



## Tony Travers, Director, Greater London group at the London School of Economics, looks at influences on the voluntary sector

**F**ive years is a short time in the 2000-year history of London. But there can be no doubt that this particular five-year period has seen radical changes in the capital. Labour was elected into government; a directly-elected mayor took office; an array of modernising social policies were introduced and, all the while, the capital matured into one of the world's most complex and extraordinary cities.

The arrival of a 'new' Labour government inevitably meant people expected big changes after 18 years of the Conservatives. But, in fact, although there have been many

initiatives. These approaches to policy make it possible to understand much about the government's motives.

Tony Blair and Chancellor Gordon Brown want to "lift people out of poverty" rather than marginally raising the incomes of the poor. Tax credits are preferred to extra social security payments. Narrowly-targeted programmes of public spending are aimed at particular neighbourhoods, rather than whole local authorities. London is awash with zones, special initiatives and one-off funding streams. Simple it isn't, while the long-term effects will take some years to assess.

# London the mosaic city

new initiatives affecting public policy, changes within society probably mattered more.

The Blair government at first adopted an approach designed to hold public expenditure at the levels set by the previous administration. Soon it became clear that 'modernisation' of local government, the NHS and virtually everything else was the key priority. In fact, after five years it is clear that the desire to modernise public services derives from a suspicion within new Labour that existing public services are not always efficient and effective.

London's deprived communities, in common with those elsewhere in the country, have found themselves the object of a bewildering array of government-backed

One aspect of new Labour's modernisation – and, indeed, of devolution – was the creation of the Greater London Authority, consisting of a city-wide mayor and assembly. Ken Livingstone, leader of the Greater London Council from 1981 to 1986, became London's first-ever directly-elected mayor. This reform brought an element of American politics into the heart of the capital. As an elected executive for the whole city, the mayor inevitably has to govern in such a way as to take account of the rainbow of races, religions and lifestyles that make up London.

In the five years since 1997, the capital has had to absorb many pressures and unexpected changes. The population of London has continued to rise sharply. International immigration into the capital has occurred at an unprecedented level.

Recent research commissioned by the mayor suggests that the population is now 7.4 million, (not its largest ever population, which was 8 million in 1939) and will rise to over 8 million by 2015. Immigration has included asylum seekers, young citizens from within Europe and the Commonwealth, and rich bankers from the United States.

London is now a diverse, multi-lingual metropolis of epic proportions.

But not everyone believes London should develop in this way. During 1999, a bomber attacked targets in Brixton, Brick Lane and Soho. His targets were the African-Caribbean, Asian and gay communities. His motives – as it turned out at a later court case – were explicitly derived from extremist, National Socialist, objectives. This random and brutal incursion into London's apparently peaceful community relations was a reminder that there is a fragility to the capital's unique culture.

Policing London – the Met were highly effective over the capture of the bomber – has also become a matter of continuous political and community concern. Tragic failings in the handling of the Stephen Lawrence case led to major criticisms of police practices and management. The current senior officers of the Metropolitan Police (which is now subject to greater accountability than in the past) clearly understand the problems of policing a racially-diverse city in a way that has altered radically since the murder of Stephen Lawrence.

Voluntary organisations have, as in earlier years, been vital in providing help to many individuals and communities that official organisations cannot reach. London has one of the most wide-reaching and creative non-governmental sectors in the world. City Parochial Foundation, as a consistent supporter of organisations for the dispossessed, has played a key part in underpinning London's social and economic development.

Five years is not long for London. But for those of us who live here, particularly ones who have arrived from strife-torn countries overseas, even a few months can seem a lifetime. Freedoms – to work, to relax and to live peacefully – may be mundane, but they are also precious. London offers the bright lights and big city attractions that bring the ambitious to live here. But the

### February 1997

Labour Party publishes report on voluntary sector *Building the Future Together*.

### May 1997

Labour government is elected.

### August 1997

Home Secretary Jack Straw announces a full independent judicial inquiry into the handling by the police and Crown Prosecution Service of the murder of Stephen Lawrence in April 1993, to be headed by the former High Court judge Sir William Macpherson.

### March 1998

Lawrence public inquiry opens at the Elephant & Castle.

Tim Cook retires after 12 years as Clerk. He is succeeded by Bharat Mehta.

More than 300 people – most of them from organisations funded by Trust for London – attend an event at the Guildhall to launch *Trusting in the Community*, a report published to mark the Trust's 10th anniversary.

### October 1998

CPF report *Financial Monitoring of Voluntary Organisations* looking at 59 organisations of various sizes is published.

### November 1998

Lawrence Inquiry ends after 69 days of hearings.

A compact between the voluntary sector and the government is agreed, setting out a set of shared principles, paving the way for codes of practice on issues such as funding, community groups and volunteering.

city also provides a haven for those fleeing persecution and poverty.

