

Challenges



Reflections on funding
and change in London
1986-2007

Tim Cook


Trust
for
London

Supporting ▶ London's ▶ Communities ▶

cpf City Parochial
Foundation
Tackling poverty in London

Contents

Acknowledgements	page 2
Foreword by Nigel Pantling	page 3
Summary key points	page 5
Preamble – the historical background	page 6
SECTION ONE: Introduction	page 7
1 Scene-setting: the mid 1980s	page 7
2 Some fundamental questions	page 10
SECTION TWO: Analysing the lessons	page 13
3 Funding plus: more than money	page 13
4 New needs – The discovery process	page 16
5 Special programmes and initiatives	page 22
6 Risky and controversial	page 25
7 Funding dissent	page 26
8 Funding alliances	page 28
9 Using assets	page 30
10 Monitoring evaluation	page 34
11 Influencing	page 35
SECTION THREE: Looking ahead – and learning from the past	page 38
12 Setting the scene in 2007	page 38
13 Overarching lessons	page 39
Final historical note	page 41
Appendix – Further sources of information	page 42

Throughout this report, references are made to many City Parochial Foundation and Trust for London initiatives and programmes. More about these and where further information can be obtained – including website links – is given in the Appendix on page 40. We have highlighted in bold major initiatives where CPF and TfL led the way in establishing them.

This report is dedicated to Maggie Baxter who has been involved with the Trust for London for 19 years – first as a co-optee, then as a trustee and chair of the TfL Grants Committee, and most recently as chair of City Parochial Foundation.

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Foreword

The charity environment of twenty years ago was quite different from today's. The work of the City Parochial Foundation, like that of many of its peers, was little known. Charities were often shadowy, secretive organisations, with no desire to gain publicity for their work and 'doing good by stealth' was still the philosophy for many grant-givers. Assessments of the relative merits of potential beneficiaries were relatively unsophisticated.

Trustees were selected from a narrow band of society, and corporate governance, for charities at least, was little thought of. Perhaps most tellingly, from the viewpoint of those who might benefit most from charitable funds at least, there were none of the large funders that have emerged from that brainchild of John Major, the National Lottery. Change was due and it was coming quickly.

The Trust for London was born in 1986 into that changing world. Endowed to replace funds previously dispensed by the Greater London Council and given to the City Parochial Foundation to administer as its Trustee, the Trust for London was saddled with none of the political or constitutional baggage of established charities. It was able to make its own mark on the charitable scene, and to operate as it thought fit.

Appropriately enough, as a relatively young charity itself, the Trust has emerged as an important funder of new, small charities often operating at the very edge of viability and heavily dependent upon voluntary effort for the work that they do.

Twenty-first birthdays are often occasions to look back both fondly and critically. Tim Cook, clerk to the City Parochial Foundation for 12 of the last 21 years, is unusually well qualified to examine the development of the Trust for London, and the changes that have been taking place simultaneously at CPF. This book contains Tim's personal reflections on those changes, and we are immensely grateful to him for the insights and wisdom that he has provided.

I would also like to thank all those who have been involved with the development of the Trust over the past 21 years. In particular, I would like to dedicate the report to my fellow trustee and immediate past chair of the Foundation, Maggie Baxter, who has made a sustained, lively and well-informed contribution to the work of the Trust over most of its existence, first as a co-optee and later as chair of its Grants Committee.

The lessons that Tim draws on the way that the two charities have tackled the difficult business of grant making will we hope prove valuable to future generations of CPF trustees, staff and advisers. If the lessons of our mistakes – and hopefully some successes – prove useful to a wider audience too, then so much the better.

Nigel Pantling, *chair, City Parochial Foundation*

Summary key points

Attempts to draw out lessons from the last twenty years are well worth undertaking but need the caveat that they are limited to today, and later histories may surprise by ignoring what now seems so vital to us and emphasising what we have failed to mention... *“grant-making is an art not a science”*.

There is a need to recognise the time required to have a new scheme up and running... sufficient time is not given for the early development stage. Reviews of CPF/TfL programmes invariably stated that three years funding may well be too short to make an impact. Timescales for funding often need to be longer with more defined exit strategies. Priorities should never be too inflexible: there has to be space for following up hunches, worrying away at the unexpected, asking the right questions and sharing the findings, even when nothing is absolutely certain. The very nature of the discovery process may necessitate the creation of a new organisation. This route is always more time-consuming and demanding on both staff and trustees than ever is expected.

Visits enable funders to see things that would not be apparent in any written documentation – in many cases the charities undersell themselves. The process of assessment can reduce the more obvious risks and these have become more rigorous each year. Care and thoroughness in the whole funding process puts any alleged risk into context.

Any problem ought to benefit more from the combined resources and knowledge of a group of funders than those of one funder alone. However, it is rarely quite so straightforward: it is the invariably different cultures of the respective organisations that proves to be one of the biggest hurdles to overcome.

Setting-up a new organisation to fill an identified gap demands more time and energy than predicted. Knowing when to take that route rather than rely on established charities is not an exact science and it would be hard to lay down criteria for one route or another. Evaluation processes should be built in from the outset with content and expectations clearly agreed. It is essential for the groups to say, ideally on a visit, what their desired outcomes are and not create them because that is what the funder's form demands.

Monitoring demands from a funder need to be commensurate with the grant made and not impose undue burdens on hard-pressed service providers. Small groups often need more than money - the 'funding plus' approach allows funders to put this point constructively to voluntary organisations.

Not all small groups want to become larger and over-generous funding of a small community group can take it beyond its natural capacity: an example of funding to fail. Funders are in a strong position to give a voice to the voiceless groups within minorities who are often the most oppressed and disadvantaged. The funding approach should be encouraged and welcomed even though the actual written application may not tick all the procedural boxes.

What is now required is forms of social policy alliances after the work has been completed, a true pooling of data, findings, hunches, outcomes and real discoveries.

Preamble – the historical background

The City Parochial Foundation began operating in 1891 but its origins lie in the philanthropic activities of the City of London over the previous 400 years. During that period, the 112 parishes of the City had within them some 1400 charitable gifts and bequests to be used for the benefit of the parish churches or, more often, the poor of the parishes. Most of the charitable assets were invested in property.

As the wealth of the City grew, the charitable endowments also grew while, at the same time, the residents of the area, poor or otherwise, decreased to the extent that some parishes had no residents at all. No-one ever confessed to an absence of beneficiaries! Some charitable funds were consequently seriously misused.

The disquiet, including a letter to *The Times*, led to the establishment in 1878 of a Royal Commission to investigate the charities and its report resulted in the 1883 City of London Parochial Charities Act. The endowments of all bar the five largest City charities were handed over to a new corporate body known as the Trustees of the London Parochial Charities. The area of benefit was then defined as the City and the Metropolitan Police District, now the City and the 32 London boroughs.

The funds were divided, according to the purpose of the original endowment, into the City Church Fund and the Central Fund. The former is used to benefit the City Churches and the dioceses that fall wholly or in part within the area now covered by the London boroughs. The latter is used to benefit the poor of London including “*poor persons located in the area for the time being*”. The income of both funds came almost entirely from freehold properties until the 1980s when diversification began in order to protect against the risk of relying on all the income coming from one source.

When, in 1986, the Government abolished the Greater London Council (GLC), there was great concern in London’s voluntary sector as the GLC had been a generous funder of hundreds of voluntary organisations. Part of the government’s response to this concern was to endow the Foundation with £10 million which was to be the basis of a new Trust for London of which the Foundation would be the trustee. London’s voluntary sector publicly welcomed this development. The trustees were clear from the outset that the Trust would be different in style and approach and should not become the small grants arm of the Foundation.

In the summer of 1987 the Foundation began six months of consultations across all the London boroughs to discover what the voluntary sector thought the priorities of this new grant-making trust should be. The undertaking was exhausting, fun and frequently surprising. What was not foreseen was the impact it would all have on the Foundation itself. In particular, the Trust from the outset stressed diversity in its staff, grants committee and an advisory committee. The last advised on issues that arose from the applications but the applications themselves, and its work, enriched the information and intelligence available to the trustees as a whole.

In the 21 years that have followed there have been many developments that could not have been anticipated and others that built upon the long history of the Foundation and its style of working. This report is not a chronological account of those changes, but rather an attempt to tease out the key themes, taking into account the influence of the trustees, staff and the ever-changing external environment.

'Any superlative is probably suspect and should be shot on sight'
 (Simon Caulkin, *The Observer*, 28 August 2005)

section one

Introduction

1 Scene setting: the mid 1980s

The Foundation, like many other Trusts, used to pride itself on 'doing good by stealth', though secrecy was how the critics saw it. There were no directories of grant-making trusts. Communication between trusts was spasmodic. Published lists of grants made were as rare as gold dust. Discussions, now commonplace, on, say, monitoring and evaluation or being accessible to black and minority ethnic groups, were non-existent. The Lottery was not even a gleam in John Major's eye.

Those with direct experience of the voluntary sector were rarely employed within the trusts. Those of us who were applicants at that time, know that terms such as business plans, outputs, outcomes and evaluation did not feature a great deal, if at all, in any application. The changes since 1987 in the trust world have been enormous and the Foundation's own work should be seen in that context.

Though the Foundation began its work in 1891, some of its ethos has remained constant and has had an important influence on its more recent history. It has never balked at funding charities over many years where this was necessary. It has often enjoyed creative relationships with other bodies such as the polytechnics (as they then were), leading, for example, to the purchase of playing fields which were leased to several of them – an action which, 70 years later in the 1990s, created major challenges for the trustees.

Over the years it developed a belief in the importance of meeting and visiting potential applicants so better to understand the needs of the charities and the context of their work. That the Foundation was

restricted in its area of benefit to London made such direct engagement with applicants eminently possible. It is important, also, to acknowledge the enormous effect of the simple – historical – legal requirement to benefit the poor of London, providing as it does such a challenging and direct focus for the work.

Few from the Foundation's past would have been at all surprised by the comment in the 1989 Annual Report of the Trust for London that *"every group visit teaches us something about a local community ... the information and ideas obtained... help inform the Trust's views about needs and priorities and should ensure that the Trust is learning from its constituents... When a group is visited it is invariably a surprise in that what is seen on the ground is never quite the same as that which has been described either on the telephone or in correspondence. More often than not, the work is much more exciting than might have been thought, and often the eventual purposes of the grant are different from those that were first expressed"*.

Above all, the trustees have always had to ask the question 'how will this benefit the poor of London?' when any enterprise was considered. In seeking to benefit the poor, the trustees recognised that they had to have a *"readiness to adopt and develop ways and means of meeting the new needs disclosed by... changing conditions"* (CPF *Quinquennial Review*, 1961). It was also necessary to be innovative for *"one of the fruitful ways of helping the poorer classes of London is by making major grants to schemes designed... to test new ideas... pioneering is one of the Foundation's most important functions..."*



Scene setting:
the mid 1980s

The Foundation should give priority to schemes which break new ground, provided they are sound and viable, though not to concentrate on them exclusively". (CPF Quinquennial Review, 1967).

The final qualifying phrase is essential as no matter what exciting changes might be underway, there is always going to be much solid and important work that needs continued funding. Not everything can – nor indeed should – be considered a challenge or require change.

Although since 1935 very thorough quinquennial reviews were carried out to look at what had been funded in the previous five years and plan ahead for the next, there was little detailed analysis of the grants made except in very broad categories. In the absence of any requirement to publish reports, the need for analysis was not viewed as pressing. But in 1987, a major review was undertaken of the grants made on a borough-by-borough basis. This was revealing: it showed, for example, that two boroughs, namely Barking and Dagenham and Merton, had not had any charities apply to the Foundation for many years.

In the subsequent discussion one trustee asked *"where exactly is Barking and Dagenham?"* Doing good by stealth clearly had its drawbacks for some parts of London. For the funder, having plenty of applications and working hard were manifestly not the only two criteria to be considered.

It should also be recognised that quinquennial reviews, while looking forward over five years, were not documents of precise forecasting. They were, however, and continue to be, valued means of scanning the horizons. The 1987 Review made no mention of refugee groups and communities, although a grant had been made to a Vietnamese group in 1984. Yet, quite quickly, initially through the Trust for London, the refugee world in London was to have a very significant impact on the overall work of both the Trust and the Foundation.

Against this background the Foundation and the Trust for London with three new

staff from the voluntary sector – the Clerk (1986) and two field officers (1988) – launched a new era with the full support of the trustees. The latter had proposed that the Trust undertake the public consultations, had wanted to appoint field officers with the emphasis on outreach work and were clear that the Trust was to have a distinctive role.

It turned out they were ready for even more change than the Clerk had anticipated. As the Trust began to fund the small groups, particularly from the minority communities, the chairman of the grants committee remarked *"you certainly learn a lot at these meetings"*.

