholders to build widespread support and awareness.

≈ Maintaining momentum

PCaW kept up the momentum of building awareness by issuing regular reports on defence procurement, abuse in care, standards in public life, Matrix Churchill, the police and local government. This illustrates the importance of keeping on the case even when you have gained a measure of acceptance. There are always plenty of other issues to push yours off the agenda.

Funding

The story of PCaW is without doubt a story of foundations backing an, at the time, unpopular cause. Without independent foundations it seems unlikely that PCaW would have developed when it did – if at all. One person involved suggests: 'JRCT was very, very important. It was about a long standing relationship and not something we applied for. It would have been much harder without them. We would have had to spend a year fundraising and who knows... There weren't many funders willing to back this. I doubt we could have moved on in such an effective way'.

At the outset, and for some years afterwards, there were very few foundations PCaW felt it worthwhile to approach. 'We always had to worry about money'. 'We were always constrained in what we could do by how much money we had but there was also a belief that if we do the work and show its working then the money will follow'. Nevertheless, in 1996 constraints of funding meant that PCaW had to make two research staff redundant.

Despite the general lack of support for the issue of whistleblowing, and PCaW, Nuffield, Gulbenkian, JRCT, Esmée Fairbairn, Barings, Leigh Trust, Paul Getty, Allen Lane, Tudor and Savoy all played a part in keeping PCaW going. The story of Esmée Fairbairn Foundation funding highlights the difficulty for PCaW and the way in which an unpopular issue gained support. When PCaW initially approached Esmée Fairbairn for funding in 1993 its application was rejected. Eighteen months later PCaW re-applied and the then newly appointed Foundation director put the application to the trustees again. Knowing that the previous application had failed

because support for whistleblowing was seen as an interference in a free market economy, the new foundation director recommended funding on the grounds that support for whistleblowing was a means of enabling a free market economy to operate as it should – ‘whistleblowers helped to heal and prevent running sores’ – and, in addition, appealed to the Trustees’ principle of supporting issues that do not fit anyone’s priorities. A three year core grant was agreed (and was later extended at least twice).

PCaW regards itself as very lucky in having been given some core funding which it suggests made it easier to get other funding for particular projects. It attributes its success in obtaining funding to three main factors: (i) ‘The foundations who were interested knew that very few were going to fund us so if it was going to work they’d have to put in core funding for a time’; (ii) ‘We answered the questions they asked – we tailored applications to each foundation’s questions and interests’; (iii) ‘Possibly because it was a fast moving issue and because of our experience in a new area there was a bit of an idea that we would know best how to spend the money’.

Given the prevailing assumption that whistleblowing was about ‘knocking’ business PCaW also considered it particularly important to get small sums of money from companies to provide legitimacy early on.

Success Factors

Success Factors in Brief

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| ≈ Passion and confidence | ≈ Learning |
| ≈ Luck and opportunism | ≈ Focusing on the message |
| ≈ Relating to other agendas | ≈ Telling stories |
| ≈ Positioning | ≈ A constructive approach |
| ≈ Beyond politics | ≈ Seed money for planning |
| ≈ Building credibility and legitimacy | ≈ Flexibility of funders (core funding) |
| ≈ Joining up the dots | ≈ The people |

What were the factors in PCaW’s success?

≈ Passion and confidence

Marlene Winfield (author of the original research and later a Board member) attributes a part of the Board’s persistence to ‘the personal stories in the research. They were so upsetting, that was a real drive in getting something up and running’. Dehn remembers: ‘Despite the warnings of friends and colleagues I was totally confident that this was a very important issue that was going to have to be addressed in the next decade because of the way all sorts of things were going – trust in government, accountability and so on’.

≈ Luck and opportunism

Dehn notes: ‘We were amazingly lucky. The constellations shone very benignly on us’. However, he also adds: ‘we were lucky but you make your luck’. Part of making your luck is about positioning.

≈ Relating to other agendas

Partly because of the people involved PCaW was able to highlight and capitalise on the relationship between whistleblowing and other agendas. Corporate social responsibility tied into ethical investment which tied into access to information which tied into whistleblowing.

≈ Positioning

‘We saw a wave and we worked to position ourselves on the board to catch that wave and surf it’. Creating a ‘counter-intuitive’ Board and Council, borrowing credibility from established, trusted figures, were important aspects of PCaW’s positioning.

≈ Beyond party politics

PCaW was very careful to avoid presenting the issue as in any way party political.

≈ Building credibility and legitimacy

PCaW consistently and painstakingly worked to position itself as an informed, enlightened contributor.

≈ Joining up the dots

‘We didn’t see things in compartments. Everything fed off everything else. It was all about learning. The education work fed into the policy work and vice versa and the help-line fed into both.’

≈ Learning, learning, learning

‘We were constantly in learning mode. We didn’t stop learning and kept using that learning to inform, illustrate, adapt and to learn more about the intricate relationship between the public and private interests.’

‘We were very candid about things that had not gone well and why.’

≈ Avoiding ‘tub-thumping’ and focusing on the message

PCaW constantly focused on the message not the messenger. One consequence of this is that the organisation has a low profile with the general public but a high profile in certain targeted circles.

‘PCaW worked on very targeted communications with emphasis on the message not the messenger – it’s much much more powerful if you work with others but the price is that the credit doesn’t attach. As one observer remarked “you can have as much influence as you want as long as you don’t ask for the credit” ‘.

≈ Telling stories

‘We were constantly building on small examples to show people the problem and what could be achieved.’

≈ A constructive approach

‘People liked that we didn’t have an agenda other than to raise the matter in a constructive way. We wanted to learn and to help and to prevent.’

≈ Seed money for planning at the outset

‘Getting us to work out the model before we started out paid big dividends – by the time we had gone through that process we had thought of every question and had an answer to all objections.’

≈ Flexibility of funders

One commentator notes: ‘To start with we had a wise enabling funder who put things in place we needed. But there were lean times. You have to find your USP and Dehn did that through developing training packs for employers. Those deter people having to blow the whistle outside and really change the culture. Often funders seem more interested in how many people rang your helpline than in what you have prevented or changed.’

≈ The people

One issue that came up time and again in interviews for this case study was the importance of the individuals involved, and foundations’ willingness to back these people. One funder said: ‘We don’t talk about these issues but they are the real stories. Why don’t we talk about them? Perhaps it’s because you can’t bottle it and then there are issues of political correctness and issues about the scale of grantmaking.’

While these are clearly important considerations it could be argued first, that foundations need to reflect on the significance of individuals in successful change projects and second, to consider whether there are ways in which, even if passion, networks, charisma and drive, cannot be bottled they can at least be enabled.

In Retrospect

In retrospect there is little that PCaW would have done differently.

‘The only thing that didn’t really work was where we developed a strand of work primarily because that was how we thought we could best secure grant money – for us, chasing and being led by grant money caused more problems than it solved.’

So what was the role of foundations?

Dehn answers:

‘The foundations gave money and backed an unpopular and risky cause when no-one else probably would have done’. But were the foundations more than a cash machine?

Foundations’ main role in this case was to provide money, support and legitimacy. ‘Without independent foundations we wouldn’t have existed. Nuffield funded the research and JRCT were proactive in saying “let’s do something” after the research’. Apart from the money itself ‘there is a very real thing that someone is backing you. Often with small grants that was more important than the money’. ‘JRCT was seen by some as a “usual suspect” funder but that wasn’t true of some of the others. Those others gave us money and external legitimacy and kudos.’ They also provided networks and introductions – ‘when one funder had supported us we asked for other introductions’. In addition, although ‘I’m very glad we don’t have to do applications now. It can be very forlorn’, Dehn notes that ‘Doing larger applications can be a very useful process and discipline. It wasn’t all bad.’