The period from 1997 to 2002 has seen London mature into perhaps the ultimate muddled, creative mosaic city. Whatever it is, its people made it thus.

# Responding to change

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**W**ork on the 1997-2001 quinquennium began in 1996 when the Trustees and staff held a series of meetings to consider and shape grant funding for the coming five years. This was backed by interviews by two former members of staff Alison Harker and Maknun Gamaledin Ashami with 75 people from very poor areas of London to discover their most pressing concerns. From this work, the priorities were set.

## Setting the guidelines

Trustees were very aware of the way poverty can lead to social isolation, injustice and exploitation in all sections of the community and the effect of policy on young people. As a result, **City Parochial Foundation** decided to focus a significant part of its resources on two priority concerns:

- the need to tackle social isolation, injustice and exclusion as they affect individuals; and
- the need to provide help for young people (aged 10-25 years) experiencing poverty.

Grants would be made for direct work involving provision of advice, information and assistance with individual advocacy, local initiatives to combat racial harassment or crime, and support for education and training initiatives and schemes.

Back-up and development work for the voluntary sector was also considered important and Trustees agreed to look at applications for infrastructure support in individual boroughs as well as across London, advocacy for policy change, and collaborative work where

organisations work together.

The Trustees also agreed to continue to take initiatives in addition to grant-making for programme funding, local area work and alliances.

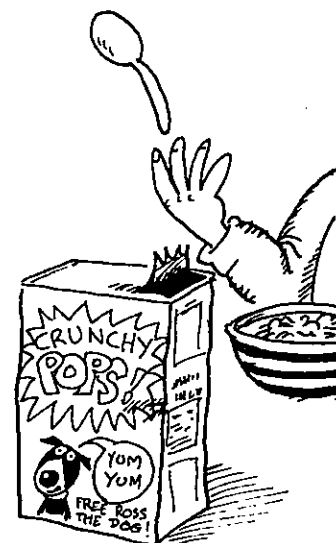
– *Programme funding* aiming to make significant funds available for new work in areas of particular concern to Trustees. For the 1997-2001 Quinquennium these were social isolation, young people and disability.

– *Local areas work* to achieve geographically-focussed initiatives through a coherent and co-ordinated approach.

– *Alliances* working with other funders where the size and complexity of some issues means that Foundation funding alone can only make a limited impact.

**Trust for London** guidelines for the Quinquennium reflected the Trust's own distinctive grant-making practices and procedures, focussing on small, locally-based community groups with the equivalent of no more than two full-time members of staff. Emphasis was placed on grants for start-up costs, training, self-help groups concentrating on young people (16-25) and elderly people, supplementary and mother-tongue schools, refugee and migrant groups and disability groups.

Within this, Trustees also highlighted two areas:



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Harry Venning

## More than just funding

The past five years – and the 1990s in general - have seen significant changes in the operating environment for voluntary and charitable organisations. As a result the sectors have had to adapt.

It has required new approaches to funding and organisation, and new approaches which can respond rapidly to needs as they change.

During this time CPF and TfL have realised that organisations do not simply need money. In many cases, particularly small organisations – which often have at most one or two members of staff – do not have internal resources for such things as training. And often activities that would be normally carried out by specialist staff, such as finance and accounting, are just among a host of tasks which have to be undertaken.

It is why CPF and TfL have adopted an approach best described as 'more than just funding' or 'funding plus'. As this review shows, approaches such as the Small Groups Worker scheme and Financial Monitoring are two projects which have proved highly valuable to the small organisations which have taken part.

- funds were committed for an initial three-year period to back the establishment of the Resource Unit for Supplementary and Mother-tongue Schools;
- the difficulties experienced by small groups in London were a continuing concern for the Trust and staff. The success of the small groups workers scheme was convincing evidence of the value of projects to provide general help to a range of organisations. (This led in time to the financial fitness and training projects, and the governance work).