In reflecting on the funding of 20 years, certain themes or common threads stand out and each will be discussed. But not every activity will be described and not everything covered has been a success. The themes which are analysed separately here, are not so easily containable in water-tight compartments and overlap is inevitable. However, every effort has been made to avoid unnecessary repetition. Any lessons to be learned are not to glorify the Foundation or the Trust but to benefit, albeit indirectly, the poor of London.

As already mentioned, a regime of basic grant-making continued throughout this period alongside the new initiatives. The report *Capital Youth* (2001) highlighted this aspect in relation to youth work but the same could be said about all areas of the work funded. In his foreword, Tom Wylie said: *"There is often a temptation for funders to bypass the traditional and longstanding and seek out the wholly new. Of course, some projects do become careworn and lose touch with their potential customers. But research... shows the long-term benefits of what is too often seen as 'just the local youth club'"*. Interestingly, in July 2007 the Government announced it would provide £184m to set up a network of youth centres in every community in England.

Change can often occur because of the actions of a funded organisation when the funder has not made the grant as part of any particular programme or with any distinct aim in mind. In 1986, CPF made a



grant of £2,790 for new furniture in the counselling room to the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, a charity established in 1985 and with a very modest income. Several grants have been made since, the most recent for £70,200 in 2007, by which time the charity had an income of nearly £8m: over the years, it has become one of the leading charities in the world helping and advising on victims of torture. The grant in 1986 was made with no such expectations.

What the Medical Foundation illustrates vividly is the staying power, or constancy, of the voluntary sector as it has pursued its objectives over more than twenty years. It is just one of many such organisations but the importance of this constancy merits consideration.

Over the last twenty years there have been significant changes at national, regional and local government level as well as major developments in health, housing and education. Nationally, there was the end of the Thatcher era and the emergence of New Labour. London has seen the abolition of both the Inner London Education Authority and the GLC.

Throughout all this organisational upheaval, what has been a constant is the voluntary sector, with thousands of organisations pursuing their aims in a range of fields including health, arts, environment, education, social justice and many others, but often to benefit the most disadvantaged in society. In many ways they are, and will remain, a bastion of the much-lauded civil society. Refugees from oppressive regimes speak movingly of the voluntary sector as being democracy in action.

Such organisations have seen the effects of funding feasts and famines. The GLC was a great supporter of the voluntary sector, but it went. The Lottery helped fill the gap in the 1990s, but now its focus has shifted. Talk to any director of a voluntary organisation and they will soon be citing the charitable funders to which they are in the process of applying. Independent funders, such as the CPF and TfL, are the lifeblood of the voluntary sector.

They can help kick start new and controversial charities. They can support voluntary organisations over long periods. They can come to the rescue quickly in certain emergencies. A few voluntary organisations have long since celebrated their centenary but the growth of charities during and after the 1960s was not thought by some to be sustainable – fortunately an unfounded fear. For a London funder at least it is rewarding to travel around the capital and note en route the raft of organisations still operating, largely unsung but critical to their beneficiaries.

An interesting illustration of the value of constancy arose when early in 2007 the government announced that the Social Exclusion Unit would undertake a Families at Risk review. Such families had been the core concern of Family Service Units which had begun in 1947 with a start up grant from CPF.

In 2006, FSU had merged with the Family Welfare Association – which had received its first grant from CPF in 1910 when FWA was still the Charity Organisation Society. CPF's long standing relationship with FSU was such that it convened in May 2007 a seminar of 25 experienced former staff from FSU to draw together the lessons of 60 years of pioneering work with families at risk, with the aim of submitting a paper to the review team and subsequently to the relevant ministers. CPF saw this as a legacy that not only should not be forgotten, but which had absolute relevance to the government's concerns of today.



2 Some fundamental questions

Before discussing the work of the past twenty years it is necessary – and probably wise – to tackle some fundamental questions that any such history inevitably raises. These touch on issues that are of concern to all contemporary funders, especially when any reflective analysis is written.

It is said that history is written by the winners so isn't a funder's account going to be self congratulatory and, in effect, a list of successful enterprises? Clearly, if the last twenty years of the Foundation and the Trust had been marked by desultory, moribund, unimaginative and poorly-judged funding then there would be no impetus to write any form of history.

Funders will perhaps inevitably err on the positive side but there is no league table of funders and there is much one funder can learn from any other. Sibling rivalry has no place, especially when beneficiaries are often rightly urged to pay attention to other charities' work and indeed to work in harness with them. However, no funder has twenty years of unparalleled glory. While there have been many interesting and challenging activities for the Foundation and Trust, there have, at the same time, been some undoubted 'failures'.

At this point there has to be some discussion about the notion of funding failures or mistakes. What do these terms mean in a funding context?

Funding is about making assessments and judgements. It is not a haphazard process but it is not one of scientific precision either. It is certainly a mistake or a failure in the process if an applicant's accounts are misread and money given to a virtually bankrupt organisation. It is not, however, a failure if one year after a grant was made the inspirational director of the funded body moves on to greater things and the work funded suffers as a result. In other words, there are a vast range of factors that come into play in any grant-making process and should not lead to the rather pejorative judgement that a grant was a failure.

If we all knew what to do about, say, improving the educational opportunities and achievements of very disadvantaged children, then there would hardly be any need for complex funding programmes. We would just do it.

Thought should also be given to sins of omission. It is an unusual funder who has not turned down an applicant only to note a few years later the public success of the applicant with the wry comment "*I remember we turned X down, I wonder why!*"

Errors of judgement are, of course, made and care has to be taken to guard against the processes that lead to that. For example, guilt about not funding any or enough minority ethnic or women's organisations, can put pressure on a funder when what may be required is a more open and responsive funding process to help strengthen the application and support the applicant.

When funders' mistakes are openly discussed – and this has been more the case in the USA – it tends to be about major initiatives. These will always attract more attention and may be more at risk if only because expectations are that much higher. A retrospective review over, say, five years of smaller grants may reveal a wide range of outcomes along the success/failure continuum. This may be more conducive to learning than the analysis of one major programme. The former may also put into perspective any so-called failures which may even have generated public attention. With hindsight, a few judgements will always be wrong: only continuous misjudgements should be termed failure.

This report could catalogue grants that fell far short of any reasonable expectations but it is unclear what could be learned from such a list except to do better next time, though, of course, that is an important lesson in itself. All funders will have such lists or, at least, unhappy memories. For example, in the mid 1980s and early 1990s nearly £900,000 was given by CPF over



several years to two second tier bodies both of which showed that their rhetoric far exceeded their capacity to deliver services to front line organisations. Judgements at the time were made by staff and committees who, perhaps, could have been much more critical.

More recently in 1999, the Schools Exclusion project funded by the Funders Alliance was subject to an independent evaluation which was published and which highlighted some serious shortcomings. Much less was achieved than might have been expected on an issue of such importance.

Funders today are increasingly bold in their aims and indeed ambitions. They will state that they wish to make a real difference, have an impact, effect real change, be ahead of the mainstream, plan for sustainability, to be at the cutting edge of social innovation and so on. The question is: how does one know when that has been accomplished?

What would be the evidence required to answer that question in the affirmative? Incidentally, a look at the history of funders' activities, say, over the past 40 years, shows that there certainly was change and impact – it was just that funders did not talk in those terms! The work of the Foundation and the Trust described here has also to face this evidence question.

But that question in turn raises two others. Who 'owns' the work that has been funded to make the difference? What is the timescale to be agreed before, as it were, the results are in?

The media – press, radio and television – regularly feature charity directors pressing their case, challenging government or advocating new approaches to this or that social problem. The funders of the charities are not mentioned, far less interviewed. That is as it should be. The work is not done by the funder. The beneficiaries of a project know who the workers are, probably know the name of the project but are most unlikely to know the names of the funders.

Funders can take credit for having been imaginative, generous, risk-taking or the first to respond to an issue but if change is truly effected and success is publicly acknowledged then that is invariably to the credit of the funded charity. The success of a funder may need to be considered in other terms, such as taking the first step to address a problem, making a significant contribution, acting as a catalyst, or a host of ways that do not amount to 'owning' the work funded.

It is interesting to recall one major funder in the 1980s which asked its successful applicants to acknowledge it only as 'an anonymous trust' in their reports. The only trouble was all the other funders knew which this singular anonymous trust was! It remains, however, the most honest attempt to leave the glory to the beneficiary.

Even where the funder has taken the lead in launching an initiative and has clearly agreed outcomes, it is still left with the most difficult question of all, namely at what point is the work regarded as complete, the outcomes assessed and the judgement on its success or otherwise made? All beneficiaries, of course, face exactly the same dilemma. Environmental activities, artistic endeavours or social welfare programmes to name but three examples, do not always readily lend themselves to hard outcomes and may require years to be confident of 'successful' outcomes.

Much of the work in trying to tackle poverty and disadvantage is not likely to produce 'solutions' – there is no discovery of DNA – but will proceed incrementally with external influences such as government policies often playing a key, and not always anticipated, role.

In considering evidence, thought needs to be given to distinguishing specific grants, programmes and projects from what might be termed overall aims. The Foundation and Trust are unlikely to reduce poverty in London – there are always going to be too many counter forces at work – but they may hope to help some specific groups of 'poor people' through targeted

Scene fundamental questions interventions. Impact is almost certain to be limited.

The above might be viewed as a form of health warning with regard to what follows. It is not seeking to avoid the vexed issues of success, evidence, outcomes, and ownership and has tried to avoid that danger of self-congratulation. It is, however, important to be aware of some of the complexities around these themes as a background to the work of the Foundation and Trust. As areas of work are discussed an attempt is made to draw out the lessons from each, though some lessons cover a range of work.

Others, of course, may well draw different lessons entirely. Ultimately, it is not about success and failure but rather trying to explain how and why CPF and TfL came to do what they did. For much of the work described, only time will tell whether it could be called successful.

section two

Analysing the lessons

3 Funding plus: more than money

The value of visits to both funder and funded alike, already highlighted, will be referred to more than once in this account. One advantage for the charity being visited is that it enables the funder to see things that would not be apparent in any written documentation – in many cases the charities have undersold themselves. For example, in 1980, the then Clerk's visit to a first time applicant, Jackson's Lane Community Centre, led the former to put some very challenging ideas to the applicant and this played its part in the development of a more adventurous centre than originally planned – as well as a grant and a longer term relationship with CPF.

Such 'added value' was not the term used in 1980 and it was certainly not systemised in any way. But it was there. Its more sustained application was to emerge with the experience of the two field officers whose work with Trust for London began in January 1988.

The Trust had broad charitable aims, but decided to give priority to small charitable community groups, not necessarily yet registered as charities, and, in particular, to organisations from black and minority ethnic communities including refugee communities. It soon became apparent from the field officers' visits that grants alone, however welcome, would not always be enough if the organisation was to be helped beyond the short-term: funding to fail was an ever-present danger.

But more was needed than immediate advice from the field officers. The latter soon began to recommend to the grants committee that, in addition to the grant, a consultant should be funded to assist the charity on matters such as its financial systems, registering as a charity, governance and committee structures.

A panel of consultants was soon established and in 1988, a budget of £20,000 made available which lasted until 1990. By then, it was necessary to have a consultants' budget of £25,000 a year. But even this expanded assistance was limited, as there were invariably more organisations needing help from a consultant than the Trust's modest grant income would sensibly permit.

However, there was no doubting the need and unless the Trust was to reverse its priorities and only fund the more established groups – and this would certainly have seriously disadvantaged refugee groups – something more long term needed to be established. What emerged from this early experience was the **Small Groups Worker Scheme**. Though growing out of the Trust's work, this was the first formal expression of what was to become part of one of CPF's fundamental strategies, namely 'funding plus'. Even that term suggests a much narrower approach than what emerged.

The scheme built on the recognition that small groups often need more than money but took this a stage further by funding others to advise and support groups who were not for the most part applicants to the Trust, nor would necessarily be so. It was 'funding plus' but not necessarily the Trust's funding. Indirectly, other funders would benefit from the scheme where they were the recipients of applications from small but well supported, and now better organised, community groups.

The Trust committed £675,000 over three and a half years from 1992 to fund nine part-time small groups workers in nine boroughs based (with one exception) in councils for voluntary service (CVS). Tri-borough advisory committees were set up to maintain an overview of the scheme and to allocate training budgets. In the lifetime



Funding plus: more than money

of the scheme, 774 groups received hands on support and 1,037 individuals received customised training. Most encouraging was the fact that these groups were enabled to apply for and obtain a total of more than £800,000 from a range of funders. Funding plus, indeed. There were also many other benefits, for example groups previously unknown to the CVSs were drawn into the mainstream.

