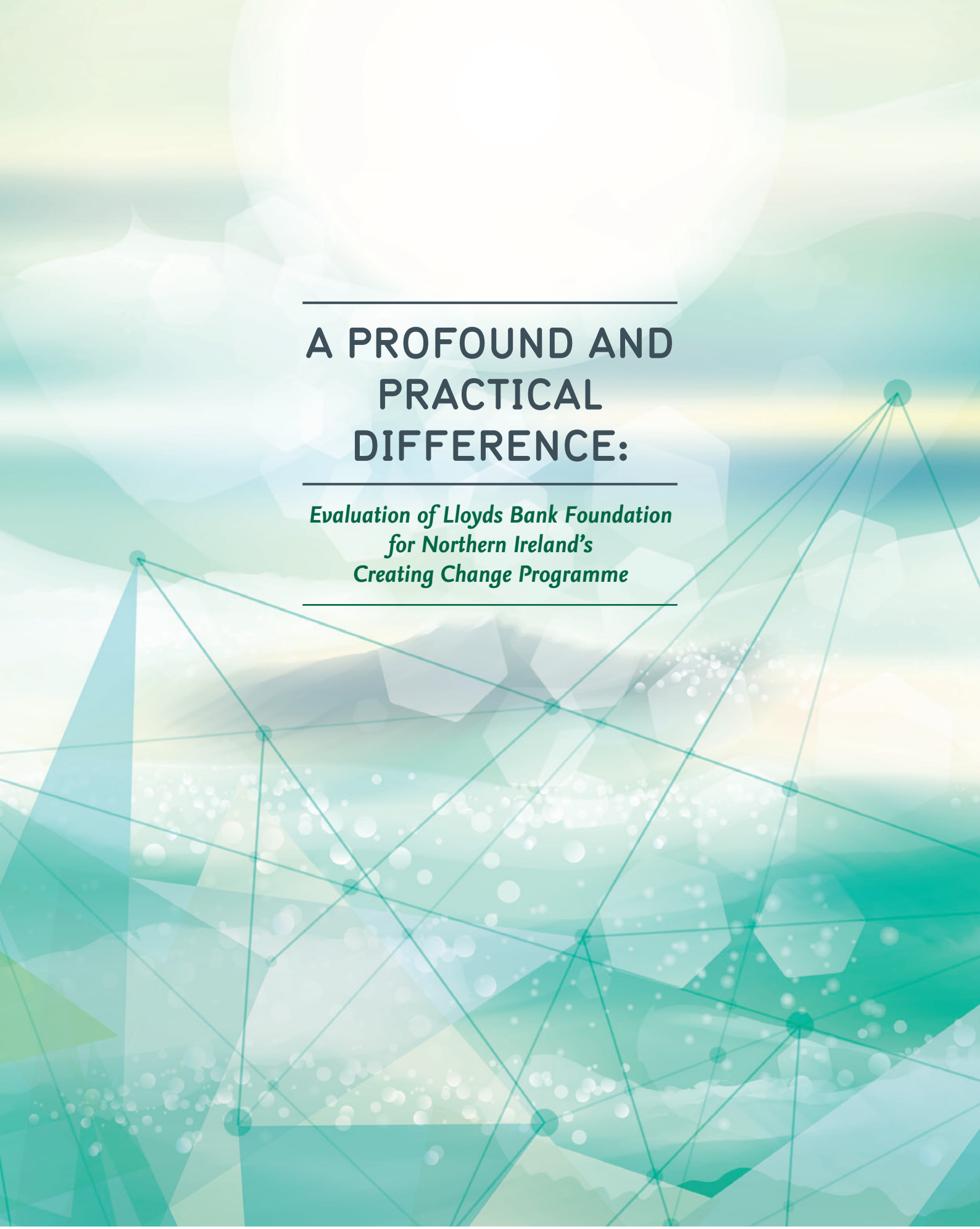
A PROFOUND AND PRACTICAL DIFFERENCE:

Evaluation of Lloyds Bank Foundation for Northern Ireland's Creating Change Programme



LLOYDS BANK FOUNDATION
for Northern Ireland

FOREWORD

Responding to the needs of the ever-changing needs within the sector is always a challenge for any independent Trust or Foundation and the design and implementation of the Foundation's Creating Change Programme was no exception.

At the time of the programme's inception, many small charities and community groups had found life quite difficult with reductions in European funding and what was often insufficient short term funding, making it impossible for organisations to develop strategically and work towards sustainability. This pilot programme was developed to address these issues.

Following the application process, which included a lengthy interview, 19 organisations were awarded £1,880,479 over 6 years commencing in April 2008. To the best of our knowledge this was the first time an independent funding body in Northern Ireland had offered such widespread long term funding to the voluntary and community sector.

Through the Creating Change Programme, the Foundation aimed to build a strong relationship with each of the successful organisations, providing financial and non-financial support including training and networking opportunities to enable them to develop and achieve their full potential. It was envisaged that this 'grants plus' approach would strengthen and energise those organisations in receipt of the funding and that the Foundation's investment would impact positively upon future sustainability for those organisations and the communities they served.

The Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) was commissioned to carry out a qualitative evaluation of the programme, to identify for the Foundation, the learning about the grant making process and practice, and for the wider foundation field, about the challenges and benefits of the model of funding and support pioneered through Creating Change.

We hope that this evaluation will encourage other Funders to explore the key learning points highlighted as a result of this research and that Funders might consider taking a more proactive and visible role in promoting the work of funded organisations, as well as the challenges and difficulties faced by their beneficiaries.