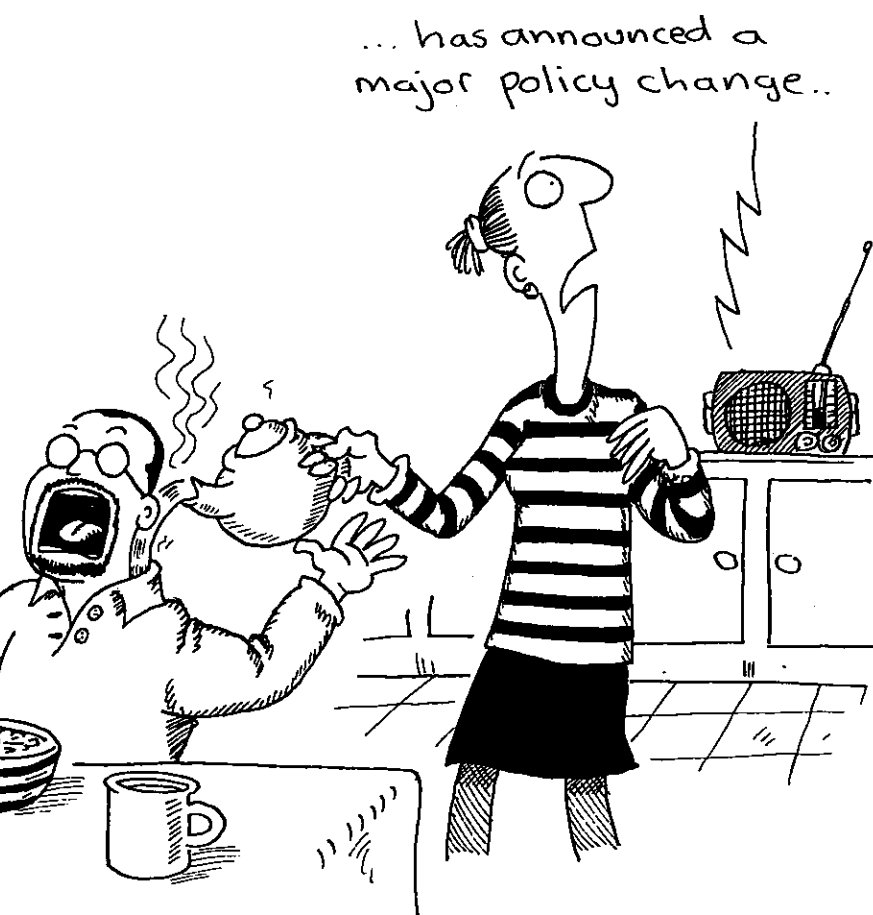
It was agreed that grants would continue to be made for up to three-year periods, with the maximum grant remaining at £10,000 per annum.

As well as drawing up these guidelines and priorities, Trustees also appreciated the importance of ensuring that the London voluntary sector knew about them. At the end of 1996, field officers spent three months talking to a whole range of organisations collectively and individually across all London boroughs. In addition 10,000 leaflets each for the Trust and Foundation were distributed.

One feature of these guidelines is the way in which many of the approaches adopted interact with each other. Thus initiatives often end up as partnerships and alliances with other organisations and funders, while alliances complement work in other fields. And the emphasis on youth matters cuts across many different strands of grant and funding programmes.

### Funding plus

One important aspect of the Foundation and the Trust approach has not simply been to wait for grant applications to arrive, but to adopt a pro-active approach, and encourage groups to apply. And when applications are made, the practice is always to visit the groups to understand them better. This can lead to revised applications because the visits and discussions have shown that other needs are more pressing or the group can benefit more from a different approach.



It has shown that many groups do not always have the resources or do not pay enough attention to administrative and other necessary functions. Many do not have access to the training and personal development resources that are available to larger organisations.

These issues have come up time after time, and have encouraged the Foundation to develop approaches to help a number of groups at the same time.

It started with the Small Groups Worker scheme in the previous Quinquennium. The project concluded in 1997, and featured as the first of several special reports on the work of the Trust and the Foundation.

*Voluntary groups – helping them develop* confirmed that small groups do not just need money but can benefit substantially from hands-on support. It reported that, in all, 774 small groups gained advice on constitutions, legal issues, fund-raising, finance and a range of other issues.

The scheme involved 1,037 individual members of these groups, and the nine organisations (mainly councils of voluntary services) who were funded by Trust for London helped groups raise more than £800,000 during the three-and-a-half years of the project.

CPF and TfL have become aware that many groups face particular difficulty with financial control and this led to a similar cross-group project. In 1996 the Trustees decided to carry out a thorough evaluation of this area of concern and the report published in 1998 confirmed the difficulties.

As a result a pilot training project was set up in 1999, and later the following year, a follow-up report showed just how much could be achieved by training – and how important such training is in the early stages of a group's life. *Financial fitness* revealed that of 15 organisations that took part, post-training assessments had shown that 11 had improved their 'scores', seven of them significantly.

A similar approach – this time in association with other funders including the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and regulatory and umbrella bodies – has been adopted to help emerging organisations develop their governance skills through training and consultancy. The pilot project involves 20 small groups which volunteered to take part and is due to be completed in 2002.

## Working with others

There is increasing co-operation between funders both in adopting more standardised approaches to advice and guidance on best practice, and in developing similar approaches to such things as applications, monitoring and procedures. These can help improve understanding both by the groups which provide services of how they approach grant applications, and by funders of the needs and difficulties faced by the groups.