The overall impact was considerable: many of the posts continued to be funded from borough sources, three other boroughs began their own schemes, and the Trust funded four full-time small groups workers in new boroughs. It changed the thinking about the value of small community groups while acknowledging that their value was only fully realised when they were properly advised and supported.

Needless to say, not everything went like clockwork and lessons were learned for any future such schemes: some of these, though specific to the scheme, were to be echoed in other initiatives taken in the years ahead. In particular:

- the timescale needed to be longer with a more defined exit strategy;
- the evaluation process should be built in from the outset with its content and expectations clearly agreed; and
- where there are complex management and accountability structures more formal written agreements need to be in place.

As with many initiatives with relatively secure funding, the enthusiasm can too easily lead everyone to assume there is agreement around some of the more nitty-gritty issues. None of this jeopardised the scheme but time and energy were, at times, diverted from the core tasks.

The experience of this scheme, together with the continuing practice of staff visiting applicants to the Trust, heightened the awareness that small groups in particular have difficulty in exercising financial control: muddle not fraud. A study was undertaken in 1997 for both the TfL and CPF to investigate the need for financial monitoring of organisations. In essence, it found that the financial competence was poor.

To tackle this problem, the report recommended that funders should work together to improve access to local, good quality, low cost financial training. But the Trust wanted to know if such training was actually effective. The Community Accountancy Project was commissioned to work with twenty funded organisations to see if training would improve their overall financial competence.

The study, *Financial Fitness*, was published in 2001. Training was found to enhance the financial competence of an organisation whether it had paid staff or not. Such training at an early stage of the organisation's life, created a secure base for the future. The costs were not high for the rewards.

The demands for fiscal competence on all voluntary organisations have vastly increased since 2001 and the fraud scares of 2005-6 highlighted this. If there is a panic about fraudulent charities – and some of it, though by no means as much as stated, was real – then sound, well-ordered financial systems are one protection against muddle being mistaken for fraud.

In the late 1980s, the term 'funding to fail' surfaced with black and minority ethnic groups saying that they were given grants, which could be large, but little in the way of support or access to mainstream second tier advice services. Subsequent failure led funders to be wary of funding such groups in the future.

The Trust was acutely aware of this trap and it was partly because of that the Trust, and by implication CPF, took on board the notion of funding being a lot more than just a grant paid to a successful applicant. Of course, it was also a response to a need as perceived by staff. It would be an unusual group which said 'we would like a grant but we also need a lot of other help', as it might fear such openness would ruin its chances of success.

The lessons

The funding plus approach has shown that funders are able to say constructively to



voluntary organisations that ‘it is not only money that you need’. This is a very important development.

The applicant is understandably driven by immediate worries over money, the local committee wants to know how the fund raising is progressing, staff may be concerned about their jobs, and they are being overwhelmed by an increase in users. In this context, CPF is saying ‘money is not the sole answer to your problems: capacity building is needed and there are ways of helping you with that’. This can be a complex transaction but the process of visiting applicants makes such a negotiation possible.

Small groups are especially able to benefit from a funding plus approach. The strength and community focus of these groups has really been highlighted over the past twenty years particularly through the Trust. Their voice is now stronger than it was. It has been most important to recognise that not all small groups want to become larger and over-generous funding of a small community group can take it beyond its natural capacity: another example of funding to fail. The funder is not there to tell a group what is best for it but the climate should not be created in which a local committee feels that it is failing by not constantly seeking to expand. Small can be very beautiful.

Where a funder is in partnership with voluntary organisations, care obviously has to be taken to ensure a sensible and fair balance between the extremes of giving the funded organisations total freedom to proceed as they see fit, and the funder

laying down very rigid conditions and procedures. With the Small Groups Worker Scheme, a management structure was created to take account of everyone’s interests but it proved cumbersome, and confused frontline staff who were not party to all the thinking that had gone into the structure. Newly-recruited staff come into posts with their own expectations and ambitions which are then added to those of the pre-existing mix of funders and managing organisations.

Although at first it may seem over bureaucratic, more detailed formal written agreements could reduce the unspoken assumptions which tend to surface later in any undertaking. One is reminded of the 1960s American anti-poverty programme when local boards appointed some real poor people to them. The national authorities expressed surprise as such a move had never been anticipated or discussed and in reality it was rather too radical for them.

In all the ‘funding plus’ developments, trustees and staff continually learned more and more about the problems facing the small voluntary organisations. Although the initial analysis of the need for more advice and support for such groups was accurate, it was only just the beginning of a learning curve for the Trust. Funders’ initiatives will often teach the funder a great deal. Some aspects will always be beyond anyone’s control and staffing is one of these critical areas, a theme which will be highlighted again later. In the Small Groups Worker scheme, only five of the nine staff remained in post throughout the three years of the initial scheme. Such a turnover is a serious drawback in any scheme.

Key points

- ▶ Small groups often need more than money – ‘funding plus’ allows funders to put this point constructively to voluntary organisations.
- ▶ Not all small groups want to become larger; over-generous funding can take groups beyond their natural capacity: an example of funding to fail.
- ▶ Visits enable funders to see things that would not be apparent in any written documentation – in many cases the charities undersell themselves.
- ▶ Care has to be taken to ensure a sensible and fair balance between giving the funded organisations total freedom to proceed as they see fit, and the funder laying down conditions and procedures.
- ▶ Timescales for funding often need to be longer, with more defined exit strategies
- ▶ Evaluation processes should be built in from the outset with content and expectations clearly agreed.
- ▶ Sound, well-ordered financial systems are one protection against muddle being mistaken for fraud.

4 New needs – the discovery process

The process of discovering or rediscovering needs is a varied and challenging one and has to rely on more than staff perceptions and experience, which were primarily the driving force behind the funding plus approach.

CPF's mid-quinquennial review in 2004 looked back over such reviews since 1935 and drew out seven themes which had consistently featured in the time. One of these was an 'alertness to take up new issues'. The Trust's funding guidelines for 2007-11 has as one of the priorities "*new and emerging needs*". Such language is common to many funders but how it is played out in practice can vary enormously. Here we look at examples of how the Trust and CPF were able to develop projects which demonstrated that aspiration to reveal and tackle new needs.

The discovery process varies. Four main avenues seem evident:

- analysis of the applications and grants made;
- seeing and noting;
- growing concerns; and
- serendipity.

Analysis Funders sit on a mass of invaluable data in the form of every year's applications and grants. With systematic analysis this data can reveal important information, as the Barking and Dagenham question showed (see page 8) but above all it can serve to highlight new needs and issues. Memory plays tricks and at the end of even just one year, impressions about what has or has not been funded are rarely confirmed by the hard data. There is always an in-house gold mine. For the Trust and CPF, this process was to lead to two major initiatives.

By 1992, the Trust's analysis of its grants showed that it was regularly making grants to supplementary and mother-tongue schools. Many more were in the pipeline and schools were phoning for advice about a possible application. Staff realised that more information was urgently needed about them, as it was clear that not all of

them could be funded, even assuming it was known just what 'all' meant. The grants committee, though very sympathetic in principle to the schools, often raised questions about their number, quality and capacity.

As a result, a conference was convened in 1993 to discuss their requirements. It was overwhelmingly clear they needed much more than just financial help. What they asked for was training for teachers, advice on management committees, links to mainstream education and recognition of their role in educating children from minority communities, especially from refugee communities.

In 1996, two consultants were appointed to research these concerns – which were essentially the need for a more strategic approach – and to recommend action to the Trust. They proposed a **Resource Unit for Supplementary and Mother-tongue Schools**. Trustees agreed, and the Unit opened in January 1997 with funding from the Trust, BBC Children in Need and the then National Lottery Charities Board. It became fully independent in 1999.

Perhaps the most long lasting of the Unit's achievements was to uncover the depth and spread of the supplementary and mother-tongue schools, and to succeed in getting them national attention. Starting with 60 contacts from the Trust in 1997, the Unit soon had a contact list of 400 organisations. When, in 1999, the Unit published the first Directory, funded by the DfES and covering only London, more than 1000 schools and classes were identified. A second – national – edition in 2001 listed more than 2000 schools.

Many schools and individual teachers benefited from the Unit's advice and training. The Trust remained the core funder but realised – as did the Unit's trustees – that it needed to move beyond London if it was to be fully effective and to have a broader funding base. In 2005, these two aspirations came together when the Unit was merged with ContinYou, a leading national educational charity.

At the same time it received a grant of more than £500,000 from the DfES to develop the work nationally, with additional support from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. The then Schools Minister, Lord Adonis, said early in 2007: *“A national survey found that eight out of ten pupils who attended a supplementary school said it helped them with their mainstream school work. Supplementary schools activities can bring a tremendous sense of achievement and can boost children’s confidence and motivation in and out of the classroom”*.

Things had come a long way since the Trust’s field officers had worried at just what to do with those supplementary school applications. Successful though the journey has so far turned out to be, it was certainly not smooth the whole way. Its arrival on the national scene as the Trust’s funding was ending after nine years, greatly assisted by the particular interest and support of a government minister at a key moment. Good fortune can play its part in any funder’s strategies: indeed it probably must.

Count Us In, the CPF’s disability programme 2000-5, had a very similar discovery process. The summary report on the programme puts it clearly: *“Staff and trustees of CPF/TfL were concerned that few applications were received from small disability groups and even fewer from small black, minority ethnic disability groups. Outreach work had tried to tackle this, but had not resulted in an increase in the number of applications from these groups. So Count Us In was launched as a special programme in an effort to provide practical support to these groups, and to learn from them about the barriers and difficulties that they experienced”*.

The work started in 1998, with £1m allocated over five years to three major national organisations with the aim of *“putting in place sustainable support for small, local disability organisations in London, in particular organisations of black and minority ethnic disabled people, and self-advocacy groups of people with learning difficulties, in order to provide an effective and independent voice for these marginalised groups of disabled Londoners”*.

This programme was acknowledged to be *“a big step into the unknown”* which proved at times to be *“very difficult,”* but it did *“push the boundaries and challenge the way things are done”*.

(No single report in the past twenty years simply stated that all went smoothly. Even if it had, it is doubtful if the trustees at CPF would have believed it, or if it was that straightforward, it was perhaps inappropriate to undertake it!)

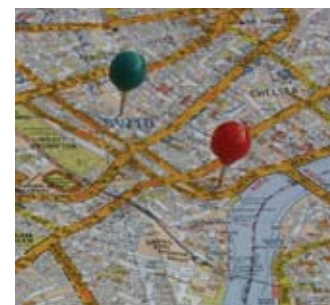
There were immediate tangible benefits from the programme: 85 black and minority ethnic disability groups were helped to raise £467,000, as well as the establishment of a campaigning network. Some work will be much longer term and will, says the final report, require a range of practical programmes of capacity building, better links between these small disability groups and the mainstream disability organisations, as well as funders having a proactive approach to encourage applications from such groups.

The longer term work suffered a setback when one of the three mainstream charities at the heart of the programme ceased operating. This only serves to demonstrate that no programme is ever foolproof and it will be a long haul to reach the point where one can report ‘change achieved’.

Seeing and noting A few developments that were undertaken arose fortuitously, more from observation and analysis externally than from the staff. One such project became London Prisons Community Links (LPCL).

By 1991, the then Chief Inspector of Prisons, Stephen Tumim, was becoming concerned by the inadequate visiting facilities at many prisons which undermined what everyone knew as important, namely the value to prisoners of maintaining good family relationships. His wife was a trustee of CPF, and she suggested that the Clerk might usefully talk with Stephen Tumim to see whether there might be any way the Foundation could tackle this problem, at least in London prisons.

Although in 1993 there was to be a special Penal Programme, this was not yet even an





As a result of a relatively casual conversation, City Parochial Foundation eventually got involved with other funders to set up London Prisons Community Links, which in turn led to the building on two brand new visitors' centres at Belmarsh (top left) and Holloway (above and right). LPCL became CLINKS and operates nationally.

Pictures courtesy Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT).

which would build on the existing prison service Consultative Group on Family Ties and establish greater exchange of ideas, information and plans around prison visiting.

LPCL was formed in 1993, funded by CPF and two other funders. What was not anticipated was that with only one member of staff, Una Padel, so much would be achieved in very practical terms. In five years, LPCL helped raise £1.3m to fund significant developments, not least the building of two brand new visitors' centres at Holloway and Belmarsh prisons.

The core funding for these two centres came from Tudor Trust which was not in any form of alliance with CPF but each was familiar with the other's style and interests. More was probably achieved this way than by any formalised funding partnership. Familiarity breeds trust and understanding.

By 1998, it was evident that LPCL should be national and so it became CLINKS and its work, ever more vital with a rapidly rising prison population, has continued. National work of this importance was certainly not foreseen at the time of that relatively casual conversation held between the Clerk and the then Chief Inspector of Prisons. The

idea and the CPF's engagement with penal concerns was quite modest. Following discussion, it seemed that this might be an area in which there was a role for CPF, and so, in 1992, a feasibility study was commissioned from a leading criminologist, Silvia Casale. The aim was to examine the practical visiting arrangements at London prisons and to make recommendations for better practice and facilities.