Dehn notes that seed money and core funding go against the current vogue for fully worked out proposals. He notes that PCaW applied four times to the Lottery and were successful only once. The lesson, he argues, is that the more process and outcome driven funders become the less they are likely to fund new ideas. ‘It’s important for foundations to retain flexibility because the voluntary sector won’t be the third sector if it behaves like the second sector. Foundations need to be light footed and accept there will be weeds.’ ‘Foundations have a more important role in guaranteeing the independence of the voluntary sector than does the Charity Commission.’ ‘Foundations key role is to look at things differently – things not coming out of the mainstream.’

Vignette

A very different example of a grantmaker encouraging re-framing of an issue, prevention, and policy influence at a local rather than national level, comes from Wales.

Healthy Living in Wales

Reported levels of poor health are significantly higher in Wales than in the rest of the UK, and are heavily associated with patterns of deprivation. In 2003 *The Review of Health and Social Care in Wales* (The Wanless Report) recommended long term strategic adjustment of services to focus on prevention and early intervention to improve health in the longer term. By then the New Opportunities Fund (now Big Lottery Fund) had already launched its Healthy Living Centre (HLC) programme with a budget of £300 million throughout the UK. In Wales £19 million was spent on 29 HLCs. HLCs in Wales, as elsewhere, undertook a range of activities to address broader determinants of ill-health, working with communities to prevent illness, improve well-being and encourage self care.

HLCs in Wales are united by adoption of a community-led approach to addressing health inequalities, supporting local people to identify their needs and how they can be addressed. HLCs focus on prevention and on re-framing the issue of health as the business of a wide range of sectors and agencies, encompassing issues of employment, the environment, housing and healthy eating, transport, crime and other matters. HLCs have drawn organisations together into partnerships to address locally identified needs.

One example of the way in which HLCs in Wales have contributed to sustainable change is the Lanbsbury Park HLC Initiative and the Upper Rhymney Valley HLC Project. Here the HLC Management Board ensured strong representation from the Local Public Health Team, the voluntary sector and the Local Authority from the outset. This inter-agency involvement has strengthened during the life

of the project and resulted in the HLC Management Board taking ownership of the sustainability of the HLCs in Caerphilly after Big Lottery Funding ends. The Management Board collectively developed a Sustainability Options paper to be taken to the Local Authority and Local Health Board. The proposal and recommendations were successful thus ensuring that some HLC activities are continued in the longer term.

(adapted from a report on HLCs in Wales to be found at www.biglotteryfund.org.uk).

7 Working for Peace in Northern Ireland

Introduction

Foundations often talk about making a sustainable difference but few willingly enter into arenas of funding that combine real unpopularity with risks of failure, legal risks and risks to personal safety. This case study of the work of Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI) with ex-political prisoners in Northern Ireland is at the extreme end of risk-taking in a highly contentious area. It illustrates the potential of foundations to contribute to peacebuilding by working on issues and with people government cannot easily address.

The case study highlights the range of resources foundations can contribute to achieving change: convening, independence, non-alignment, expertise in grant-making, community knowledge, local and, in this case, international networks – using their own or other people's money. Although CFNI is both a fundraiser and a grantmaker it also, in some programmes, adopts an operating role adding value from its own non-financial resources.

This case highlights the value of funding risky, sometimes intangible, value-added work, as well as work on policy lessons and international exchanges – all things that some foundations are reluctant to fund.

The Issue

CFNI commenced its support of the work of re-integrating political ex-prisoners into society after the paramilitary ceasefires of 1994; it continued its work with funding under the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 1995-1999, work which was expanded with the early release of political prisoners provided for under the Belfast Agreement 1998. Underlying this work was

the idea that 'if you are part of the problem, you must be part of the solution' and that, whatever other views might be held, Northern Ireland could not achieve genuine peace with a significant resentful and excluded population of ex-prisoners and their families.

What Changed

As discussed in more detail below, CFNI contributed to recognition of the issue of re-integration of ex-political prisoners as one that had to be addressed; it provided support to development of service and support organisations; it developed training and skills; it created networks and alliances; and encouraged understanding, dialogue and healing – basic building blocks to re-integration and lasting peace.

Background

The challenges, and achievement of CFNI, need to be seen in the context of a then deeply divided community, a hostile media and, perhaps more importantly, the personal pain of so many people on both sides of the sectarian divide. In some respects everyone – from the press, politicians and the public to ex-prisoners – needed to change and presented a potential obstacle.

A Democratic Dialogue report *Future Policies for the Past* estimated that during 'the troubles' 7,000 parents lost a child, 14,000 grandparents lost a grandchild, 3,000 people lost a spouse or partner, 10,000 children lost a parent; 15,000 people lost a brother or sister. Furthermore, 'Continuing fear and uncertainty, as well as hurt and anger, has fed into a spiral of tit-for-tat suspicion between communities... There is also an implicit suggestion that only one of "our side" (whether defined in terms of political and/or religious persuasion) can be trusted to deal impartially with "our" community or section of the population' (*Back to back into the future Community Foundation for Northern Ireland Annual Report 2005/06*: 19).

The opportunity post ceasefire was to contribute to peacebuilding. 'For the Board, morally they felt they couldn't refuse to take the opportunity. You can't talk about social inclusion unless you are going to address the most marginalised'. 'We saw an opportunity to act as a catalyst. Foundations are in a very privileged position in not having to keep in with anyone – that gives them a responsibility to take on difficult issues. Having said that, for us as a community foundation we were conscious of the risk to fundraising – and it did hurt in that way. But it was simply the right thing to do.'

The Organisation

CFNI (then the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust) was created in 1979 with a grant of £500,000 from the British government. The foundation's remit was to provide seed grants to new organisations, to grant aid pilot projects, to provide guarantees of short term loans for organisations waiting for statutory grants and to help other 'deserving' groups or projects not being supported by statutory bodies (A. Kilmurray, *Building a Foundation for Change A personal reflection on 25 years of Community Foundation support for community action*, undated, p11).

By the early 1990's the foundation had a broad range of supporters and an annual income of around £650,000. It had a reputation for community support and taking risks in very difficult and unpopular areas. The Board had always been equally divided between Protestant and Catholic and had always had a strong and clear commitment to social justice, social inclusion and social change.

The Story

There is no simple beginning to a story that has gone on for decades. However, one immediate starting point was the 1994 ceasefires and the Good Friday agreement which led to the release of a number of politically motivated prisoners. Prisoners gained freedom but relatively little else. While paramilitary organisations

generally provided some support for families of prisoners, there was little provision for ex-prisoners. Prisoners came out to face often significant family tensions, problems with access to training and employment and all of the disadvantages that go with what was defined as a criminal record. Ex-prisoners also found themselves in a society that placed most of the blame for the troubles on them.

In 1994 CFNI (then Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust), with Rural Community Network (NI) and Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA), produced a report on what 186 voluntary and community groups saw as priorities in the post cease-fire society. Nine priority areas were identified and many of these were subsequently cited as Measures of the E.U. Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (1995-1999). This was an achievement in itself.