It has developed towards strategic

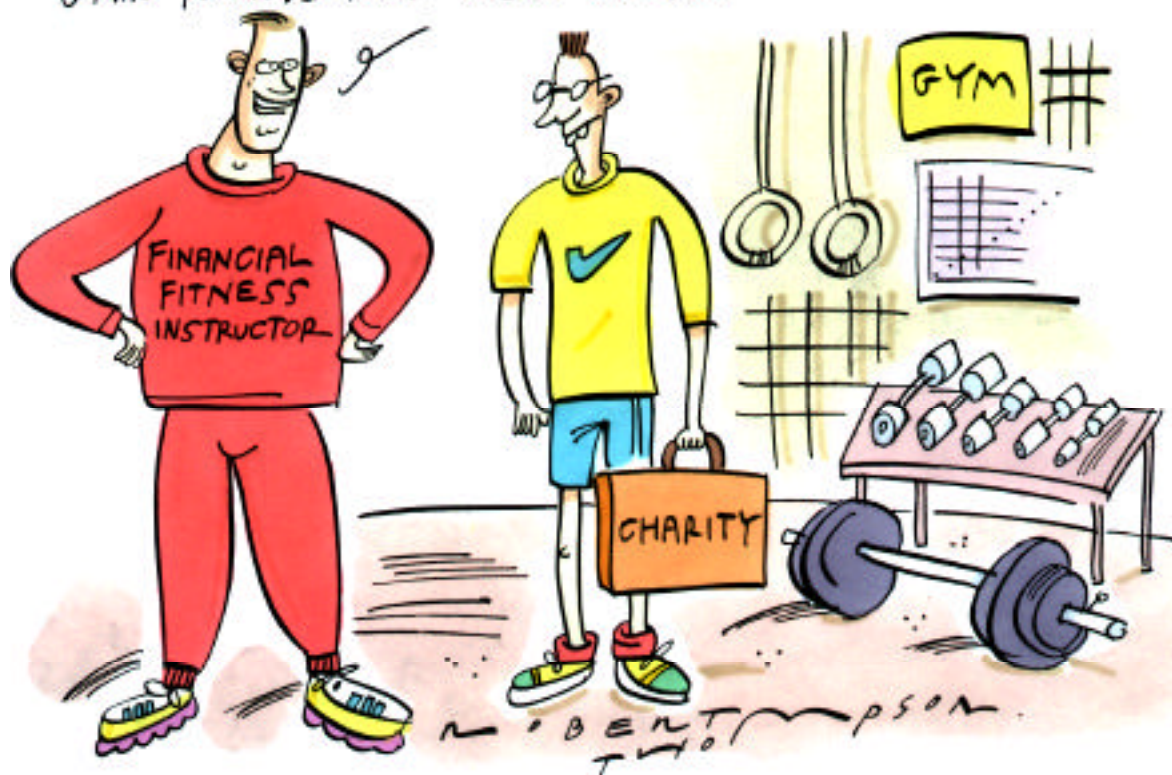
## Governance – home and away

Governance has become a big issue both for commercial and non-commercial organisations over the past decade, resulting from concerns about probity and the need to ensure greater openness and accountability. Central and local government and Parliament now have well-defined procedures operating following the Nolan inquiry and the subsequent establishment of the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

In the commercial world, the Greenbury and Cadbury committee reports played a significant part in encouraging companies to look at their arrangements and to improve their practices.

Housing associations held an inquiry under Sir David Hancock and they too have revised their structures and procedures to take into account best practice to ensure good governance. The National Council of Voluntary Organisations also took action, adapting the seven Nolan principles into a code of conduct for charity trustees which was endorsed by the Charity Commission.

THE DIFFERENCE IS, WE WANT YOU TO GAIN POUNDS NOT LOSE THEM



The *Guardian's* Society pages carried an article on the financial fitness work, accompanied by this cartoon by Robert Thompson.

City Parochial Foundation and Trust for London have over the years had a long-standing interest in how small voluntary organisations are run and managed, and set up the Small Groups Worker scheme and Financial Training Project to assist them in operating more efficiently. But what has been apparent over the years is that because of the pressures on them, many small groups tend to focus on their short-term tasks often to the detriment of the longer term – governance is often seen as a luxury.

It was this that led to the establishment of the **Governance Project** developed in conjunction with other funders and supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The report and recommendations are due to be published later in 2002. What has already emerged is that what is needed is appropriate governance based on the differing needs of organisations, relative to their size and stage of development. In some cases it means that funders should not neglect core funding and should even consider grants for strengthening governance.

But the Trustees recognise that the need to ensure robust, effective and accountable governance is as vital for funders such as City Parochial Foundation and Trust for London as it is for the organisations which actually deliver services. It was this that prompted the Foundation and the Trust to undertake

a review of their existing arrangements. It has led to some major changes in the governance of both organisations.