The report was an eye-opener, not least because it was not academic research so much as detailed and graphic observations about the day-to-day difficulties for families visiting prisons. Very practical proposals were made to help improve visiting facilities, many of which fell outside CPF's own remit. But for the Foundation, what was proposed was the creation and funding of a new independent body, LPCL,

drive of Una Padel, (who sadly died aged 50, in 2006), the strength of the first LPCL committee and the engagement of other funders were vital in taking the initiative forward, once CPF had seen so clearly the problem as set out in an authoritative and hard-hitting feasibility study.

Growing concerns A discussion at a grants committee, staff meetings, conversations with other funders, or a pertinent question from a trustee, can all feed into what can only be termed as a growing concern that 'we should be doing something about this or that issue'. It is rarely precise at the outset (and not every such concern develops into a project).

The best example of this more incremental approach is the Foundation's work with the refugee communities of London. Stimulated initially by the Trust's engagement with small refugee groups, CPF realised that it, too, needed to respond to this emerging need as refugees were certainly among the poor of London. There was the occasional dissenting trustee voice: 'do they count as the poor of London as soon as they arrive at Heathrow?'

Other than that, the trustees responded positively and never held back on decisions because the issue was too controversial or in some ill-defined way too risky, concepts which will be looked at later. Unexpected interests sometimes emerged, such as when one trustee explained his enthusiasm for a grant application because of his work over many years in the Sudan.

The refugee thread runs from the opening of the **Evelyn Oldfield Unit** in 1994, through the **Refugee Education Unit** and the **Refugee Education Awards Scheme** (both based at the charity Praxis), to the creation of the Employability Forum, and on to the funding priorities for 2007-11 which has as one of its aims in the Open Programme the promotion of "*the inclusion of recent arrivals to the UK*". In early 2007, CPF and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation published *A Long Way To Go*, a study of the challenges facing young refugees and asylum seekers.

The Evelyn Oldfield Unit was formed by a consortium of funding bodies and agencies which worked with refugee communities. CPF remained a core funder for 12 years. The aim of the Unit was to develop specialist support for refugee communities to enable them to tackle the pressing needs of their communities. It focussed on the more established groups.

It is refugee-led and refugee-managed, and that has been its great strength along with a stable staff group especially the director, who has been there since its inception. An example of its influence is illustrated by the constructive dialogue it now has with the Home Office on matters such as the training of refugee community leaders, and being represented on the National Refugee Integration Forum. Another trust has more recently funded it to work outside London.

Great prominence was given to the Unit and the refugee experience by the Refugee Community History Project funded by CPF, Metropolitan University of London and the Museum of London. Mainly through oral histories this documented the history of refugees in the capital since 1951, and culminated in a major exhibition at the Museum of London from October 2006 to February 2007.

By the mid 1990s, the Foundation staff became aware of issues that could not be dealt with by individual refugee organisations and where a more strategic approach was required. One such issue was education, and especially the interrupted education, of displaced refugee professionals. In 1996, in partnership with three other funders, the Refugee Education Unit was started within Praxis.

Very quickly, it was realised that advice alone was insufficient to make an impact and the CPF set up the refugee awards scheme to provide modest grants to assist with further training. Over its first five years, nearly £230,000 was given to 746 individuals by a CPF-based awards committee. This activity has links back to the funds CPF once made available to the ILEA, before its abolition in 1987, to assist students in need, and indeed to all the London polytechnics (as they then were) for almost forty years.



New needs – the discovery process

The awards scheme developed into 'Personal Study Accounts' under which the individual grant applicant was required to show that the training would lead to employment in the health and social care sector. For 2004-5, a grant was made to enable clients from Praxis to undertake foundation degrees in public sector interpreting.

As the Praxis-based work has shown, employment is critical to the individual refugee, if he or she is to build a secure base in their new country. Having qualifications, though, is not always enough, so from 1998 to 2000 CPF carried out a series of consultations to examine the barriers to employment for those refugees who had permission to work. The result was a realisation of a gap in provision and a new organisation, **Employability Forum**, was formed.

CPF has been a core funder since 2001 with many others making major contributions. The Forum aims to facilitate the integration of refugees in the UK into the world of work paying particular attention to influencing public policy on refugee integration and employment, and developing a coherent strategy for the training and employment of refugees.

The Forum has worked closely with government, and the publication in March 2005 of a strategy on the integration and employment of refugees was, by any criteria, a very significant landmark. The Forum has sought to position itself as a lead body with government departments on the major employment issues concerning refugees such as teachers, nurses, doctors and dentists. Bedding in the gains for the longer term is viewed as essential.

Serendipity In 2004 the Foundation made a grant of £30,000 over two years – including £10,000 for evaluation – to the Maytree respite centre, a sanctuary for suicidal people. The fact that there had been an application at all was curious, as Maytree's work did not fit any of CPF's priorities. The Clerk had come across Maytree quite by chance. He was struck by its approach to suicide prevention and saw the need for the evaluation of its work. The trustees

readily agreed to an exceptional grant – which showed the wisdom of never making any priorities too inflexible. It may be obvious, but we don't know what we don't know. Funders should be concerned if they find they are never surprised.

Maytree opened in October 2002. It takes in suicidal people in crisis, for a maximum of four nights, and by December 2005 had taken in 159 guests, with accommodation for four at any one time. There is a calm therapeutic regime. The independent evaluation of Maytree's work concluded that it fulfils its mission to offer respite to suicidal people. The evaluation noted that *"there is a clear need for more centres based on the Maytree model"*. Replication is required. The story of this particular grant and its impact has a long way to run, but to date it represents a strong case for being open to looking at new needs that previously had not been on anyone's radar.

One way to tackle new needs is obviously to work through existing organisations and this has been the approach used in CPF's special programmes which first began in the early 1990s and which are detailed in the next section.

The lessons

However exciting the idea and however generous the funding projects of whatever scale, needs organisations capable of implementing the scheme devised by the funders. The very nature of the discovery process may necessitate the creation of a new organisation. This route is always much more time-consuming and demanding on both staff and trustees than ever is expected. It also means, in practice, a longer term funding commitment than is usually made explicit at the outset.

As vital as the organisations are, the quality of staff is equally critical whether in a new organisation or in well-established organisations. Without the right staff nothing will happen and the tendency then is to think the original idea may be at fault, when first rate staff, in fact, can make a great deal happen. CPF was very fortunate that in the organisations it set up, it was





The Evelyn Oldfield Unit was, with CPF and TfL and other funders, at the forefront of the Refugee Communities History Project (2004-2007), which collected oral histories of refugees in London, including that of Alebachew Desalegn, seen above. The project culminated in an exhibition at the Museum of London and is preserved at www.refugeestories.org. It won a Charity Award in 2006. The Unit celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2004 (below).

Another initiative was the report *Refugee professionals – fulfilling potential and meeting needs: A way forward?* This showed that for very small amounts of cash to authentic their qualifications to UK standards to qualify for employment, refugees can become net contributors through tax and national insurance rather than recipients of benefits. The report was launched at a seminar held with government and health service representatives. Among the speakers was Dr Massud Wasel (right) who explained how a study grant had enabled him to achieve the necessary standards to take on work in the National Health Service.



able to recruit outstanding managers, three of whom are still there after more than ten years. As one trustee always said “we fund people not projects”.

Staff staying in post is important, though, as was noted earlier, funders have no control over that. The report on the 1993 Penal Programme (see the next section) highlighted how all the staff in all the funded projects stayed for the full three years, whereas the report in 2006 on Count Us In commented that only three people were involved from beginning to end. The people interviewed by CPF may be very impressive but if one year later, or even sooner, they have moved on, a well-planned project can take a very different turn. CPF’s report, *Valuing Potential, New thinking on recruitment and retention of*



New needs – the discovery process

staff in the voluntary sector, stated that “sometimes really exciting and badly-needed initiatives have been blighted by these basic problems”, namely the recruitment and retention of staff

CPF does not fund academic research. It does, nonetheless, have a vast amount of data within its records. Basic analysis of this data will always reveal surprising findings. Memories play tricks and staff recollections and impressions may well be at odds with the facts. Such data analysis can lead to new schemes where gaps have been revealed as with Count Us In or, as in the case of supplementary schools, surprise the staff that so much is being done but without any strategy to it. The data can also show just how far the Trust

and the Foundation are, in fact, ensuring they are funding the causes, the types of organisations or the geographical areas that they have publicly committed themselves to support.

A trustee once remarked to the field officers that *“you are really like detectives”*. This clearly implied that the role was more than visiting applicants and processing applications. There has to be space for following up hunches, worrying away at the unexpected, asking the right questions and sharing the findings, even when nothing is absolutely certain. There has to be space at grants committees for comments which begin ‘I wonder if...’ or ‘this may sound silly but...’

Key points

- ▶ The process of discovering needs has to rely on more than staff perceptions and experience.
- ▶ Good fortune can play its part in any funder’s strategies: indeed it probably must.
- ▶ No programme is ever foolproof and it will be a long haul to reach the point where one can report ‘change achieved’.
- ▶ Discussion can feed into what can only be termed as a growing concern that ‘we should be doing something about this or that issue’. It is rarely precise at the outset (and not every such concern develops into a project).
- ▶ Never make any priorities too inflexible: there has to be space for following up hunches.
- ▶ The very nature of the discovery process may necessitate the creation of a new organisation. This route is always much more time-consuming and demanding than ever is expected.

5 Special programmes and initiatives

Over the past two decades, CPF and TfL have funded special programmes and initiatives, which earmark funds for strategic approaches to a general area of activity – special programmes – or a specific need – special initiatives. They have obvious affinities but a different impetus, but the differences are, essentially, an internal CPF categorisation and thus they are discussed together.

The programmes have been less about meeting new needs as trying through a concerted effort to bring extra resources

and new ideas to familiar problems that had previously only been dealt with by responding to ad hoc standard applications. From the Foundation’s perspective, they were a proactive move to seek out first class charities working in a particular field, encourage them to submit proposals for new projects, fund them for three years, and ensure that the experience of the chosen projects was shared on a regular basis.

Funds available for any one programme have ranged from £400,000 to over £1m.

This style of working is now much more common than it was in the early 1990s. Such programmes generate excitement and even optimism that significant progress might be made in dealing with some age old problems. However, realism still needs to be the watchword. For CPF the themes have been:

- carers
- mental health
- penal work
- youth
- domestic violence; and
- preventing racist violence.

Within such broad themes, priorities are determined often after extensive consultation, and expressions of interest from organisations are then reduced to a number of focussed applications. It is not a case of throwing money at an issue and hoping for a positive outcome. However, given the complex nature of the issues selected, the impact of any such programmes is likely to be incremental. Any success is also ultimately determined by the continuing quality of the selected applicant bodies and the external environment, neither of which can be controlled.

Ten years after the first three programmes ended – carers, mental health and penal – it is worth reflecting briefly on their impact.

Particularly striking, in the light of CPF's sustained work with black and minority ethnic groups, was the finding from the both the carers and mental health programmes, that ways had to be found for mainstream services to engage with bme organisations if the latter communities were to benefit from those services. Count Us In was once again to highlight that message.

Some of the funded projects led on to sustained work which continues, but building on successes proved difficult. For example, the CAB in Wormwood Scrubs funded under the penal initiative, was an outstanding success, but it was never possible to persuade the prison service to take it up in other prisons. With a prison population now exceeding 80,000 it has become ever-more difficult for the voluntary

sector to make its presence felt even though it is even more needed: the external environment has played a critical role in affecting outcomes. The review of the penal programme in 1997 said that too many key services were being funded by charitable foundations and that *“the need for change is urgent”*. It is even more urgent ten years later.

Funders usually achieve their aims through the charities in the field – the service providers. It is striking to note that one of the funded bodies under the 1993 penal programme, Leap Confronting Conflict, is also one of the four selected under the programme Preventing Racist Violence in 2006 – yet another illustration of the constancy of the voluntary sector. Funders have to have the imagination and resources to launch major initiatives especially in areas that are less popular but they ultimately rely on the commitment and quality of the service provider.

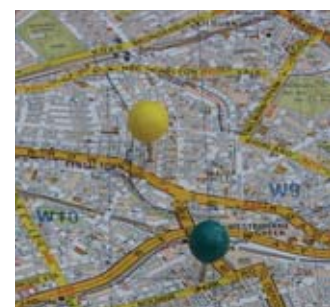
Two important ‘special initiatives’ were taken in 2006:

- tackling modern day slavery; and
- safeguarding children’s rights.