The E.U. Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation aimed to support peaceful political process and social inclusion. The British and Irish governments agreed to provide matching funds if required, thus enabling groups which had never before received European funding to benefit. The funding allocation arrangements included Central Funding mechanisms, Intermediary Funding Bodies and Partnerships.

In August 1995 CFNI was approached by the European Commission to become an Intermediary Funding Body. This was not an easy decision for CFNI. CFNI had a number of concerns to do with the effects on both the organisation and on its relationships with those it funded. Offset against these concerns were the prospect of vastly greater resources to achieve social inclusion of the most marginalised groups; a desire to contribute CFNI's 16 years experience of grantmaking; the opportunity to engage with the European Commission over issues of social policy; and, above all, the potential of the Programme for embedding the peace process. Subject to various conditions, the Board decided to agree to become an Intermediary Funding Body and contracts were finally signed in early January 1996.

Meanwhile the decision to go ahead had created another dilemma for CFNI. The expectation had been built up that money would 'hit the streets' quickly but, at the same time, some Intermediary Funding Bodies were reluctant to employ staff before contracts were finally signed. CFNI decided to take the risk of employing staff while negotiations were ongoing and was thus able to start work in January 1996. CFNI saw this as a risk worth taking to begin building community confidence in what was bound to be a difficult situation.

One other dilemma is worth noting. Sustainability was clearly going to be an issue at both project level and for the intermediary funders. In its first draft Memorandum of Understanding (with the Commission) CFNI had inserted a paragraph about exit strategies, but this had disappeared in the second draft. CFNI decided that it could do little to change this, and having unsuccessfully requested permission to spend the total budget over a longer period, CFNI agreed to administer 4 Measures with a total budget of £41.8 million over the period 1995-1999. Full details of the various aspects of CFNI's work under the programme are available in *Taking 'calculated' Risks for Peace II*, CFNI 2002. The rest of this case study focuses on work with politically motivated ex-prisoners.

Starting Work with Politically Motivated Ex-Prisoners

In 1995 CFNI called a meeting of all the paramilitary support organisations to discuss ways in which EU Measure 4.4. PEACE 1 funds (referred to below as EU Peace 1 funds) might be most effectively spent to achieve the re-integration of ex-political prisoners. CFNI was under no illusions about the sensitivity and difficulty of this approach but felt that if a lasting peace were to be achieved this was the only viable way to begin.

One result of this meeting was the creation of a Grant Advisory Committee composed of cross-community representatives. This committee, including representatives from the IRA, UDA, UVF, IRSP and others (organisations such as NIACRO and the Quaker's Service Committee that had experience of supporting prisoners),

continued to meet until 2000 even during periods of breakdowns in ceasefires.

Supporting Groups

Between 1996 and 1999 the Grant Advisory Committee gave over £5 million to 61 groups working with politically motivated ex-prisoners and their families. Funding was given to ex-prisoner groups themselves as well as to organisations working with or supporting groups. Ex-prisoner groups varied in both aims and challenges. Some focused on providing welfare, others on housing or employment or counselling. What they had in common was a desire for re-integration of politically motivated ex-prisoners.

Groups faced various obstacles. One obvious and immediate challenge was to obtain funding. None of the members had money and nor did the communities they came from. Few other funders were sympathetic to applications, and government took no interest in the need for re-integration of politically motivated ex-prisoners. In addition to problems in getting funding, groups of politically motivated ex-prisoners had difficulty in finding and renting premises, opening bank accounts, and so on. More generally, groups were operating in a context of hostility; and, particularly in loyalist areas, there was considerable apathy and little tradition of self-help.

On top of all this there were problems in getting people together and in getting them to identify their needs. Identifying needs was difficult because, among other things, it required ex-prisoners to admit to weaknesses and difficulties in front of their peers. Creating workable plans and putting those into action was a further challenge. Few members had experience of planning or managing, or of what might be realistic goals. A further complication was that, for understandable reasons, many groups insisted on employing ex-prisoners with little or no experience of managing projects or staff. And all of these challenges were played out in the context of on-going tensions and rivalries within communities, as well as discrimination and hostility.

Despite these difficulties, and with funding and support channelled through CFNI, groups were developed with high levels of user involvement and a variety of impacts in helping members find employment, develop personal skills and relationships, acquire financial skills and benefits, become involved in their communities and build community infrastructure (for further detail on impacts see *A Level Playing Field, Inbrief*, NIVT June 2001). Groups also had an impact in preventing young people from getting involved in paramilitary activity, and in working with marginalised young people to reduce violence and anti-social behaviour.

But there were other, perhaps more important, benefits in terms of long term peacebuilding and integration. The independent evaluation report notes, in addition to these specific impacts, 'the ability of groups from all traditions to build alliances and partnerships across the divide. Groups have in this way been prepared to take risks, perhaps more so than other sections of the wider community for here we have sworn enemies recognising that they share common problems and being prepared to come together to address those problems. There is little doubt that the vast majority of ex-prisoner groups are solidly committed to the overall peace process and have in fact been major contributors to its development and maintenance' (Ibid p5).

Beyond Grant Aid

Alongside grant aid to emergent groups, CFNI commissioned a number of external evaluations of work in this area. The external evaluations were designed to increase transparency regarding funding allocated, encourage projects to learn from each other's good practice, draw out policy implications across projects and identify areas for additional support.

Among the many conclusions of both the external evaluations and the research conducted by groups themselves, three issues stood out. First, ex-prisoners were seen as to blame for the troubles. Second, politicians, the media, and others, fostered separation and comparison of funding for prisoners and 'victims'. Third,

ex-prisoners faced significant personal and family tension, as well as exclusion from employment and training opportunities, housing and financial arrangements.

CFNI recruited Sir George Quigley (chairman of the Ulster Bank and a highly respected figure) to chair a number of conferences designed to encourage awareness and consideration of the issues in effective re-integration of ex-political prisoners. These conferences had at least two important effects. First, an Intergovernmental Task Force was created to address legal and policy issues including employment opportunities and implications of the designation of politically motivated ex-prisoners, and their groups, as having a criminal record (e.g. being unable to acquire rented premises or open a bank account). A second effect was the realisation that ex-prisoner groups had important links back into communities through which work might be undertaken to reduce tensions and actively address peacebuilding.

To encourage ex-prisoner groups actively to engage in peacebuilding CFNI raised funds from Atlantic Philanthropies to organise a study tour to Belgium in 1997. Twenty one representatives from the provisional IRA, the UDA and UVF visited a German prison camp and then heard a talk on how Belgium had moved from wartime trauma to signing the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Union. Members of the group were then challenged by a variety of European Commission representatives/Ambassadors on their political perspectives, involvement and commitment to peacebuilding. When the group returned CFNI actively kept up the momentum with various meetings to discuss the role of ex-combatants in peacebuilding.

In this period CFNI also raised funds to provide a programme of organisational development to ex-prisoners groups. Although CFNI had planned to offer this programme on a cross community basis the political tensions of Winter 1997 meant that separate Loyalist and Republican group sessions had to be arranged.

In 2001 a second Ex-Prisoners' Conference was held to review the findings of an external evaluation of the self help Ex-Prisoner Groups funded by CFNI under Peace 1.