The main changes are:

- consolidation of the two funds, Central and City Church to facilitate asset diversification;
- new property and equity managers who advise Trustees;
- a total return approach to investment and distribution;
- adoption of Nolan principles for the conduct and actions of Trustees;
- full declarations of interest by trustees;
- detailed terms of reference for all the committees;
- limitations to the length of service of Trustees and committee chairmen;
- skills audits for Trustees;
- proposed change in status to a charitable company limited by guarantee; and
- changes in nomination arrangements to allow the Greater London Assembly and Association of London Government to put forward nominees.

Carrying out and implementing such a review has given Trustees a significant insight into the issues facing all types of organisations, such as those that have arisen in the Governance inquiry, and the implications they have for change.

# Refugee communities – and ‘funding plus’

Over many years, CPF and TfL have been concerned with the needs of refugee communities, as they fit so closely with the primary aim of meeting the needs of the poor of London. In the previous Quinquennium, the Foundation set up the **Evelyn Oldfield Unit** to support refugee community groups.

Work over the past five years in this area provides a further example of how the Foundation's and Trust's various funding strands complement one another – and contribute to the concept of ‘funding plus’ which looks at all aspects of the work and not simply that of distributing grants.

Take alliance funding. The needs of young refugees who face many difficulties in starting or continuing their education encouraged the Foundation to set up the **Refugee Education Unit**, run by Praxis, in partnership with other funders including the Tudor Trust and the Henry Smith Charity. Since the Unit started its work, more than 850 clients from 58 countries – the vast majority asylum seekers under the age of 35 – have been interviewed and guided into further training.

This has been complemented by the Foundation's

**Refugee Education Awards scheme**, which has made awards to 428 individuals since it started in 1997. The Unit has now been restructured as the Refugee Education and Enterprise Unit.

Then there are the initiatives. In 1999 the Foundation began working with a range of agencies and organisations to look at the barriers which have prevented professionally qualified refugees from obtaining appropriate employment. This led to the establishment of **Employability** and the highly successful events aiming to bring together refugees and potential employers. Such has been the influence of this work that Employability has become a member of the National Refugee Integration Forum, which spearheads the Government's policy in this field.

The establishment of the **Resource Unit for Supplementary and Mother-tongue Schools** is another aspect of the work relating to refugees. Set up by Trust for London, the Unit has been the major influence in raising the profile of the sector. It is now firmly established and is supported by major funders such as the Community Fund and its work is recognised and promoted by the Department for Education and Skills.

partnerships with agencies. City Parochial Foundation and Trust for London have taken this further in the last five years, through the development of Alliance Funding where several funders work together to provide longer term finance which can hopefully lead to better outcomes for beneficiaries. So far, three such alliances have developed on education issues involving refugees, tackling school exclusion and mother-tongue teaching and supplementary schools.

The latter provides a good example of how strategic approaches can mushroom. It started with research by Trust for London which revealed that many such schools needed skills to handle funds and set up and run effective classes – it was not just about money.

This led to the establishment of the **Resource Unit for Supplementary and Mother-tongue Schools**, which has now been established as an independent charity

under the leadership of its founder Director Mohammed Abdelrazak.

The Unit provides information, runs workshops and seminars for teachers and managers of schools and provides a network to link up both individual schools themselves and the sector with mainstream education.

The success of the Unit is such that mother-tongue and supplementary schools are now being recognised by other major funders including the New Opportunities Fund. Further details about the Resource Unit are given in the panel (See page 16).

Another example of Alliance Funding relates to the problem of permanent exclusion from school of an increasing number of pupils and in particular the disproportionate number of black Caribbean boys (See panel page 19). The Foundation's education adviser Robin Hazlewood undertook a

A possible new initiative is the **Refugee Communities History Project** which is being developed in partnership with the Museum of London to document the testimonies of individuals who have come to the London since 1951, the year of the establishment of the Geneva Convention. The aim is to record the arrival, settlement and contribution of members of refugee communities.

Another recent approach has been support for organisations such as AFFORD – African Foundation for Development – set up to support the African ‘diaspora’ – for which London is a global capital. In the case of AFFORD, the support involves funding for a development worker to respond to the needs of many disparate, isolated and fragmented groups. AFFORD also seeks to develop the enormous potential that exists for mutual support not just to organisations in London but also voluntary and charitable organisations in the countries of origin.

Other work of the Foundation and Trust also has an important influence. **Financial fitness** and the **Governance Project** are of particular note. Many refugee community groups are fledglings, striving to become established. As the work of the Trust in particular has shown, it is at this stage that organisations need support in developing structures and organisation to help provide them with a solid base from which to move forward.

Many of these approaches involve significant projects. It goes further than that, though. Grant-funding lists over the last five years (and before that, too) have shown that the Foundation and Trust are also deeply committed to providing direct support to small groups. Significant numbers of individual grants go to local refugee organisations which provide services and help which directly benefits individuals who are experiencing poverty.