In both cases an initiative was taken by the Foundation and Trust to make significant funds available to find ways of dealing with current and disturbing manifestations of old problems.

The Foundation wished to mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade by funding work that addressed the modern equivalent, namely human trafficking in adults – especially women – and children. Five organisations were funded for two or three years and only one of these had had any previous dealings with CPF. (Interestingly, one of those funded was Anti-Slavery International which was formed in 1839, pre-dating the Foundation by almost 60 years.) Each beneficiary stated the expected or anticipated outcomes to be achieved over the two years. None could, of course, be guaranteed.

Safeguarding children’s rights was a joint response of the Foundation and the Trust to a very particular aspect of child abuse,



Special programmes and initiatives

namely faith-based abuse linked to a belief in spirit possession. It is a phenomenon centred on African communities. The Victoria Climbié case had brought the matter into the public arena.

Seminars, research and consultations were carried out during 2005-6 before the initiative was launched as, clearly, inappropriate responses could drive the issue underground, and too much publicity to the work could lead to whole communities being stigmatised when it was in fact the community groups who were most concerned to resolve this complex problem.

At that grass roots level, a lack of resources has been a serious problem, something which CPF and TfL have tried to address.

What these two initiatives showed was that independent foundations working with well-informed and well-placed voluntary organisations can focus on people at the margins of society who are highly disadvantaged or 'beneath the radar'. The last was a term used by one funder to describe young men from very deprived backgrounds, but the term is just as apposite in this context.

The work on faith-based child abuse requires enormous cultural sensitivity coupled with the realisation that only engagement with small community groups will make any headway. The challenge is to face the issue head on, but in a way that allows for honest discussion. The Trust's openness and accessibility to small groups had paid dividends in that the issue was first brought to its attention in 2004 by a local community group working with Congolese communities.

The lessons

The trustee commitment in many of the special programmes and initiatives has been immense and serves to underline just how essential the working relationship is between staff and trustees. In some cases, it was the trustees themselves who sparked the start of a development. In all cases, their support – and above all

understanding – of what was involved was more than just legally necessary. The experience and knowledge of trustees varies greatly but their questions refine initial proposals so that what emerges is a stronger basis for any given scheme. No single agenda is dominant. Staff know that questions will rightly be asked and trustees are aware that staff are seeing the problems at first hand.

Trustees, of course, bring their own knowledge and experience. A diverse trustee body with appropriate co-optees can make a huge difference to the functioning of a funding body not just in terms of its operational culture but also in what and how it funds. A grants committee (or equivalent) as a whole plays its part in ensuring that the funder's finger is on the pulse and does not rely solely on the staff. Knowing the trustees hidden skills and interests is not always easy. One CPF trustee had a vast knowledge of the Indian sub-continent and spoke several of the languages, facts that only became known through his obituary!

Funding under the special programmes has normally been for three years with extensions in some cases. But reviews of the programmes invariably recommended that this timescale was too short. The report on the carers programme put it clearly: *"the three year funding period, enlightened compared to year-by-year funding, was still found to be too short for some time-consuming development work... to set the work up in all cases took a period of one to two years. Five years therefore allows three years of developmental working time, and, with particularly exacting work such as access work with hard-to-reach minority ethnic communities, even ten years may be more realistic"*.

The late Luke Fitzherbert of the *Directory of Social Change* frequently asked where the magic number of three year funding originated. Twenty or thirty years ago, he would have been critical of the 'pensioner' beneficiaries of many funders who year-in and year-out received grants with little systematic scrutiny. In the mid 1980s, the CPF trustees expressed their concern about this issue: three year funding was

an improvement, but it now needs re-examining. Some funders still see three years as too long. An open debate among

funders about the how and why of the length of funding would be invaluable.

Key points

- ▶ Given the complex nature of the issues selected, the impact of programmes is likely to be incremental.
- ▶ Any success is ultimately determined by the continuing quality of the selected applicant bodies and the external environment, neither of which can be controlled.
- ▶ Funders ultimately rely on the commitment and quality of the service provider.
- ▶ A diverse trustee body with appropriate co-optees can make a huge difference to the functioning of a funding body not just in terms of its operational culture but also in what and how it funds.
- ▶ Funding under the special programmes has normally been for three years: reviews show this timescale is too short.

6 Risky and controversial

In the Trust's funding guidelines for 2007-11, it states that in prioritising applications it will give additional weight to a number of factors one of which is where organisations find it difficult to obtain support because their work is "*perceived as being challenging and risky*". The important word is 'perceived'. Some issues are headline grabbing and they are of concern, but the closer one comes to the problem and the more one sees of the organisations working to resolve the specific problem, the less risky it becomes.

Moreover, independent charitable funders have a vital role to play as they are free from, say, the public accountability constraints of the Big Lottery Fund. This does not mean that trustees can act irresponsibly but it gives a funder such as CPF, huge freedom which, because there are no obvious public constraints, calls for a great degree of self-imposed responsibility. One trustee regularly said at the grants committees "*we should always be looking to fund the 100-1 outsider*". He was not encouraging profligacy but a readiness to take proper risks partly because CPF could, and partly because none of us knows where the next 'winner' is coming from.

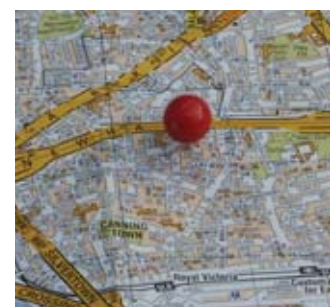
The sense of responsibility creates the climate in which apparently risky issues or applications are handled. Refugees and asylum seekers have not been viewed as

inherently risky, nor provoked great debate in themselves, though individual applications receive as much scrutiny as any other and not all succeed. The London focus of CPF and the Trust has made this slightly easier, and it would have been hard to define the 'poor of London' so as to exclude these groups. An application can still throw up an element of risk. In 2006, the full board of trustees considered whether to fund an application which focussed on advice and support for undocumented migrants. The decision was taken to fund.

Two initiatives, Touching the Margins and Fear and Fashion, illustrate the risk element in funding.

Touching the Margins was a project undertaken with another funder, the John Lyon's Charity. It worked with two local community groups to find ways of helping young men aged 18-30 who were seen as marginalised and often vilified in the press. One group worked with refugees and asylum seekers and the other with Bangladeshis. The enterprise was viewed as being in the tradition of independent funders "*taking on a pioneering, risk-taking role to bring about social change*".

In the first group, the government's dispersal policy made long-term work "*impossible*", which is again an example of how external events can undermine a project, so much so in this case at one



Risky and controversial

point “it looked as if it may have to close”. For the second group the familiar problems of linking to mainstream services and needing more time to develop the project were cited as difficulties despite individual successes with some of the 139 young men with whom the staff worked. *Fear and Fashion, The use of knives and other weapons by young people*, was a report by Lemos and Crane commissioned by Bridge House Trust (now The City Bridge Trust) and published in 2004. Following the report, Bridge House Trust approached four other funders to fund work to tackle the problem, already familiar in newspaper headlines and detailed in the publication. The latter had recommended demonstration pilot projects to combat the problem, setting out what the author saw as the key features of such projects. In 2005, CPF committed funds to the work along with other funders. In 2007, the shootings in London have given the phrase ‘and other weapons’, the report as a whole and subsequent projects, even greater weight if that were possible.

However, not all risk is embedded in new initiatives. It can appear in a one-off grant application. CPF, for example, gave a grant to a charity working to reform men who had been violent to their partners, work that is necessary but in some areas very controversial, and not always well understood.

The lessons

The argument is often put that independent funders are in a position to take risks and indeed funders may stress that they are willing to take risks. This does not, of course, mean that one ignores the

fraudulent treasurer. But what seems risky to one funder may be far from the case for another.

A judgement is made on every application not least because there are always more applications than funds available. The process of assessment can reduce the more obvious risks and these have become more rigorous each year. ‘Risky’ tends to mean the subject matter is controversial or the applicant organisation is new or both. Funding a Vietnamese refugee group was once seen as risky. Today, the Fear and Fashion initiative is certainly not an easy option but the care and thoroughness of the whole funding process, in partnership with others, puts any alleged risk into context.

Not tackling any contentious issue would be even more irresponsible given the privileged position of the independent funder. CPF could reflect on how risk-free funding in London is, and be grateful it has not had to wrestle with funding in Northern Ireland over the past 30 years.

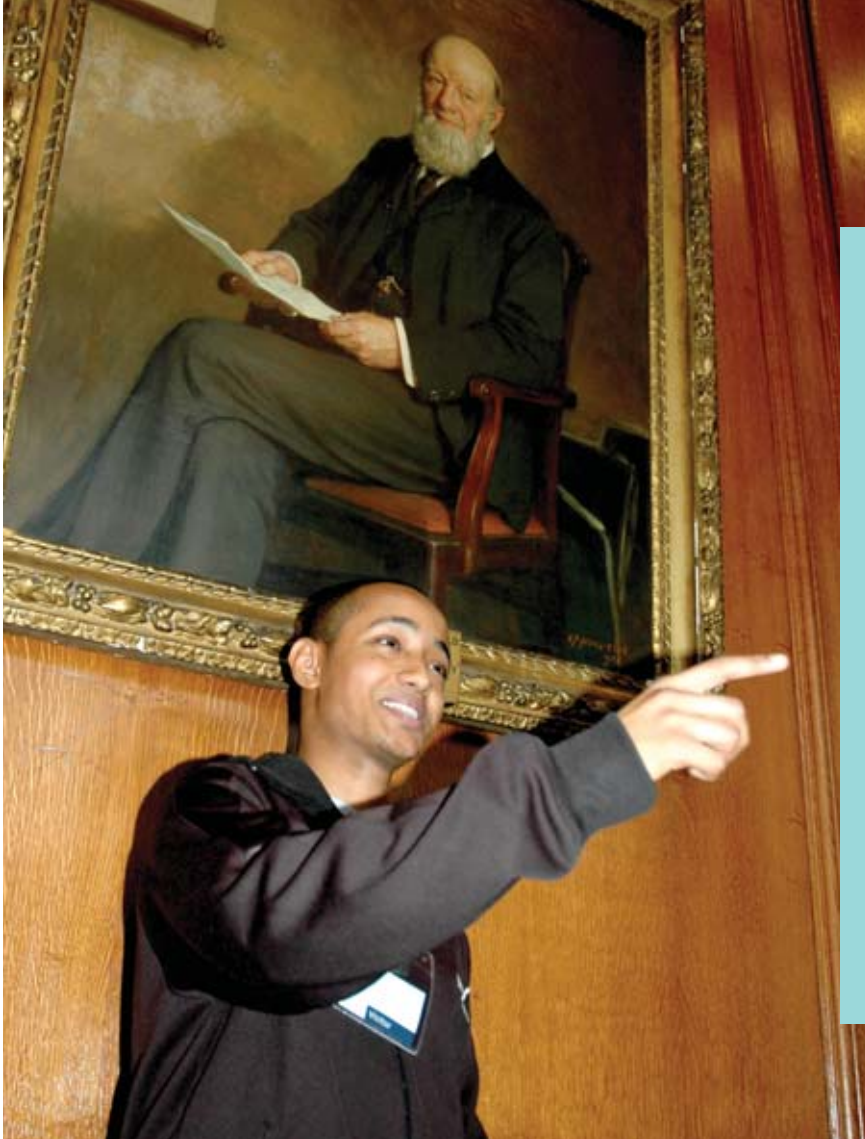
Risky is an ill-defined term and contains at least two elements and any debate about risk needs to separate them out. An organisation may be new and has not yet received any grant. It is unproven, so a grant to it carries some risk. But all work has to start somewhere and good assessment processes are more than capable of weeding out the foolhardy from the bold and enterprising.

In the second element, the word risk is in effect a substitute for ‘we don’t like these people’ or in old fashioned language ‘they are undeserving’. The latter is clearly the more sinister and worrying.

Key points

- ▶ The closer one comes to a problem and the more one sees of the organisations working to resolve it, the less risky it becomes.
- ▶ Independent charitable funders have a vital role to play as they are free from some public accountability constraints.
- ▶ Assessment can reduce the more obvious risks – care and thoroughness in the funding process puts any alleged risk into context.





One often-overlooked group, which suffers social exclusion, is young men aged 18-30. A significant number, many from black and minority ethnic communities, are marginalised and disaffected. The Young Men's project was an alliance funded by SPF and John Lyon's Charity, which helped refugees improve their spoken English and communication skills, and young Bangladeshi men to attain higher self-worth and gain higher aspirations in life and employment. Both groups comprised people 'beneath the radar' who were difficult to find and difficult to help.

The project – which was described in the report *Touching the margins* – showed how independent foundations, working in partnership with voluntary organisations, could work together and break new ground. The report was launched at a seminar where participants related how they had gained from the project.