According to the independent evaluation report the programme:

- ≈ 'supported the healing process, ... particularly essential within combatants who had been engaged in violence as part of the overall peace process;
- ≈ secured a wide level of community involvement, both in the establishment of ex-prisoner groups and in the on-going contacts which those groups have with the wider community;
- ≈ provided significant levels of training and re-training to many ex-prisoners, therefore enhancing the skills base of ex-prisoners and the communities within which they operate;
- ≈ clearly involved user groups in the design and implementation of projects in keeping with best practice in community development;
- ≈ encouraged self help and user involvement in the provision of services.'

In addition:

- ≈ 'there now exists a comprehensive support structure for ex-prisoners and their families; that structure is led by ex-prisoners and so is a clear model of self help in practice;
- ≈ linkages have been initiated and developed across the divides;
- ≈ some innovative approaches by ex-prisoners and the awareness of their potential contribution for good in society have been significantly highlighted;
- ≈ networks and alliances with some statutory bodies have been formed' (A Level Playing Field: Peacebuilding through the Reintegration of Politically-Motivated Ex-Prisoners' CFNI, *In-Brief*, June 2001).

Noting a number of challenges and difficulties, the Report concluded that 'The Programme has had impacts which are both quantifiable and intangible. The most single benefit of the Programme has been the impact it has had on peacebuilding. Peacebuilding has involved building confidence within

communities as well as developing contacts between what had been warring combatants, fostering contacts so that collaborative working can be initiated, and identifying ways in which the issues facing ex-prisoners and their families can be addressed. All of this has led to many ex-prisoners and their families feeling much less alienated and seeing that they have a place in this society' (A Level Playing Field: Peacebuilding through the Reintegration of Politically-Motivated Ex-Prisoners' CFNI *In-Brief*, June 2001). Justice Albie Sachs launched the report at a gathering of Loyalist and Republican ex-prisoners, and spoke about how he had survived attack and imprisonment to create a new South Africa.

It is also worth noting that some of those people CFNI involved in 1995 on its grantmaking committee are now elected representatives for their political parties.

These achievements were secured despite a constant climate of media hostility and some politicians' portrayal of support for perpetrators as being in contradiction to support provided for victims. European public funding meant that questions could be asked in the House often by those wanting to undermine the programme. In addition, ongoing violence required constant and tricky judgments about backing those working for peace without jeopardising their safety and efforts.

Neither the Programme for Government of the devolved Northern Ireland Assembly nor the EU PEACE II Programme made specific provision for integrating politically motivated ex-prisoners; nevertheless, a number of groups obtained funding under the PEACE II Programme under the title 'Pathways to Inclusion' and other headings. CFNI continued to work with government, other funders and with ex-prisoner groups to address re-integration issues and to secure sustainable support for this process.

Methods

≈ Re-framing issues

CFNI's approach was founded on a number of fundamental principles including a need to re-frame the challenge of peacebuilding and integration and to move away from the language of both clearly distinguishable perpetrators and victims, and hierarchies of victims. The approach CFNI adopted in its work with ex-prisoners was very deliberately the same as that adopted in work with victims: 'we had to follow issues; we couldn't do something and then walk away, and we had to build organisational capacity'.

Re-framing issues worked at different levels and in different places. At some of the conferences where ex-prisoners began to talk to each other they also began to explain to each other. 'This process wasn't about de-politicising things but rather about personalising things. Once a group has been demonised you have to unpick it in order to humanise it'.

≈ Non-alignment

CFNI worked to constantly maintain an even handed position between different and shifting groups, and between ex-prisoners and victims.

Although work with victims and prisoners were two separate strands of work, one would have been impossible without the other. Despite pressure to the contrary CFNI refused to accept any 'hierarchy of victimhood' – 'a victim is a victim irrespective of politics'. 'We had to fight for that against public perception which saw some victims as being more victims than others or more worthy than others'.

≈ Building credibility and trust

Especially in the early stages CFNI and the groups involved had to spend considerable time building up contact and credibility with relevant organisations and agencies. Given the stereotyping

and hostility that existed this required considerable persistence with no immediate and tangible results.

≈ Taking calculated risks

The work was always extremely risky at a number of levels. Inevitably there were sometimes media headlines claiming that the CFNI was supporting 'terrorists'. 'The problem for the Community Foundation was to distinguish fact from rumour; and allegation from evidence. It would have been all too easy to adopt the line of "three headlines and you're out" – but then headlines were for the purpose of selling newspapers rather than a sound basis for funding decisions.' (Taking 'calculated' Risks for Peace 11, CFNI, undated, 50).

≈ Convening

CFNI not only brought groups together across the sectarian divide, but also worked with civil servants and ministers locally and from the British and Irish governments. CFNI used its reputational capital and its funding relationships to get groups to the table: 'they probably gave us the benefit of the doubt because we were a funder'.

≈ Using a variety of resources and working on different levels

In both its work with victims and with ex-prisoners CFNI applied a combination of money, reputational capital, organisational capacity building and work on policy issues. These elements were inter-related and built upon each other, and at no time did CFNI rely on one method alone. In addition, CFNI worked at a variety of levels with local groups and with Ministers and civil servants.

Funding

A total of over £40 million was spent by CFNI under Peace I. Spending money from other sources is obviously attractive but it has potential disadvantages.

CFNI notes various issues associated with acceptance of European Commission funding. In addition to the failure to consider issues of sustainability and duration (mentioned above), CFNI questions whether more could have been done to record and learn the policy lessons of work funded; whether the emphasis on economic development within the overall programme was the most suitable theme for a peacebuilding programme and whether the administrative processes and requirements of the Programme may detract from achievement of its goals. ‘This has often posed a quandary for Intermediary Funding Bodies who are faced with the potentially contradictory demands of being bold and imaginative in their funding policies, while being cautious and overly regulatory in their administrative procedures’ (op.cit 2002:5).

At a purely practical funding level there were tensions in the effective use of grants. Groups were very new and inexperienced in terms of both organisational efficiency and financial transparency. Some groups were also over-ambitious – and likely to be disappointed and discouraged. A further tension arose from the desire to appoint ex-prisoners as paid staff; this had the advantage of providing group credibility but the disadvantage that such people did not necessarily possess the skills to manage projects. Further tensions arose when ‘macro-political re-alignments over the on-going peace process were reflected at a micro project level’ (50).

In addition to European funding CFNI also raised money from independent foundations. This money was crucial to the success of the work; European funding was project specific, tied closely to guaranteed outcomes, and therefore excluded some of the bolder, more creative aspects of the work. All added-value work was funded by independent funders.

Getting additional funding was not easy for various reasons. Relatively few foundations give grants in Northern Ireland; CFNI is both a grantmaker and an operating foundation and some funders questioned why they should give grants to a grantmaker. There may also have been a feeling that Northern Ireland was receiving very large sums of money from other sources, and a view that to fund this work could be seen as subsidising the proper work of government.

Factors in Success

What factors influenced CFNI’s achievements?

Success Factors in Brief

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| ≈ Persistence | ≈ Building legitimacy and recruiting champions |
| ≈ Passion and a clear value base | ≈ Building international networks |
| ≈ Pragmatism | ≈ Recording knowledge critical for policy |
| ≈ Focus on the outcome | |

≈ Persistence

Persistence was an important factor. ‘The ex-prisoners group first met in 1995 and then carried on through the breakdown of the ceasefire in ’96. It felt like one step forward and two steps back but we carried on.’