The Foundation and the Trust aim to ensure that all funding is thought through to provide for all aspects of need, from the youngest affected to elderly people. The refugee work amply demonstrates this, by providing support for the full spectrum of work, from advocacy and policy development to direct provision of services.

project to investigate the issues.

This led to an alliance with Bridge House Estates Trust Fund and Equitable Charitable Trust to see how voluntary organisations might help to develop innovative solutions. The London borough of Merton was selected and three projects set up. These are working with Jigsaw, Merton Education Business Partnership and a number of concerned voluntary organisations.

An important consideration is that the issue cannot be tackled in isolation from other social and family matters which is why local voluntary support will be crucial.

The projects are still in their early days, but it is already clear how vital the work is – school exclusion continues to increase.

The third example of the Alliance approach is the **Refugee Education Unit** established in 1996 to tackle the many problems young



St Peters North community Project

## Resource Unit for Supplementary and Mother-tongue Schools

Before 1986, no one at City Parochial Foundation and the newly established Trust for London knew anything about supplementary and mother-tongue schools. Later investigation revealed that local education authorities also had little information and few were providing any support.

But Trust for London's efforts to reach small organisations that are isolated or detached from the mainstream voluntary sector drew applications from several schools.

By 1996, some 60-70 were being funded, and the Trust decided to convene a conference to discuss their needs, and appointed consultants to take matters forward. The eventual outcome was the establishment of the Resource Unit to enhance the quality of management, establish a pool of teachers and train them, and establish links with mainstream education.

Trust for London agreed to fund the Unit and such has been the success that further funds have been attracted from the National Lottery and BBC Children in Need. It has also attracted support from the Department for Education and Employment.

The Unit now has 70 'core' users plus several hundred schools which have telephoned and written in for advice – it is estimated that there are more than 1,000 in London alone. Help has been provided through training courses for teachers, general advice, and publication of guidelines to assist those setting up schools with basic ground rules, standards and a framework. A directory of schools in London was also produced.

In her assessment of the Unit's first four years, Elspeth Kyle commented:

*"The real challenge is the scale of the potential demand and the need for additional funding to meet the demand. The Unit supports schools that sustain the diversity of communities in London and beyond and enable the children of those communities to achieve their full potential. There are few more important causes than that."*

refugees face in starting or continuing their education. The Unit was set up in partnership with a consortium of funders including Tudor Trust and the Henry Smith Charity.

The Unit has interviewed more than 840 clients, the vast majority aged under 35, from 58 countries.

**“** *For years voluntary sector education initiatives have struggled on, unrecognised and marginalised. We tend to think of school education as something that happens only in state schools behind closed doors, not outside of school hours in people's homes, community centres or youth clubs. The huge contribution made by supplementary/mother-tongue schools changes our understanding of the whole issue of holistic development of the child. It is one of the less visible dimensions of modern education that has to be recognised and celebrated.* **”**

**– Broadcaster Jon Snow in his Foreword to the school's directory.**



**Mohammed Abdelrazak, Director of the Resource Unit for Supplementary and Mother-tongue Schools, chats to DfEE officials at the launch of the directory of schools**

Attention is now turning to future development, including whether to increase the size of the Unit, how to develop a national service, to consider a structure change to a membership body, how to balance policy and direct services, to strengthen links with mainstream education, and to develop accreditation for teachers.

It has now been restructured by Praxis creating a new Refugee Education and Enterprise Unit which will integrate its work with Praxis' existing activities. The Foundation continues to support the work and to back the **Education Awards Scheme** which has supported more than 500 individuals since it started in 1997.

## Taking the initiative

Another approach by the Foundation and the Trust has been to concentrate efforts through special initiatives working with disadvantaged groups and neglected communities.

One of these also involves refugees - and has been developed with the support of a number of other funders and organisations. This started in 1998 under the informal title of **Employability** to discuss the barriers facing displaced people in obtaining work. An important workshop was held under the theme Hidden (later Undiscovered) Talents, which was attended by more than 50 people including refugees, government departments, representatives of business and funders.

Employability is chaired by Lord Limerick, a Trustee of CPF and a former Chairman.

Another event was the Employability Forum which sought to bring together more than 300 refugees with potential employers (see page 18).

More formal arrangements followed including the establishment of a company limited by guarantee which identified a number of areas of work including influencing policy on integration, individual portfolios for refugees, pilot training programmes and information.

Sub-groups have worked on policy issues with government including the Department for Education and Employment and the Home Office, employers and refugee agencies, including Praxis, Refugee Council, Refugee Education Training Advisory Service, Refugees into Jobs and Skills for Southern Sudan.

Employability's influence has been considerable: it was asked to become a member of the National Refugee Integration Forum.