7 Funding dissent

As already indicated, some causes are less popular than others, but some might be seen as not so much unpopular as – also – controversial or risky, and where extra care is needed before charitable funds are invested. There are two aspects to this 'risk'. One is where the grant is made to address an issue which is controversial or even divisive within a particular community; the other is where society more generally, may view the matter as a risky and difficult issue. The former is, in some ways, funding dissent primarily because of the value clash within a community.

Had the suffragettes been able to register as a charity, it is intriguing to imagine what might have been the response of an all male group of trustees to their application. Even today, the Fawcett Society does not find it easy to raise funds for its far less controversial work. Yet within some of London's minority ethnic communities, and beyond, there are issues every bit as challenging for them as the suffragettes

were for the whole community one hundred years ago. The Foundation has sought, wherever possible, to engage with the dissenters.

In 1991, an application was put to CPF's grants committee on behalf of a women's organisation concerned with the terrible consequences of female circumcision. Women were standing up for themselves over the issue and, in an indirect way, requesting the Foundation to support that stand. The staff did not view the application as unduly risky but were very unsure as to how the trustees would react. The group received more money than expected from a predominantly male committee, due mainly to the impassioned support of one trustee who had served in the Sudan and knew a lot about the practice. The issue has, from time to time, had funding from both CPF and TfL and, although there is now legislation to forbid the practice, the battle is by no means over.

Funding dissent

Two issues that have come to the Foundation's attention more recently are faith-based child abuse and the impact of quat chewing on Somali women. Seminars on these have been held. As indicated above the former has become the theme of a special initiative, Safeguarding Children. The prevalence and acceptance of quat chewing for men means that the burden of managing the home, caring for the children and overseeing the finances falls to the women. Too much dissent could lead to domestic violence, yet it is not an issue that will go away, and the Somali women need support to find ways of tackling it.

The lessons

The principles underlying CPF's involvement in such potentially divisive community concerns need elaboration. The changes sought by the dissenting element within the community are not marginal but go to the heart of some

people's health and well-being. An independent funder can – even should – play a role in assisting to bring about the change, which is coming from within the community.

Funders are in a strong position to give a voice to the voiceless groups within minorities who are often the most oppressed and disadvantaged. It requires bravery to form a group and then go public by seeking funding. The funding approach should be encouraged and welcomed, even though the actual written application may not tick all the procedural boxes.

Flexibility, allied to support, can lead to a grant because that is just what an independent funder is able to do. The issues come out from the community because those in the community needing change, want the issues out in the open.

Key points

- ▶ The changes sought by dissenting elements within the community are not marginal but go to the heart of some people's health and well-being.
- ▶ Funders are in a strong position to give a voice to the voiceless groups.
- ▶ The funding approach should be encouraged even though the application may not tick all the procedural boxes.

8 Funding alliances

The work described above – and other initiatives such as the Refugee Education Unit – involved CPF in alliances with other funders. Sometimes the Foundation has taken the lead, while in others it has responded to an approach from another funder. It is worth reflecting on the benefits and the challenges of such partnerships

In the 1980s, it was rare for funders to work together to address an issue. Independently, they would sometimes find that they were all funding a particular organisation which had applied to them all quite separately: acting jointly was seen as undermining an individual funder's independence.

In 1988, CPF called a meeting of Vietnamese refugee groups to see how priorities might be determined and to discover the differences between the increasing number of groups. Only one other funder accepted the invitation to attend. Less than ten years later, funders were in partnership funding in, for example, the Refugee Education Unit. Such alliances have continued. CPF has worked with a range of funders on projects such as Schools Exclusion, Touching the Margins, Challenging Girls and Fear and Fashion. Any problem ought to benefit more from the combined resources and knowledge of a group of funders than those of one funder alone. However, it is rarely quite so

straightforward. For example, the evaluation of the Schools Exclusion project which involved three funders, found that the added value of such an approach was limited. Further, while the trusts were keen to engage with the project, their funding priorities were different and this affected the work that was funded.

There were also differing expectations. The funded organisations tended to relate to their funder rather than the alliance of funders. The external evaluation suggests that some of the problems could have been avoided if the three funders had put their money into a single funding source and that there had been a protocol of expectations.

Not all funding alliances run into such difficulties but work is always required to hold an alliance together. Two funders together – as with CPF and John Lyon’s Trust – can be effective. One funder clearly being in the lead role and acting as convener, minute taker and overall organiser of the alliance is of value, as with the Refugee Education Unit.

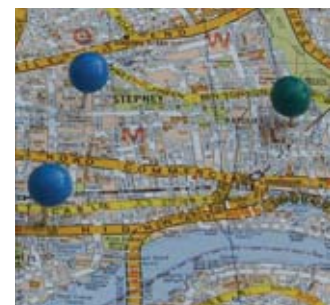
There is probably no magic formula but lessons can be learned from each joint enterprise. Interestingly, the CPF Grants Committee has asked for an evaluation into how the funding alliance operated in the Fear and Fashion project. It is keen to understand how the collaboration between different funders has worked.

The lessons

Anyone who has been involved in the mergers of organisations soon realises that it is the invariably different cultures of the respective organisations that proves to be one of the biggest hurdles to overcome. It is frequently subtle, hard to pin down but extremely strong and valued. Partnerships between funders have some of the same chemistry. Alliances do not always run smoothly and there would be value in developing guidelines for such alliances.

The combined resources of the funders and the strong desire to address a very challenging problem means there is much at stake so that being clear at the outset, even if it seems rather formal, may have longer term benefits. This is also true of all partnerships where a number of groups need to work together, whether or not they involve funders.

There is no one model of collaboration for so much depends on the character and style of the funders involved. Over the years, accumulated wisdom around alliances, should develop. Given the size and complexity of many of London’s problems it seems hard to envisage a time now when funders would only work alone. There will be occasions when an alliance is inappropriate though financial support from others is certainly needed. For CPF, two such instances arose when the trustees were faced with major dilemmas concerning its own assets, a topic covered in the next section.



Key points

- ▶ Any problem ought to benefit more from the combined resources and knowledge of a group of funders than those of one funder alone: it is rarely quite so straightforward.
- ▶ Work is always required to hold an alliance together... one funder clearly being in the lead role is of value.
- ▶ Different cultures of the respective organisations is one of the biggest hurdles to overcome.
- ▶ There is no one model of collaboration – much depends on the character and style of the funders involved.

9 Using assets

The assets of most funders are principally financial, but some do have other assets which, in the right circumstances, could provide alternative ways of achieving their aims. This was certainly the case for City Parochial Foundation.

During the early 1990s, CPF, whose asset base was then entirely in property, had two leaseholders which wished to surrender their leases. One was the John Lewis Partnership which wished to give up its Jones Brothers store in Holloway Road, Islington. The other was the London Federation of Boys' Clubs (as it then was) which no longer had use for the 12-acre playing field in Bellingham, Lewisham.

Just before the lease on the Jones Brothers store was surrendered, a number of major voluntary organisations had asked to meet the Clerk as they were concerned at the rapid rise in rental levels that was seriously affecting charities in London. Aware of CPF's property interests, they were keen to know whether it could find properties or make any of its own available at less exorbitant rents.

The Foundation's surveyor was alerted to this issue and when Jones Brothers fell vacant, he suggested that it might make a good charity centre if the trustees were willing to forgo the expected rental from a new leaseholder. In principle, the trustees agreed to consider a proposal. With the enthusiastic support of LVSC (London Voluntary Service Council, which wanted new offices anyway), a detailed business plan was put to the trustees.

The final approval to proceed was given after a lengthy debate. The proposed charity centre was not seen as financially viable by some, while others argued it was a good use of an asset, as buying a building for such a much needed centre, was prohibitive. The latter case won the day.

Many funders gave generously to equipping the Centre and CPF undertook to meet the capital costs of the conversion. As it turned out, the business plan covering the operating costs was too pessimistic. The **Resource Centre** was soon used to capacity, and CPF, sooner than expected,



The Resource Centre is located in the former Jones Brothers store in Holloway Road, a building owned by CPF. The John Lewis Partnership handed back their lease on the building in the early 1990s, and a decision was made to turn the building into a resource centre for use by voluntary sector organisations at affordable prices. It provides high

quality offices, and conference and exhibition facilities and has been used by thousands of voluntary and charitable organisations.

It is an example of how assets can be used to meet needs rather than simply providing grant funding.

was actually in receipt of a rent which had not been anticipated. The capital costs, however, increased three-fold, partly because of the high quality of the refurbishment which has stood the test of time.

Eventually, what made it all work was the full backing of the trustees once the go-ahead was given, the partnership between CPF and LVSC, the involvement of very business-like trustees at all stages, the quality of the Centre manager, and the immediate success from the day it opened. Here and there luck played a part, but commitment and hard work were more the bedrock of the success.

The site at Bellingham, though now a flagship project, had a much more chequered development. The playing fields had been bought in 1932 specifically for the London Federation of Boys' Clubs at a time when CPF began providing recreation sites for the then polytechnics. What was developed on those sites is a history in itself and only the essential elements can be drawn out here.

These playing fields were unusual in that they were in an inner city borough with estates on all sides, whereas CPF's other playing fields were all in leafy suburbs, with little or no local community on hand. All the leaseholders were, in fact, indicating their intention to surrender their leases. A sub-committee was formed to advise on what should be done with them.

But once members of the local community in Bellingham heard that the Federation was leaving the site, they asked for a meeting with the Clerk and expressed the strong opinion that they should in some way be allowed to manage it. This desire was fuelled by the fact that, since 1932, the Federation had not given any local teams access to the playing fields.

Such a bottom-up approach was encouraged and a local board formed, building on the already established social club. Problems soon arose as, in reality, there was not the depth of management experience to manage the whole site. The Foundation became more involved and a new structure was created with the CPF

having overall control. Some improvements were made but the dilapidated buildings and long the history of local community exclusion proved to be enormous obstacles.

The site needed major improvement with a greater range of activities. Consultation and funding exploration began.

The trustees visited the site and were able to see at first hand the location and the run-down state of the buildings. The breakthrough came when it was clear that improvements were never going to be the answer and that what was needed was wholesale demolition and a totally new sports centre. Once proposed, it was obvious that was the road to take.

The potential was clear provided that, at all times, the needs of the local community were taken into consideration. The last thing that was wanted was a wonderful new facility that was too expensive for the local people to use, so all business plans had to factor in reduced fees for Bellingham residents.

With financial and organisational support from CPF, the local authority and major funders such as Sport England, were approached were – with specialist advice from the latter also being crucial. In April 2004, the **Bellingham Leisure and Lifestyle Centre** opened, managed by Greenwich Leisure, whose challenging task is to ensure long term financial viability with continuing local community commitments.

Much still needs to be done but it is still early days. Outreach to the community will be necessary to draw in groups such as elderly people. Regular communication as to just what the centre offers, is always going to be needed. Regenerating an area is more than new buildings, valuable though they are: local people have to see that such facilities are for them and memories of exclusion die hard.

The Foundation's own commitment to the area has continued. It had always been concerned that when the new Centre was built, it had meant the displacement of a long-established youth club. A corner of the playing fields was earmarked for a new





Bellingham, in Lewisham, was the location of one of several playing fields provided by City Parochial Foundation in the 1930s, at a time when public recreation facilities were rare in London. By the 1990s, the facilities were outdated and no longer required by the tenants at that time. Eventually, the decision was made to rebuild with support of a range of funders, and a state-of-the-art centre now provides a wide range of activities, while a new youth club has also been built. An important emphasis has been to ensure that prices are set to ensure they are affordable to the local community.

In September 2007, a report – *Bellingham community project: regeneration in action* – was published, highlighting the development of the centre and the wider community action with which CPF has been involved in the area. It described what lessons had been learned during the development.

The report was launched at an event held at the centre, at which members of the youth club performed a street dance (pictured).



youth club and that facility was opened in 2007.

Throughout the trustees wanted to be sure that the development of the Bellingham site would benefit the local community. Would they know in, say, ten years time that it had? Such legitimate concerns raise the much wider and vexed issue of monitoring and evaluation, the subject of the next chapter.

The lessons

Funding over a longer period is not simply a question of annual cheque writing, but it may well test the nerve of the funder. A three year project may raise awkward issues but the dilemma is not often whether to pull out or not. Projects such as the development of the site at Bellingham continually required the trustees to hold their nerve, trust to their long term aims and yet act in a financially responsible way. To date, they were right to do so but the uncertainty of the eventual outcome still has to be acknowledged.

Bellingham demonstrated the great difficulties in trying to combine community involvement and community regeneration with the management of a large scale capital investment. It was a twin track approach that nearly derailed the whole enterprise.