CFNI also had to persist in the face of political hostility. A Unionist MP and a Unionist Lord referred at different times to the Director as ‘a leading Republican’ in contributions condemning the funding of these groups in the House of Commons and House of Lords respectively. This did not make it any easier for CFNI to undertake neighbourhood development work in tense loyalist areas.

≈ Passion: A clear value base

CFNI was very much aware of the risk to its reputation and there was close scrutiny of programmes by the Board. The Board’s strong value base of social justice, social inclusion and social change was important in putting the risks into context and providing a clear justification for the work ‘on all three counts we just had to get involved in this. If the peace process was going to work there had to be justice, inclusion and change. All groups had to be involved’.

≈ Pragmatism

CFNI adopted and promoted a pragmatic view that if peace were to be achieved then ex-prisoners were the ones who could help to deliver that. As Sir George Quigley put it: ‘Old problems need new questions asked of them.’

Pragmatism, passion and persistence enabled CFNI to weather the squalls of media and political protest and criticism.

≈ Focusing on the outcome

This work made it very difficult for CFNI to raise money and it undoubtedly lost some donors in the process. ‘But the Board saw the peace process as the greater good.’ Later on the funding loss was addressed by a more concerted strategy to emphasise the range of work undertaken by CFNI.

≈ Building legitimacy and recruiting champions

CFNI’s 16 year record in grantmaking and its knowledge of and involvement with communities on both sides of the divide, as well as its links with the wider voluntary sector, government and business, were clearly significant elements in its credibility in engaging in this work.

The early grant advisory committees were important as a means of bringing all sides into the process and giving them ownership. CFNI also worked hard to keep the Board of Trustees informed and on board.

The composition of the Board was clearly an important factor in the initial credibility and legitimacy of CFNI’s involvement in this work. CFNI also sought to gain legitimacy from people, places and processes. For example, it deliberately involved a widely respected champion (Sir George Quigley) who could not be discredited; one event was held in Dublin Castle and both sides attended – this was an important political statement. Although government never publicly supported CFNI’s work in this area it did give a £3 million

challenge grant in recognition of the Foundation’s 25 years of service to the communities of the North.

≈ Building international networks

CFNI itself sees its use of international speakers and networks as crucial to its impact. The support of Hilary Clinton and George Mitchell was hugely important in giving credibility and publicity to the issues, but bringing in less well known international speakers from divided societies was also very powerful. The introduction of such speakers gave inspiration and confidence that peace could be built, as well as acting as ‘a sort of lobbying.’ International speakers ‘moved things on because it allowed people who couldn’t be pigeon holed to say challenging things.’

≈ Recording knowledge, creating knowledge for policy

‘Writing things up as we went along was very important. We had to keep on thinking about the policy lessons and drawing those out. And it meant we had something to give people.’

In Retrospect

Given persistent media hostility CFNI had to spend considerable time responding to media statements and criticisms. In retrospect CFNI believes it should have put in place a more vigorous communications strategy from the outset.

In retrospect, CFNI believes that it did not always adequately recognise the limits to neutrality in post-conflict situations. ‘Maybe we should have spent more time re-building relationships after we were interpreted as being ‘pro-agreement’; maybe we should have been sharper in challenging the rate of the move away from conflict.’

CHAPTER FOUR

So What? Engaging Philanthropy for Change

Introduction

The aim of this report is to encourage and inspire foundations to consider ways in which they may extend their impact beyond immediate grantees and contribute to a more just and sustainable society for all. The case studies above have illustrated what foundations can do, different routes to change, different roles for foundations and different methods of contributing to change. They have also illustrated the variety of factors in success, the roles of opportunism and luck, different types and levels of risk and different types of ‘unpopular’ causes.

The case studies demonstrate that achieving wider and longer term sustainable change is not rocket science but nor is it entirely ‘business as usual’. So how might foundations wanting to achieve impact beyond their immediate grantees need to change?

This chapter draws out some of the key points from the case studies and vignettes concerning strategies for change. The case studies are, of course, limited in number and scope but put in the context of other research they are revealing (the wider research literature is reviewed in Appendix 2). First, however, it is worth making some general points about change, how and where it happens.

Challenging Assumptions About Change

These case studies challenge some of the assumptions some foundations appear to make about how, where and when change happens.

Challenging Assumptions About Change

The case studies, and evidence from other research, suggest that:

- ≈ Change does not ‘just happen’ – it has to be steadily worked at.
- ≈ Credible knowledge is increasingly important in achieving change in an ‘evidence based’ policy environment.
- ≈ Different problems/issues require change at different levels – organisational, community/neighbourhood, regional, wider society, European, global etc.
- ≈ Different problems/issues require change in different types of system – behavioural, attitudinal, cultural, economic, practice, policy, legal etc.
- ≈ The nature of change required depends on the nature of the problem, the roots/causes of problems, and the locus of control.
- ≈ Who or what has to change may be one person or one million people.
- ≈ Not all change requires policy change.
- ≈ Sustainable change requires influencing those with the power to effect change; this often means working from the top down (albeit informed and supported by those who are disadvantaged/affected). Leaving the achievement of change to the disadvantaged denies the realities of the distribution of power to effect change.
- ≈ Legal and policy change are often an important step but may not be sufficient to achieve real sustainable change. Policies have to be implemented, and often attitudes and behaviour have to change too. Changing the hardware of systems and policies is not sufficient without changing the software of attitudes and practices.
- ≈ Most change takes time and persistence.
- ≈ Most change requires luck and opportunism.

Key Lessons from the Case Studies

The case studies (and the wider research literature) demonstrate that there are no golden rules or magic bullets in achieving change with impact beyond immediate grantees. But the case studies do highlight some recurring themes in how foundations work and what they need to look for, and fund, in grant recipient partners if they want to contribute to achievement of wider, longer term impact.

≈ Flexibility, opportunism and luck (and implications for core funding)

Seizing opportunities, capitalising on, or making, luck, requires flexibility – and that has implications for core funding. ‘It’s about taking opportunities, choosing the right time and nuancing things in the right way to fit the needs of the moment or the audience. That requires flexibility, being able to jump when you need to’. ‘You’re always working in a changing context. If you know you have core funding it enables you to react flexibly and intelligently’.

≈ Passion

Believing passionately in what you are trying to achieve came up again and again in case studies. Passion gave people confidence and charisma, it helped them through the low times, it encouraged persistence, and passion could be infectious reproducing itself in other champions for the cause.

≈ Creating an evidence base/credible knowledge

Passion seems to be most effective when it is allied with a solid evidence base. Anecdote and good ideas are not sufficiently convincing in today’s ‘evidence-based policy environment’. Research can uncover new facts, raise new issues, create new ways of understanding causes and effects, demonstrate what can be done and/or change the terms of the debate.

≈ Telling human stories

The most robust statistics and evidence may be necessary, but they are often not sufficient to engage commitment around an issue. Human stories bring a hundred figures alive.

≈ Reframing and relating to other agendas

Re-framing an issue to see it from a different angle can be powerful in itself and may create new interest and support. If the issue can be related to some other, already topical, agenda that may be equally, or more, powerful in gaining attention and action. ‘Hitching rides on other band wagons’ was one element in ‘making your own luck by seizing opportunities’.

≈ Working on different fronts

The case studies suggest that change is most likely to be achieved by working on a number of fronts: national and local, service and advocacy, support and promotion, and so on. This also has a time dimension: ‘Achieving change means working in two streams. The slow stream of research and a very, very fast 24 hour media stream requiring an immediate response. If you don’t respond in the fast stream then people assume you don’t exist or the issue doesn’t exist. That’s tough to handle’.