Another major initiative was the Foundation's **Local Areas Work**. This involves supporting community-based

initiatives which work closely with local people over extended periods of time. The emphasis is on 'local' because many regeneration schemes can fail to take into account the views and expertise of the people, thus by-passing those who should benefit most.

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Four schemes are currently being supported:

- **St Peter North Community Project** (Tower Hamlets). Here the Foundation is working with Peabody Trust dealing with issues of deprivation and race. Government funding has been achieved for a number of training projects. Greater community participation is now being developed.
- **The Bellingham Recreation Project** (BECORP). This has a long history for the Foundation as it has owned playing fields in Lewisham since the 1930s. Work continues on obtaining funding to upgrade the sports and recreation facilities and funding of £4 million has been raised from Sport England, the London borough of Lewisham and CPF. At the same time, the facilities are being used to develop community activities in a deprived area which has missed out on government spending in the past.
- **Greenford Southall Detached Youth Project**. This aims to reach young people who have fallen outside the job market and other networks. One strand involves bringing them into a programme of social education.
- **Kilburn Youth Resource Centre**. The needs of young people have been identified as paramount in this area and has led to the establishment of the resource centre - which the young people themselves are involved in running. Single Regeneration Budget funding has been attracted to the scheme.

## Special programmes

Young people again feature strongly in the special programmes which take a co-ordinated approach towards tackling

issues of special concern.

The **Youth Programme** was established after consultation with a number of voluntary organisations. Nine were funded to provide specific services. As well as providing grants, the Foundation brought the organisations together three times a year to discuss progress and common issues.

The programme has revealed some important lessons. The accepted wisdom had been that the organisations knew best what young people need – and that often related to the future. But it became apparent from listening to them that the young people really want projects that relate to today.

In a report on the project published in 2001, the Foundation made it clear that it considered the whole experience an important learning exercise. Perhaps the most significant lesson was that young people should be looked on as just that, and not as entities in transition to another

age. There may be more to gain by engaging with them as they are rather than striving to get them to adulthood as soon as possible.

As Clerk to the Trustees Bharat Mehta noted in his introduction “they may well make better adults if society just lets them be young for these few years of their lives”.

The other special programme centred on disability. Because Trust for London was concerned that it received few applications for funds from small organisations concerned with disability issues, the Foundation set up the **Disability Programme** in 1999 and which was called **Count Us In**.

What has become apparent is that there is major division between physical disability and learning disability groups. Alongside that, black and minority ethnic groups are substantially neglected and there are few organisations servicing the needs of black disabled people. What is also striking is the acute lack of funding and the lack of a resourced infrastructure to support groups and individuals.

Initial consultation also revealed that despite being underdeveloped the sector is under heavy pressure from government to respond to consultation papers and initiatives. Yet such is the pressure on the groups, there is little capacity to respond to such demands and carry on everyday activities and services. In addition, organisations of people with learning difficulties have extra problems absorbing lengthy documents.

Thus it is not surprising that the sector is underdeveloped and groups are isolated. It became very clear from early on that strenuous efforts would be needed.

The purpose was to support small, local organisations in London to help them sustain and expand their activities.

Progress has been slow. Halfway into the programme it had become apparent that



**The Employability Forum was attended by Margaret Hodge, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Employment, seen with Lord Limerick, Chairman of Employability, and Foundation Chairman Professor Gerald Manners. In her address she gave her support to the work of Employability, and stressed that finding a job is key to the successful settlement of refugees because it leads to financial independence.**

**Some 300 people turned up to meet potential employers and hear expert advice on job seeking.**

## Tackling exclusion from school

Not all funding programmes go to plan. This is particularly so in areas where funders are breaking new ground, or where changes in government policy require new directions and approaches.

One example is tackling school exclusion which arose as an issue of common concern among several funders under the Alliance funding programme established by City Parochial Foundation.

Among the initial concerns highlighted by the Foundation's education advisor Robin Hazlewood were the increasing number of pupils excluded from schools and the disproportionate number of black Afro-Caribbean boys. His report concluded that more preventative work was needed, strengthening the pastoral role within schools and adopting good practice guidelines with a strong support system between pupils, parents and schools.

Three projects were selected in Merton, managed by two organisations: Merton Education Business Partnership which ran Challenger, funded by Bridge House Estates Trust Fund to provide intensive individual support to young people excluded or at risk of exclusion; and Fame (Families, Access, Mentoring and Empowerment) funded by CPF to draw on the experience of local mentoring organisations to provide a coherent framework for those young people in the at-risk groups. Each grant was £100,000 over three years.

Moving Forward Together which manages JIGSAW was funded by Equitable Charitable Trust to provide a service for young people who as a result of mental health problems require specialist counselling support.

An interim report in January 2002 revealed that both Fame and Challenger had experienced delays and problems such

that the projects have only been working simultaneously for the last few months of 2001, and to start with, the overall strategic approach was fractured with a focus on the success of each project rather than the contribution to the overall objective. Also the highly complex nature of the issue contributed to lack of clarity about the objectives.