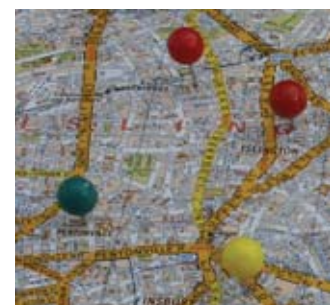
Vast amounts of staff time and energy had to be spent over several years to prevent disasters and to reassure trustees that there was every chance of a positive outcome. This process was helped enormously by the fact that the on-site manager remained in post the whole time. Had that not been the case, the history in Bellingham might have been very different.

For trustees and staff the setting-up of a new organisation to fill an identified gap demands more time and energy than predicted. Knowing when to take that route rather than rely on established charities, is not an exact science and it would be hard to lay down criteria for one route or another. Not losing control of CPF's assets was the crucial factor in the cases of the Resource Centre and Bellingham.

The Resource Centre was a huge risk as well, but resulted in a scheme which has been a success all round. It is highly valued by its users and has undoubtedly benefited many charities and voluntary organisations, enabling them to reduce costs and thus leave more of their resources for the vital work they are doing.

There were several important factors here which contributed to the success: trustees held their nerve; key staff stayed throughout, and the whole approach was very business-like, although the charities benefited through getting a good deal. Led by John Udal, a trustee with the right business acumen, meant that it had a rigorous business plan, and there was never any question that money would be simply thrown at the centre.

As stressed at the beginning, not many funders will find themselves in a similar situation as CPF. However, others do occasionally own buildings or land, maybe as a result of being left them in a bequest. Disposal by sale, or commercial use to provide a steady financial return may often be the most appropriate ways of using that asset. But the CPF experience does suggest that there other ways of using them could perhaps be considered as one of the options.



Key points

- ▶ Funding over a longer period may well test the nerve of the funder.
- ▶ For trustees and staff the setting-up of a new organisation demands more time and energy than predicted. Knowing when to take that route is not an exact science and it would be hard to lay down criteria for one route or another.

10 Monitoring and evaluation

In 1987, at his first meeting, a new trustee asked the Clerk whether he could show that the Foundation had helped one single poor person in London. It was politely put, but the sub-text of the question was clear: though staff are busy, and worthy though the causes are, can we point to any evidence that the assistance given to the poor of London is effective? It would not have been a satisfactory answer to say that no other funders did any evaluation, or that it was difficult to prove.

Whatever the trustee intended, he stimulated a sustained effort to try to incorporate monitoring and evaluation into the work, beginning, in 1990, with the formation, of a monitoring sub-committee (which, of course, he had no option but to join). It was soon realised that if monitoring was to be other than spasmodic, a monitoring officer was required. Thus in 1991, one of the first in-house monitoring and evaluation officers in the funding sector, was appointed.

A system was developed which included basic monitoring of grants made, assisting groups to self-evaluate their work, modest in-house evaluations on selected areas, and commissioning of independent evaluations.

The early monitoring discussions drew attention to some core problems which are still valid nearly twenty years later. Whatever the data collected, someone has to read it and draw lessons from it for future funding. There is frequently a danger of amassing too much information which is unusable. Monitoring demands from a funder need to be commensurate with the grant made and also not impose undue burdens on hard-pressed service providers. This is especially the case when there are several funders of an organisation all of whom may have different monitoring systems.

Monitoring is not inspection. Independent evaluations cost money, but they are essential and need to be incorporated from the start of any major initiative.

Much of this has been acted on. For example, £63,000 was allocated for evaluation and learning in the project on Preventing Racist Violence. The notion of 'learning', as part of the evaluation process, is an important new step.

What funders constantly wrestle with are two key challenges: the complexity of much of the work undertaken by the beneficiaries, and the time needed for any agreed outcomes to be seen. The former is not an argument for inaction, but it means it is essential for the groups to say, ideally on a visit, what their desired outcomes are, and not create them because that is what the funder's form demands. The latter is even more critical, as significant changes in the field of social welfare do not occur rapidly.

If much longer periods are needed for effective evaluation, then this may have implications for funding periods too. Some longer term evaluation is possible as, for example, the ten year follow-up of the first



In its first year in operation, 184 groups received grants from Trust for London. On the tenth anniversary, efforts were made to track them down. It turned out that three out of four were still in operation, showing that small community groups and representatives from many of these attended a reception at The Guildhall to celebrate – some of them are shown here.

The full story of the first ten years of Trust for London was recorded in *Trusting in the Community 1988-1998*.

184 groups funded by the Trust in 1988. After much detective work, all but seven were traced and 68% were still operational with a further 6.5% having merged with other organisations. This was evaluation that was very valuable in confirming the whole funding approach of the Trust. The early critics (larger voluntary bodies) of the Trust had regarded it as unproductive to fund the small groups who did not, it was argued, have any staying power.

The lessons

The scope and value of monitoring and evaluation is now demonstrated in the major reports on the topic that go to the full trustee body. It is not an add-on or tucked away in a sub-committee but built into the funding guidelines for 2007-11. As indicated above, learning is now part of the overall task. The work here will be to organise learning seminars, bringing together organisations working in a particular field in order to “share, learn and reflect on practice”. Staff, trustees and other funders will be invited. Such learning seminars may lead to special initiatives.

This approach serves to emphasise how the total policy on monitoring and evaluation is to dig out the knowledge that is there in organisations, to learn from mistakes, to gather data and to share information. This all recognises that in tackling difficult social problems, there is a potential goldmine of information available to funders from their beneficiaries and that it is irresponsible to ignore it. There is, in effect, a social policy bank. But who draws out from it?

The Foundation is not an isolated body. It works in London and relates to other funders, local authorities, hundreds of charities, government task forces and others. What the Foundation learns cannot stay locked inside its filing cabinets. It wants to learn but it also wants to share that learning. Even more importantly as its current policy papers make clear “it is committed to increasing its influence and making a greater contribution to the knowledge-base on poverty and related social issues in London”. How might it seek to influence significant others?



Key points

- ▶ Monitoring demands should not impose undue burdens on hard-pressed service providers.
- ▶ It is essential for the groups to say what their desired outcomes are and not create them because that is what the funder's form demands.
- ▶ Policy on monitoring and evaluation is to dig out the knowledge that is there in organisations, to learn from mistakes, to gather data and to share information.
- ▶ There is a potential goldmine of information available to funders from their beneficiaries and it is irresponsible to ignore it.

11 Influencing

This, too, is an area that should be subject to evaluation. Indeed, CPF has sought to find ways of evaluating policy change, which is as fundamental an area as any in terms of influencing others for the benefit of the poor of London. Are there ways of bringing about change that are not simply geared to the size of the grant, which is what the American experience suggests?

This is a hugely challenging area. For example, in August 2007, there was public debate about the effectiveness of NSPCC's £250m Full Stop campaign, and whether it had led to a reduction in child abuse. What is certain is that clear cut answers on these kind of issues are not to hand.

Sometimes an historical perspective is required when looking at charities' efforts to effect change. Over 40 years the carers'

Influencing movement has had a huge impact in terms of policy, legislation, financial benefits, public recognition and direct service provision. Carers UK and its predecessor bodies, beginning in 1966, have not yet spent £250m.

Incidentally, to revert to the earlier discussion around success and failure, it is worth noting that the first ever grant to the founding carer charity, The National Council for the Single Woman and her Dependants, was made by the Carnegie Foundation (after much correspondence and deliberation) while the CPF rejected the application. The latter made amends five years later in 1971 when it picked up the Carnegie grant. The grants were relatively generous. Both funders probably saw these grants as the right thing to do rather than be concerned about the success of the charity, though, no doubt, pleased that the risk taken had been fully justified.

In 2002, CPF's analysis of its grants for the year showed that 18 had been made with policy work or campaigning for policy change in mind. Given the value of such activity and the interest of CPF in bringing about change, the problem was to know whether such funding was effective. So the Foundation held a seminar to encourage organisations working in this field to share and reflect on their practice. What emerged was just how difficult it was to identify a clear causal link between a particular campaign and a policy change.

There are, however, indicators of success on the way, which could be used to identify relative success. It was also essential to have a good understanding of the tools to be used to keep a thorough record of the work undertaken. Above all, policy change is long term and requires detailed documentation along the way.

For CPF there were opportunities to develop coalitions between service providers and campaigning bodies to work on specific issues. A funder's influence is in the first place through others – the organisations funded by its grants programmes. But beyond that, funders also look for chances to influence the field, or indeed funding practices, more generally.

Reports are one means of informing the wider world of a funding initiative, its origin, methodology and results. CPF has actively developed publications and certainly there are lessons contained within them. It is now a far cry from doing good by stealth, but no-one really knows just how ideas are picked up between funders or between the beneficiaries. The workshops and seminars run by the Association of Charitable Foundations provide ample opportunity for cross-fertilisation, but the influence of one funder's ideas on another is likely to be quiet and subtle, not a public declaration on the road to Damascus.

Knowledge is passed on in a variety of ways and it may well be, at some later point, it is hard to be sure where the trail first began. It should also be said that if the idea is a good one, then it really should not matter who claims credit for it. It is not necessary or essential for any funder to be in the headlines.

Similar processes occur with the projects themselves. The Resource Centre has had many visitors keen to see how it works and, certainly since it began, other similar enterprises have been opened in London. The Centre, no doubt, encouraged other developments but it would be rash to declare a clear and direct link. The sheer presence of a successful model in any field is likely to be a spur to others but any more influence than that remains uncertain.

The staff at CPF always acknowledge that there may well be unexpected outcomes, in addition to the planned outcomes, in any funded work, and so it is with the Foundation's own endeavours. For example, in 2007 CPF published *Building Blocks*, an independent report on developing second-tier support for frontline groups. An 'open space' conference was held for voluntary organisations and funders to discuss the findings and prioritise needs. The conference threw out many challenges and suggestions: open discussion between funders and government; getting policy makers involved; reconvening to chart the progress made; working together rather than competing with each other.



Who now can anticipate what influence all this will have and even whether in say a few years time the origins of the impetus will be accurately recalled? But not attempting to influence the debate and bring about change is not an option and would, in any case be rather dull.

Another approach has been the use of small seminars to ensure the messages get across to the right people. In 2003, CPF with Praxis, produced a short report to evaluate the costs to the tax payer of keeping refugee professionals on social security, compared with the minimal costs of assisting them to bring their qualifications to UK requirements, and the financial benefits achieved by the state when they start work, come off benefit and contribute through tax and national insurance.

To explain the results of this, the report was launched at a seminar involving refugee groups and others concerned with the issue, as well as government officials, so that they could be made aware of the benefits.

This approach, alongside other studies and reports which have drawn attention to the difficulties, has led authorities in the health and other sectors to take the issue seriously, and look to remove any unnecessary obstacles in the way of refugee professionals.

The lessons

It is not easy to evaluate how and by how much a funder can have influence – it is clearly something we would all like to know,

and yet evaluation is almost impossible. As they say in the advertising industry, 50% of expenditure is wasted, but the big question is which 50%?

Influence generally takes a long time to filter through and to be recognised. Not everyone is always ready to acknowledge who or what has influenced them, even if they are aware of it.

Influence is not always proportionate to effort and intention. It is always possible to achieve the desired outcome – there may often be unintended consequences, and these can be adverse.

Asking former homeless alcoholics, now sober for 30 years, what influenced them finally to come off the drink, is interesting. Their answers bear little relationship to the planned efforts made to influence them in the hostels the author ran all those years ago.

Influence comes in many forms. Too desperate an attempt to influence can rebound. People and organisations do not always act in their own best interests. Resistance is not unknown. Why, after all, is replication so hard yet so eminently sensible? A project in north London will not learn from south London 'because they are different down there'.

Seeking to influence, publish and disseminate is the right thing to do. But it will never make the headlines, and its effects are probably the least understood or the most mysterious of any activity in the funding field.

Key points

- ▶ It is difficult to identify a clear causal link between a particular campaign and a policy change.
- ▶ Policy change is long term and requires detailed documentation along the way.
- ▶ The influence of one funder's ideas on another is likely to be quiet and subtle, not a public declaration on the road to Damascus.
- ▶ Not attempting to influence the debate and bring about change is not an option.

section
three

Looking ahead – and learning from the past

12 Setting the scene in 2007

With London as the area of benefit, trustees and staff have had to work with the practical consequences of the cliché – but still true – that the world has shrunk. Global is local and local is global. The movement of people is an increasingly significant issue in national and local social welfare, health and educational planning. In May 2007, the public debate around Roma children arriving in Slough was a perfect example of that.

The diaspora communities in London, with many of whom the Foundation and the Trust have funding relationships, are affected directly and immediately by events in their own countries of origin. Emotional, financial and social demands can be made on the London-based communities and any funder may well have to take that into account, even if it is only accepting the planned outcomes of a given programme have to be put on hold.