Bringing people together, across boundaries, was not only valuable in itself but was also one way of in effect working on several fronts simultaneously.

≈ Dissemination and tailoring communications to audience needs

Dissemination was a key strategy in all of the case studies. But dissemination was not simply about writing a report or putting something on a website – it was about tailoring communication content and channels to the needs of those with the power to effect change at various levels.

≈ Providing ‘easy’/‘smart’ answers

One theme in a number of the case studies was the power of ‘giving policy makers and others recommendations in bite sized chunks’ or ‘giving them smart answers’ that are feasible and actionable. This might involve equipping others to deal with challenges and obstacles (e.g. working with press officers in government departments). It might involve being pragmatic and compromising over what can realistically be achieved at any given time.

≈ Providing 'smart' answers related to three other themes:

- ~ Focusing on the positive/constructive
- ~ Presenting clear and simple messages
- ~ Focus on the message not the messenger

≈ Going to where the power lies

Case study organisations worked with a wide variety of people on various fronts but they also focused on who has the power to make change happen and tailored their strategies accordingly. For example, a piece in *the Telegraph* may be far more powerful than something in *the Guardian* when an issue is in the Lords.

≈ Building legitimacy, anticipating obstacles and recruiting champions

Case study organisations worked hard at building their reputations as knowledgeable and measured commentators on their issue. They anticipated obstacles and, where necessary, built tactical coalitions and recruited counter intuitive champions. Case study organisations also stressed the importance of building cross party support; recruiting counter intuitive champions (and convening) was one way in which an issue could be moved out of the realms of 'the usual suspects'.

≈ Focus on the outcome

Working in collaboration can be difficult. Finding a shared objective to bring allies together and constantly focusing on the outcome were common strategies to overcome the difficulties.

≈ The power of persistence

Perhaps the clearest message from the case studies was the need for persistence. Most change is a matter of iteration not cataclysm. Furthermore, as several interviewees from within government noted, being able to stay with an issue longer term is one of foundations' great strengths, and something government finds it hard to do. This has obvious implications for funding terms: 'There's a problem about having to bid with something new and shiny. Achieving change isn't about shiny – it's about years of hammering away, publishing reports, going to meetings, networking, building credibility, making people know you'll be around next year, and the year after'.

In some cases, persistence also entailed not simply calling for grant applications but actively supporting potential applicants.

≈ The importance of individuals

One other theme came through in a number of the case studies: the importance of individuals. At one level this is not surprising; but it is rarely openly discussed among funders.

Strategies for Change

So how do you achieve change with longer term impact beyond immediate grantees? Diffusion of innovations is generally seen as following a bell curve with a tiny proportion of innovators, followed by a small number of early adopters and then a steeper rise with the early majority, and then a slope down with the late majority and the laggards (Rogers, E.M. (2003) *Diffusion of Innovations*, New York: Free Press.). In the past foundations played the role of innovators (or supporting innovators) and then largely left it to others to become early adopters (often local authorities) and so on. That approach cannot be relied on today.

The literature on diffusion of innovations also tells us that in order for diffusion to occur the innovation must address the following issues:

- ≈ Relative advantage
- ≈ Compatibility
- ≈ Complexity
- ≈ Trialability
- ≈ Observability (Rogers, 2003).

Chip and Dan Heath in their book *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (Heath, C and Heath, D, Random House Books, 2007) suggest that ideas that stick have the following characteristics:

- ≈ Simplicity
- ≈ Unexpectedness
- ≈ Credibility
- ≈ Emotion
- ≈ Stories.

Simon Maxwell identifies four styles of policy entrepreneurship:

- ≈ Story teller
- ≈ Networker
- ≈ Engineer
- ≈ Fixer (www.odi.org.uk/speeches/bridgingpolicy/bridgingpolicy.html).

The case studies illustrate all of these frameworks. Case study organisations used techniques of story telling, networking, engineering and fixing. They emphasised simplicity of messages, unexpectedness (in re-framing and counter intuitive champions, for example), passion and stories. They emphasised relative advantage, reduced complexity and provided trialability and observability. They also demonstrated persistence, opportunism, positioning to hitch rides on existing agendas and providing usable recommendations.

The following 12 suggestions will not guarantee change but they may provide a useful check list of things to consider.

- ≈ Think about how widespread social change happens – who or what has to change and how that can be achieved.
- ≈ Question assumptions that ‘change just happens’ and/or that change can always be achieved from the bottom up. Distinguish between rooting suggested change in the experience and views of those disadvantaged and leaving it to them to achieve change alone. Go to where the power to affect change lies.
- ≈ Acknowledge that foundations have resources other than money and identify and build those resources. Invest time and effort in networks and convening; don’t underestimate the power of the foundation invitation. Build up and on reputation.
- ≈ Invest in research and evaluation to understand problems/issues, identify solutions and provide credible knowledge of what can be achieved; and make issues human – tell stories.
- ≈ Invest in timely and tailored dissemination to ensure that messages reach those with the direct and indirect power to

influence change; tailor messages and recommendations to provide policy makers with what they need when they need it.

- ≈ Reframe issues by seeing things from a different angle and recruiting counter-intuitive supporters.
- ≈ Keep the focus on the message not the messenger. Focus on policies not politics, build cross party support.
- ≈ Recognise the value of luck, and make luck by positioning; keep scanning the environment for debates and issues related to your work and be flexible enough to take advantage of opportunities; hitch rides on other related issue and policy bandwagons.
- ≈ Stay with an issue long term if necessary – this is one of your unique advantages.
- ≈ Recognise the importance of passion and charismatic individuals and facilitate ways of ensuring that they infect others. Recruit champions to spread the word and gain support.
- ≈ Accept that success has many parents – don't expect to be a lone heroine; value the importance of small roles that may be crucial to the plot (or accept that although you can't make a cake with baking powder alone, a teaspoon or two of baking powder is crucial in making the cake rise successfully). Work collaboratively – begging and borrowing skills, resources and support.
- ≈ Be prepared to take a leadership role if appropriate.

APPENDIX ONE

Definitions of Social Justice Philanthropy

At one level social justice philanthropy may be defined in terms of a set of values – a picture of the good or just society. For example, Setkova defines social justice philanthropy in terms of seeking: 'A society in which people's basic human needs are met; there is fairness and equality of opportunity, outcomes and treatment; there is a reduction in unjust inequalities in wealth, income and life chances; the dignity and equal worth of all are recognised; diversity is respected; and all people are able to participate' (Setkova, L. unpublished report.).

Others have defined social justice philanthropy not in terms of values/a vision of a just society but in terms of existing rights. For example, the Sigrid Rausing Trust adopts a rights based approach on the grounds that it takes issues out of the political arena by referring to an agreed convention and provides legitimacy for pursuit of social change enshrined in international law, (as well as moving away from service provision to systemic change and avoiding passivity/dependency). A rights based approach emphasises inclusion of mapping abuses, stopping abuse, and ensuring redress for victims.

Most definitions of social justice philanthropy include one or more of three elements. The first two are:

- ≈ What: Structural/system change or addressing root causes
- ≈ Who: Those who are most disadvantaged in society

For example, Berresford defines social justice philanthropy as: 'giving that supports people struggling against disadvantage, inequality and unfairness. It is philanthropy that aids disadvantaged people by giving them a way to improve their own lives. This approach reflects the personal philosophy of Henry Ford who distrusted handouts saying, "the best way to be kind to people is to help them help themselves". This approach drives us to try to address root causes of problems.'