But above all the programme has been greatly affected by change in government policy. Initially the focus was on preventing the rise in school exclusions and exploring new initiatives to support pupils to stay in schools. Now it has shifted radically towards summary exclusions for certain offences and re-prioritising alternative education provision such as pupil referral units.

The conclusion has been to reaffirm the programme's aim of preventing exclusion.

On a positive note many young people have already benefitted and inputs have made a positive difference.

On the issue of the funding alliance itself, a number of lessons have been learned which should contribute to good practice. All those involved were positive about any future joint-funding arrangements and felt that a lot has been learned from the experience.

Work is now proceeding on clarifying the objectives for the second half of the programme, and agreeing timescales for the rest of the projects, and what the exit strategy will be. The Trustees will also need to keep abreast of issues impacting on the programme such as the rise in female exclusions, truancy and self-exclusion, bullying and homophobic bullying.

greater efforts were needed to build capacity. Because of the underdeveloped nature of the sector, fire-fighting has dominated – to the detriment of the strategic elements.

Achieving a shared vision between three organisations which have quite distinct cultures has not been easy – developing joint systems and practices is taking a long time. More information on this programme and the issues and problems are described in the panel (see page 20).

The Foundation is now actively discussing work over the next 18 months with **Count Us In**, and in particular ways in which to fund small groups who will be delivering services. Another important aspect over the same period will be to look at funding for the programme beyond the immediate period – that is from mid-2003 onwards.

## Count Us In – the Disability Programme

Moving into new areas of need can be daunting. To tackle the problems requires flexibility, understanding and, perhaps above all, new ways of thinking and developing solutions. The Disability Programme is a prime example. While various funders had from time to time prioritised disability issues, none had tackled under-resourcing and the lack of capacity in a strategic way.

Trust for London was attracting very few applications from small disability organisations, and especially those working in the black and minority ethnic communities, and so the ambitious Disability Programme – Count Us In – was set up in April 1999 by the Foundation. No one embarked on it thinking it would be a quick fix.

Grants were made to the Greater London Association of Disabled People (GLAD), People First, (an organisation run by and for people with learning disabilities), and the British Council of Disabled People (BCODP, based in Derby).

The overall aim of Count Us In is to put in place support for small, local organisations in London concerned with problems facing disabled people, to enable them to sustain and expand their efforts. Particular efforts are made to back disabled people from black and minority ethnic communities, and self-advocacy groups of people with learning difficulties.

Through this, the Disability Programme will help to develop an effective and independent voice for these marginalised

groups of disabled Londoners.

Staff of the Foundation are involved in the steering group, as is consultant Manghanita Kempadoo.

Inevitably, in the first year there were tensions as the group of three very different agencies began to learn to work together in a common cause, not helped by personnel changes, which acted against continuity. Initially there was a fundamental issue of how the groups and the Foundation were to communicate with each other. Accessibility of written information became a major issue and all the agencies and the Foundation have learned a lot from this. Solutions are generally straightforward, ranging from use of plain English to large font sizes, and People First has been very supportive in teaching the other members of the partnership in using symbols and simple drawings to enhance the text's readability.

Each group has brought much to the partnership and the programme has begun to develop, with changes made to ensure that it can be delivered.

Developing the capacity of small disability organisations and supporting the infrastructure sector to respond effectively to the needs of these organisations is still valid and achievable.



## Winning with water

Winner of the Arts, Heritage and Culture category in the Charity Awards 2000 was Oily Carte, a national, touring theatre company working with young people with profound and multiple learning difficulties, which numbers City Parochial Foundation among its many funders. The company's innovative three year BIG SPLASH! initiative took inclusive and participative theatre to hydrotherapy pools in special schools to meet the needs of people who have difficulty communicating with the outside world because of their disability.

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The company uses the soothing effects of water as a theatrical medium to communicate with the children and free them from the restrictions of their own bodies. It explores a wide range of sensory approaches involving live music, aromatherapy and massage.

A cast of five actors work one to one with up to 16 students a day, using an interactive and adaptable approach to meet individual needs. This is a big challenge for the actors as it requires close observation of reactions from both the children and their carers. The company includes a performer with a learning disability who is an excellent role model for the students.

Tim Webb, artistic director, explains: "The project gets reactions from the children that regular teachers cannot. For example, someone may reach out for something where usually they do not, or make eye contact. Staff, carers and families see these reactions and look at the child in a different light. They can then take away ideas and deploy them on an everyday level."

Photographs bear testimony to the reaction of the youngsters, many of whom rarely respond to normal human or sensory stimuli.

*(Adapted from the judges' statements for the Charity Awards organised by Charity Finance magazine).*