The reality is that diaspora communities are often under more pressure than indigenous communities. Events back home can disrupt their lives here; sometimes they may need to attend to the immediate needs of new members of their community arriving, which may disrupt their other activities in their current communities. Clearly, they need a lot of help and, above all, understanding.

The other side of the coin is the potential for the community organisations here to have an impact beyond London. Afford was an organisation first funded by the Trust in 1996, with one of the key aims being to bring together young people from ten African countries to find ways of contributing more to the development of their communities and in their own countries. Afford is now an organisation of some stature.

One issue that it has taken on is money sent to local communities in their countries of origins. Such remittances exceed the global aid budgets of the developed countries, but currently these financial contributions are tax inefficient at both ends. Afford is working with the UN on developing Remitaid, a scheme to provide a tax-efficient way for diaspora communities to make money available.

In essence, funders today, much more than twenty years ago, need to be aware of the local/global connections especially in the major cities. Such awareness enhances the capacity to play a role in helping community development and cohesion. The events of 9/11 and 7/7 were very dramatic reminders of the world stage and the impact they have locally. Funders are part of the scene, so that CPF after 7/7 wrote to Muslim and other groups to offer immediate financial help if they wished to do anything to maintain good community relations or assist individuals directly affected by the bombings. One group took up the offer and others expressed their appreciation but had no need of it.

All this is a very different from 1986, and is challenging. But there also challenges that are less publicly dramatic. Government and society as a whole, are troubled by many issues – for example, disaffected young people or troubled families. It is certain that over the past years, hundreds of projects to work with young people will have been funded by charitable funders. If, say, just 25% of such projects are viewed as successful by funder and funded alike, then that represents a vast reservoir of information that, at present, remains largely in filing cabinets. Information on the unsuccessful has its own value too.

Alliances of funders are now more common in starting projects. What is now required is surely forms of social policy alliances after the work has been completed, a true pooling of data, findings, hunches,

outcomes and real discoveries. The role of the independent funder has still to be fully explored. More is now demanded of the applicant: more should be required of the funder.

13 Overarching lessons

Whatever the discussions about influence, there is no doubt that over the period Trust for London has been in existence, lessons have been learned which CPF and TfL will absorb and which, disseminated to others, may in turn shift ways of working, quicken some developments, or reduce risks in others.

Some lessons have been referred to in the individual sections but some seem to cover all aspects of the work. Some may seem very obvious but that is often hindsight. Some are familiar and touch on dilemmas that have always exercised funders. Some new to CPF may be old refrains to others.

Funders cannot control staff turnover but can determine the period of funding. In the majority of reports on the initiatives referred to in this report, the funding timescale has been mentioned. There is a need to recognise the time required to have a new scheme up and running, in other words insufficient time has been given for the early development stage.

Three years funding may well be too short to make an impact. It may also lead to staff appointed starting to think about their next job well before the three years ends and the funding runs out. Funding may be extended but there is no guarantee of that. The drawbacks of three year funding is a lesson that all funders could act upon.

CPF's review in 2001 of its local area work suggested that, to allow for sustainability, the Foundation should consider supporting community capacity building over a period of ten years. Organisations set up by CPF and TfL, such as the Evelyn Oldfield Unit and the Resource Centre for Supplementary and Mother-tongue Schools, have been funded beyond ten years and the value of that has been shown.

Much funding has gone into mainstream voluntary organisations over the years and, in the light of this, it is worth reflecting how so often in the CPF and Trust reports since the 1980s, those mainstream bodies are not seen as being connected to or supportive of the black and minority ethnic groups.

There has been a fissure that has, perhaps for too long, gone unrecognised or certainly not been discussed. Some bridges are now being built. Funders need to question more the mainstream applicants on just what they are doing for the minority communities beyond having an excellent written equal opportunities policy.

There has to be a recognition of limits. Monitoring has to be proportionate. Priorities mean saying 'no' to some good causes. Funders are not good at everything. Success, if that is what is required, may be years in the making. Too much concern about success and failure may be misleading or at least need a little more examination as indeed do many current terms such as 'risky'.

A sense of philanthropic history is valuable. It need not go back hundreds of years, (though as the final historical note overleaf illustrates, that can raise interesting questions too), but it should at least encompass the last forty years or so. Much has changed and shifted in that time in terms of both policies and services and a lot came out of the voluntary sector. What has been really significant and why? Are the manifest improvements down to luck, charismatic founders of charities, sensitive politicians, inspired independent funders or some down-to-earth combination of all these and more? Historical reflections should be a primary source of learning.



Overarching lessons

Today, trustees and staff work hard to benefit the poor of London. Their predecessors since 1891 did the same. At any given moment it is impossible to judge what will have long lasting impact. Would the trustees of the mid-twentieth century be pleased that the London polytechnics became universities and reflect on their contribution over 40 years of funding? Will London in the mid-twenty first century be a more racially harmonious place and lead the trustees of the future to reflect on the foresight and generosity of today's trustees?

Attempts to draw out lessons from the last twenty years are well worth undertaking but need the caveat that they are limited to today, and later histories may surprise by ignoring what now seems so vital to us and emphasising what we have failed to mention.

That just confirms what a very distinguished chairman said: *"I now realise that grant-making is an art not a science"*.



Historical note

In the early years of the 16th century one new parish charity in the City had as its purpose the provision of new winter coats for three old men. Unfortunately, we no longer have the minutes of the charity.

In today's robust world of philanthropic giving, fascinating questions come to mind. Why nothing for old women? How were the three men chosen? How soon were all the old men in the parish provided with a new winter coat? Who checked on whether the coats were sold for food or even worse drink? How old was old? Were the trustees able to follow up their gifts to see whether old men with new coats were in better health in the winter than those without? How long was a coat meant to last? Were the coats so distinctive that everyone in the parish could see who had the charity's coat? Who knows – perhaps the trustees were content simply to be helping three old men once a year.

The income for this charity came from the rent of One Gracechurch Street. This property was part of the endowment given to the Foundation in 1891 and remained so until it was sold in 1997 for a princely sum. Some buildings in the City perhaps merit a blue plaque for services to charity!

Tim Cook

Appendix

Further sources of information

The starting point for further information is the City Parochial Foundation/Trust for London website www.cityparochial.org.uk. This provides a wealth of information about both organisations, including their aims, how they operate, their trustees and staff, funding priorities (grant guidelines), how to apply for grants, grants made and so on.

There is also an extensive publications section, which gives brief descriptions of specific programmes and initiatives and the reports associated with them, as well as more general publications such as grant reviews for each year and five year quinquennial reports. All these

reports can be downloaded in pdf format – and some as Word documents. Some are also available as printed documents from CPF, 6 Middle Street, London EC1A 7PH. Telephone 020 7606 6145.

Below are further details of specific projects and programmes mentioned in this report, along with links to the CPF/TfL websites, and to other external websites as appropriate. All links were checked prior to going to press. However, broken links can occur: please contact the appropriate webmaster in such circumstances.

If you need further information, please contact City Parochial Foundation or Trust for London on 020 7606 6145 or email info@cityparochial.org.uk.

- Bellingham** *Bellingham Community Project – regeneration in action*
The Bellingham Community Project and the **Bellingham Leisure & Lifestyle Centre** based on playing fields owned by CPF have revitalised the area and brought real benefits to the local community. This report describes records the history of the project, what it offers and how it is developing. Below is a link to the Centre's website.
www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications
www.gll.org/centre/bellingham-leisure-lifestyle-centre
- Carers** *Carers in London*
The report on the Carers' programme which ran from 1993-1996.
www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications/carers_programme_1997
- Disability** *Count Us In*
The Foundation's disability programme ran from 200-2005. Summary and full reports are available.
www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications/disability_programme_count_us_in_report_20002005
- Education** *Resource Unit for Supplementary and Mother-tongue Schools*
This unit was set up by Trust for London in 1997. It is now known as the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education and is part of ContinYou, a leading education charity.
www.continyou.org.uk
- Finance** *Financial monitoring of funded organisations*
In 1996 trustees commissioned a study into the effectiveness of financial monitoring of organisations which CPF and TfL funded, and any implications from that research.
www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications/financial_monitoring_2000
- Financial fitness: The benefits of training for small voluntary organisations*
This was a follow-on from the Financial monitoring report, looking at the outcomes of a training programme for 17 small groups
www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications/financial_fitness_2001

- General information** Summary information about various programmes has always been provided in the annual Grant Reviews and the five year quinquennial reviews. Grants reviews from 1997, and the quinquennial reviews *Capital communities 1997-2001* and *Investing in the people of London 2002-2006* are all available for download from the website.
www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications/grants_reviews_annual_reports
- Grant guidelines** Information on funding over the current quinquennium
CPF – tackling poverty in London 2007-11
www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/grants
Trust for London – supporting London’s communities 2007-2011
www.trustforlondon.org.uk/tfl/grants
- Mental health** *Mental health programme*
The report describes the lessons from the programme which ran from 1993-1997
www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications/mental_health_programme_1997
- Penal; prisons** *London Prisons Community Links (LPCL)*
LPCL was set up in 1993 by CPF and other funders to look at arrangements for visiting arrangements by families at London prisons. In 1998, it went national as CLINKS. This was not part of the penal programme.
www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications/london_prisons_link
www.clinks.org
Penal Programme report
The penal programme operated from 1994-97; the report describes the projects which were funded.
www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications/penal_programme
- Refugees** **Employability Forum**
The Forum, established by CPF in 1998, is an independent organisation that promotes the employment of refugees and the integration of migrant workers in the UK.
www.employabilityforum.co.uk
- Evelyn Oldfield Unit**
The Unit, which provides professional support and training to Refugee Community Organisations, was established by City Parochial Foundation in 1994 with support from other funders. Its first ten years are documented in a report available from the Unit.
www.evelynoldfield.co.uk
- Refugee Education Unit**
Established by CPF and other funders, the unit is situated within Praxis. In 2001 it merged with the existing Training Programme in Praxis to form the Praxis Education and Enterprise Programme
www.praxis.org.uk
- Refugee professionals – fulfilling potential and meeting needs: a way forward?*
The document, published in 2003, highlighted how small amounts of money can equip refugee professionals to validate their qualifications to UK standards and thus move into gainful employment in areas of shortage.
www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications/refugee_professionals_report_2003

Refugee Communities History Project

A project established by CPF and other funders in association with the **Evelyn Oldfield Unit**. It culminated in an exhibition at the Museum of London in 2006. The records of refugees are preserved on a special website.

www.refugeestories.org

Resource Centre

In 1993, the **Resource Centre** opened in Holloway Road, N7 in the former Jones Brothers store, a building owned by CPF. Below is a link to the Centre's website.

www.theresourcecentre.org.uk

Second tier support

Building blocks – developing second tier-support for frontline groups

This project ran from 2002-2007. An 'open space' conference attended by more than 100 people from the voluntary sector was held in 2007 to discuss the report: the findings were published in a further document.

www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications/building_blocks
www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications/building_blocks_open_space_report

Suicide

Suicide prevention – The Maytree approach

This was an evaluation of Maytree Respite Centre. Both a summary and full report are available.

www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications/the_maytree_approach_suicide_prevention
www.maytree.org.uk

Small groups

Voluntary groups – helping them develop

The report of the **Small Groups Worker Scheme**, which ran from 1992-96. This is not available as a download and is out of print: photocopies are available from CPF.

Staff

Valuing potential - New thinking on recruitment and retention of staff in the voluntary sector

This was a discussion document produced for CPF by Lucy Ball and Julia Unwin in Spring 2004.

www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications/valuing_potential_2004

Youth/young men

Capital youth

The report of the Youth programme which focussed on 'young people as today's youth, not just tomorrow's adults'. The Youth programme ran from 1997-2001.

www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications/youth_programme

Touching the margins

One often overlooked group which suffers social exclusion is young men aged 18-30. Touching the margins is the report on the Young Men's initiative which ran from 2001 to 2005. The report can be downloaded from the CPF site: printed copies are available from NIACE 0116 204 4200

enquiries@niace.org.uk
www.niace.org.uk

www.cityparochial.org.uk/cpf/publications/touching_the_margins

**About
City Parochial
Foundation (CPF)
and
Trust for London
(TfL)**

Established in 1891, CPF is one of the largest independent charitable foundations in London. It aims to enable and empower the poor of London to tackle poverty and its root causes, and to ensure that its funds reach those most in need.

Its sister body TfL, set up in 1986, aims to support small and emerging voluntary and community groups.

Occasionally, they fund research – as with this report – when it increases knowledge of these areas of work or other aspects of poverty in London. A particular interest is in work which has a clear application to policy and practice.

www.cityparochial.org.uk
www.trustforlondon.org.uk

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Charity Registration Numbers: CPF – 205629 and TfL – 294710