'Addressing root causes often means making new kinds of arrangements in public policies, community and power relationships. It means changing conditions to which people have become accustomed. It is different from traditional charity – feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless – which is important in itself and justly recognised as such.' (Susan V. Berresford *Social Justice Philanthropy and US Political Traditions* Woodrow Wilson International Center Scholars Washington DC June 19 2003).

Others add a third element:

≈ How: An inclusive method of giving

For example: 'What distinguishes social change philanthropy (also called social movement, social justice or community based philanthropy) from other forms of grantmaking is the central tenet that philanthropy's success is measured not only by where money is given, but also the process by which it is given. Social change philanthropy strives to incorporate giving principles that provide access to those left out of grantmaking in order to support their campaigns for social and economic justice' (Alison D. Goldberg FNC, Cover story, *Social Change Philanthropy and How It's Done* www.foundationnews.org/CME/article.cm?ID=1982; see also Shaw, A. *Social Justice Philanthropy An Overview*, Synergos, www.synergos.org).

Some have attempted to subsume social justice philanthropy within environmental concerns. For example: "Sustainable development is a dynamic process which enables all people to realise their potential and to improve their quality of life in ways which simultaneously protect and enhance the Earth's life support systems". From that perspective, orientations towards social justice that are not located within an integrated sustainable development framework are likely to prove dangerously escapist. This goes to the heart of how the concept of social justice needs to be interpreted in today's fractured world' (Forum for the Future Report to CUKT 2006). It is not clear, however, how this clarifies the issue of what this form of philanthropy is and how it differs from any other form.

These definitions raise various issues. For example, some make a clear distinction between providing services and social justice philanthropy, but is there room for an approach that thinks in terms of building blocks rather than boxes? Using a building blocks approach, providing a service might be seen as part of a social justice approach if, and only if, this were allied to a strategy of widespread dissemination and change in wider structures/processes.

There is another issue about the tendency to define social justice philanthropy in terms of economic disadvantage. But some social justice issues have to do with other rights. Are, for example, issues to do with a fair trial or freedom of information ruled out of the category of social justice philanthropy?

Definitions of social justice philanthropy in terms of providing access raise questions about whether this is a moral principle or a necessary ingredient of success. For example, could you have effective top-down social justice philanthropy that did not directly involve in the process those suffering disadvantage?

If social justice philanthropy is defined as 'the practice of making contributions to nonprofit organisations that work for structural change and increase the opportunity of those who are less well off politically, economically and socially' (NCRP (National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy) (2003) *Understanding Social Justice Philanthropy*, Washington, DC: NCRP.) then the crucial difference seems to be an emphasis on structural change. If structural change is the issue then, whatever the terminology and vision of what social justice looks like, the necessity to engage with public policy is common.

APPENDIX TWO

The Wider Research Literature

The research literature suggests that effective strategies for change are the same whatever values and goals inform your work.

The Neo Conservative Foundations

The neo-conservative foundations in the United States are widely regarded as having been the most successful foundations in many decades, effectively transforming an entire way of thinking and policy agenda both at home and abroad (some may quibble that the neo-conservative foundations had it easy in that they were merely persuading the rich and powerful to adopt attitudes and practices they were already heavily disposed to adopt).

An initial study of US conservative foundations found that their high level of effectiveness was related to seven factors:

- ≈ Clarity of vision and strong political intention
- ≈ A focus on building strong institutions by providing general operating support rather than project specific grants
- ≈ Attention to state, local and neighbourhood policy environments rather than focusing solely on the federal level.
- ≈ Investment in institutions and projects geared towards the marketing of conservative policy ideas
- ≈ Support for development of conservative public intellectuals and policy leaders
- ≈ Support to a wide range of policy institutions, recognising that a variety of strategies and approaches is needed to advance a policy agenda
- ≈ Long term funding for grantees, in some cases for two decades or more

(NCRP (National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy) (1997) *Moving a Public Policy Agenda: The Strategic Philanthropy of Conservative Foundations*, Washington DC: NCRP).

A later study confirmed and amplified these findings (NCRP 2004).

All of these factors – long term grants, core operating support, wide discretion and flexibility– require a very high level of trust in grantees. At the same time, however, there was a high level of interaction between foundations and grantees with informal meetings several times a year. Small boards and staffs, enabled conservative foundations more easily to schedule fast decisions thus allowing grantees to respond to unanticipated changes in the policy environment.

High trust was also a factor in relation to performance measurement. Conservative foundations generally resisted the wider pressures for formal methods of performance measurement, arguing that some problems that the foundation's grantees were working on were so large that trying to evaluate the grantees may actually handcuff them and hamper their effectiveness. Conservative foundations also accepted that: 'the very amorphous nature of the policy process makes it difficult to trace policy success back to a particular organisation, foundation grant, or program officer. For these foundations to continue to succeed, they need to make sure their staff members are motivated by a desire to see major policy changes take place, rather than to receive individual credit for such changes' (NCRP (National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy) (2004) *Axis of Ideology: Conservative Foundations and Public Policy*, Washington, DC: NCRP).

Several factors were critical to the impact of conservative foundations:

- ≈ Time (and long term, flexible funds) – many of the ideas considered common in today's policy debate were once considered too radical even to consider and it took years to get them into the mainstream
- ≈ Focus – concentration on a small number of grantees.
- ≈ Development of affirmative ideas rather than simply reacting to liberal, social policies
- ≈ Presentation of changes as bipartisan to help build a larger constituency by recruiting conservative Democrats

≈ Public policy process expertise – conservative foundations understood that policy making does not just happen in Washington (or Westminster). The importance of working at a variety of levels and using a range of strategies is also vividly illustrated by de Borms in his description of the King Badoiuun Foundation’s architectural heritage programme (de Borms 2005).

Smith (2002) highlights three important lessons from the success of the conservative foundations’ strategies of innovation:

≈ Large ideas and values matter – building institutions rather than funding piecemeal projects works.

≈ Politics is ‘a relentless intellectual contest, to be waged as an aggressive war of ideas’

≈ Ideas can be propagated, marketed and sold.

Part of the genius of the conservative foundations was to recognise the way in which the framework of policy discourse has changed, and to adapt accordingly. Policy discourse is no longer the sole preserve of political parties, interest groups and elite opinion makers, but is now shared with the media, direct mail, talk radio, the Web, and so on. But, Smith notes, these new realities of the policy process have been largely ignored by mainstream foundations focused on small scale, local level, practical work.’ (Smith, J.A. (2002) *Foundations and Public Policy Making: A Historical Perspective*. www.usc.edu/philanthropy).

Creative foundations

The key characteristics of the way in which the conservative foundations worked are very similar to those illustrated by the work of the creative foundations (Anheier and Leat 2006) with somewhat different agendas.

The term ‘creative foundation’ is used to describe endowed foundations that use their unique freedom to stimulate creative, constructive conversation and debate around innovative solutions to old and new issues thus enhancing democracy and the problem solving capacity of society. Creative foundations display various characteristics:

New horizons: beyond grantees

Unlike many, these foundations are not content to ‘make a difference’ to a limited number of lucky grantees. These foundations seek to make a **sustainable difference with an impact beyond their immediate grantees**. These foundations also know that foundation funding will never be enough to achieve sustainable change.

Beyond grantmaking

Grantmaking is only the beginning of a usually long term process and may be only one strategy in a complex tool box.

Beyond philanthropy

These foundations are very clear that, for most issues, sustainable change requires change in the policies and practices of other organisations, including government. They are not afraid of talking about policy and implications for government.

Beyond money

These foundations see knowledge, networks, influence and an independent non-partisan voice as key resources and are these are built, managed and treasured as carefully as money.

Starting with an outcome

These foundations start with an outcome they want to see, and then develop a theory of change identifying who or what would have to change in order to achieve that outcome, how those organisations/ institutions or people could be reached and what sort of information, in what format would be required. The desired outcome and the theory of change influence all subsequent decisions, including what is funded, to what amount and for how long.

Beyond the magic bullet

These foundations see social change as a matter of iteration not cataclysm, as a slow, long term process. They work on an issue for as long as it takes to achieve the desired outcome – often ten years or more. Social change is rarely seen as either bottom up or top down but a mix of both, requiring work at various levels and multiple strategies.

Flexibility and opportunism

Because social change is not entirely predictable, these foundations maintain a degree of flexibility in programs and strategies. Opportunism is one of their key strategies. Planning is always a work in progress. The plan is a framework not a blueprint.

Beyond independence

These foundations value their independence but see relationships as one of their key assets and work to build rich networks of different types at various levels.

They are hungry for ideas and perspectives – the more diverse the better. And they need relationships to test out ideas, to build legitimacy, to recruit champions and to make things happen.

Focus

In order to build reputation and credibility, to develop sound knowledge and to build rich networks in a particular field, creative foundations have to focus on a small number of priorities in a limited number of fields.

Communication, communication, communication

These foundations show and tell; they are in show business. Communication to the right audiences by the most effective routes in the right format is seen as crucial to having a sustainable impact beyond the limits of its immediate grantees. Unlike many, these foundations do not assume that communication will happen ‘naturally’ or that it can be left to someone else. Creative foundations run marathons not relay races.

Beyond demonstration

But communication alone is not enough. These foundations know that the marketplace of ideas is crowded, full of obstacles and blind spots. If change is to be sustainable it has to be implemented. Moving from ideas and small scale demonstration projects to wider implementation requires continuing, influential champions.

Beyond evaluation and performance measurement

Because these foundations recognise the need to work flexibly over the long-term, performance measurement and evaluation have to be similarly flexible and long term. Conventional approaches to evaluation and performance measurement sit uneasily with real risk taking and the possibility of failure. But in an important sense these foundations do not have ‘failures’. Things that go wrong or do not work out are seen not as failures but as valuable learning opportunities.

Learning

These foundations put a high premium on constant learning within the organisation and on sharing that learning with others. Sharing learning is an essential, on-going element in what being a creative foundation involves.

Lessons from Six Successful Campaigns

Further support for the findings above come from an analysis of six recent advocacy campaigns (Center for Nonprofit Strategies *Advocacy for Impact: Lessons from Six Successful Campaigns, A Report Commissioned by Global Interdependence Initiative A Program of the Aspen Institute, May 2005* (www.cpnsw.org).

This report analyses six advocacy campaigns centred around global poverty reduction and health promotion: the Jubilee Debt Relief Bill 2000; the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) 2003; the African Growth and Opportunity Act 2004, the Millennium Challenge Account 2004; the campaign to promote

the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, and the Better Safer World Campaign.

Key findings from the study include the importance to success of:

- ≈ Planning, execution and luck – the convergence of planned and unplanned, controllable and uncontrollable factors. Although timing and luck are important factors 'having a good strategic framework helps advocates makes the best of new opportunities that might present themselves and to anticipate and avoid some of the pitfalls'. (p3).
- ≈ Structuring coalitions to include broad, bipartisan reach to gain credibility, attention, support, reach and resources; building trust and respect in order to manage ideological diversity and establish common ground for success.
- ≈ Flexible strategies to allow for responses to changing environments/events.
- ≈ Clear targeting of people to be won over and timetables for events and efforts, led by people who understood legislative processes and how best to influence these.
- ≈ Playing to individual strengths.
- ≈ Constant assessment of progress towards tactical targets.
- ≈ Reframing the debate to capture the imagination of a critical mass of constituents and policy makers; for example, the Jubilee movement repositioned debt relief as a religious and moral imperative rather than a narrow economic problem. Reframing may also serve to bring diverse members of the coalition together.
- ≈ Combining moral vision/passion and hard facts to counter objections.
- ≈ Tailoring messages, format and content to the audiences that need to be influenced.
- ≈ Knowing the system.
- ≈ Neutralising roadblocks by creating sellable policies e.g. preparing draft legislation that balanced different perspectives and would appeal to both parties.
- ≈ Having access to decision makers.

The themes of flexibility, opportunism, building credibility and relationships, focus, effective targeted communication, understanding of policy processes and time come through again.

Similar findings relating to the need to combine strategy with flexibility and managing diversity emerge from an evaluation of the Make Poverty History 2005 campaign (Martin, A. Culey, C. Evans, S. *Make Poverty History 2005 Campaign Evaluation*, Firetail).

Just Change

Strategies for Increasing Philanthropic Impact

*'You cannot live a good life
in an unjust society' (Aristotle)*

Acknowledgments

This work was a collaborative venture. I would like to thank the collaborating funders: Barrow Cadbury Foundation, Big Lottery Fund, City Bridge Trust, Carnegie UK Trust (CUKT funded initial thinking and the main study), Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, and Northern Rock Foundation; and the members of the advisory committee: Fiona Ellis, Sarah Mistry, Stephen Pittam, Paul Roberts, Lenka Setkova, and Clare Thomas, for their constructive guidance and support.

Without the generosity of the many people associated with the projects studied the report would have been impossible. They were always patient, welcoming and willing to share their wisdom, experience and reflections – thank you.

Please contact ACF for information about further copies of this report: acf@acf.org.uk

Published in November 2007.

The Woburn Place Collaborative

The Woburn Place Collaborative was established in 2006. It is a forum for grant makers and foundations concerned to more effectively promote social justice, sustainable development, human rights, and democracy.

The objectives of WPC include:

- Understanding better the ways in which philanthropy can more effectively and creatively influence social change;
- Developing and supporting practical research and development initiatives that address issues of common concern and interest;
- Representing best practice and models for working collaboratively.

For further information on WPC, please contact Charlie McConnell, Chief Executive Carnegie UK Trust charlie@carnegieuk.org

Just Change

Strategies for increasing philanthropic impact

This report is for those who spend private money for public benefit – established philanthropic foundations and new donors – who want to increase the scope and duration of their impact. It aims to encourage discussion of how philanthropy can contribute to achieving longer term systemic change with impact beyond immediate grantees, and inspire practice.

The case studies tell the stories of how foundations contributed to longer term change in a variety of fields, illustrate a variety of roles for foundations and analyse methods and factors in success. They entail different levels and types of risk and tell very different stories, but also reveal that while increasing the scope and sustainability of impact is not rocket science it is also not 'business as usual'.

The case studies (and the wider research literature) demonstrate that there are no golden rules or magic bullets in achieving change with impact beyond immediate grantees. But there are some recurring themes in how foundations work and what they need to look for, and fund, in grant recipient partners if they want to contribute to achievement of wider, longer term impact.

Diana Leat