Consideration should be given to the most appropriate kind of funding and process required to achieve the desired aims, and Funders might benefit from being open to long-term and/or core funding, understanding that achieving change takes time (particularly on complex social issues), permitting the 'how' to change during a grant term and being open to the possible need for additional support to help make things happen may also yield significant outcomes.

The Trustees of the Lloyds Bank Foundation for Northern Ireland were also reminded by this report that it is extremely worthwhile to try to set aside the obvious power advantage the Funder has and to attempt to develop a mutually supportive relationship with grantees. This, we believe, requires five critical factors - a deep commitment to behaving responsibly, a concentrated focus on being responsive and useful, rather than interfering, a real appreciation of grantees' context and circumstances, investment of a lot of internal resources, as well as someone very senior, with enthusiasm and commitment, to engage with the grantees and finally, a willingness to trust grantees.

On behalf of everyone involved in this innovative, at times challenging, but ultimately highly rewarding programme, we thank you for your interest in our work as we attempt to provide effective solutions to enable those supporting disadvantaged or disabled people throughout Northern Ireland.

Finally, on behalf of the Foundation, I would like to acknowledge the personal contributions made to the programme by Sandara Kelso-Robb, Executive Director and Sinéad Tierney, Assistant Director. Their passion and commitment was welcomed equally by the Board of the Foundation and organisations within the Creating Change portfolio.

Tony Reynolds OBE
CHAIRMAN

AUTHORSHIP AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report has been written by Ben Cairns and Charlotte Hennessy, based on fieldwork carried out by the two authors with Eliza Buckley, Pat McGinn and Richard Usher.

Thanks to the staff and volunteers of the nineteen Creating Change grantee organisations for giving up their time to take part in this evaluation and for sharing their experiences and ideas so freely and openly. Thanks also to the staff and trustees of the Lloyds Bank Foundation for Northern Ireland for their time, hospitality and willingness to reflect.

CONTENTS

MAP OF CREATING CHANGE GRANTEES
06

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
07-10

01 PART ONE: INTRODUCTION
11-12

02 PART TWO: ABOUT THE CREATING CHANGE PROGRAMME
13-15

03 PART THREE: DISTINCTIVE FEATURES AND BENEFITS OF THE CREATING CHANGE PROGRAMME
16-24

04 PART FOUR: DIFFERENCES MADE BY CREATING CHANGE
25-33

05 PART FIVE: CHALLENGES AND RISKS OF THE CREATING CHANGE APPROACH
34-36

06 PART SIX: IMPLICATIONS AND LESSONS FROM THE CREATING CHANGE PROGRAMME
37-41

07 APPENDIX ONE: INTERVIEWEES
42-43

APPENDIX TWO: CREATING CHANGE PROGRAMME GRANTS
44-46

CREATING CHANGE GRANTEE LOCATIONS

1. ARC Healthy Living Centre, *Irvinestown*
2. Belfast South Community Resources, *Belfast*
3. CAB, *Strabane*
4. Cancer Choices, *Dungannon*
5. Caring Breaks, *Belfast*
6. Cathedral Youth Club, *Derry/Londonderry*
7. CO3, *Belfast*
8. Cookstown and District Women's Group,*Cookstown*
9. Dundonald Family community Initiative, *Dundonald*
10. Easilink Community Transport, *Strabane*
11. ECF Links, *Lurgan*
12. Educational Shakespeare Company, *Belfast*
13. Home Start Antrim, *Antrim*
14. Kids in Control, *Belfast*
15. Kilkeel Parish Bridge Association, *Kilkeel*
16. Learmount Community Development Group, *Park Village*
17. Newbuildings Community and Environmental Group, *Newbuildings*
18. Off the Street Community Youth Initiative, *Derry/Londonderry*
19. Replay Productions, *Belfast*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This evaluation of the Creating Change programme is a story about a bold, groundbreaking initiative. Bold, because at the time of its inception, 2008 and the economic crash, anxiety levels within many charitable funders about expenditure and long-term commitments were rising and, in some quarters, decision-making was becoming more conservative and risk-averse. Groundbreaking, because very few UK foundations had yet embarked on the kind of flexible funding embodied by the Creating Change model.

Despite our many and varied attempts to uncover more problematic and less successful aspects of the programme, our findings confirm unambiguously that grantees were hugely positive about the opportunities afforded by the blended investment of six year funding, grants plus support and an active relationship with Foundation staff. Whilst we were not charged with assessing the 'success' of this initiative, we are in a position to comment on the very significant contribution it has made to participating organisations and, in turn, their services and activities. Creating Change reflects extremely well on Lloyds Bank Foundation for Northern Ireland as an engaged, responsive and responsible funder, as well as on the grantee organisations, all of whom are carrying out exceptional work in their local communities.

THE CREATING CHANGE PROGRAMME (PART TWO)

The Creating Change Programme awarded a total of £1,880,479 in grants, investing up to £100,000 in 19 voluntary and community sector organisations for a six year period. To be eligible to apply for the programme, organisations had to have an income of less than £250,000 at the time of application, so the programme targeted smaller to medium sized organisations.

This was the first time that an independent funder in Northern Ireland had provided such long-term funding. Through Creating Change, Lloyds Bank Foundation for Northern Ireland ('the Foundation') aimed to *'turn the usual model on its head'*, influence *'the way foundations in Northern Ireland do their business and to affect how change happens through grant making'* and respond to the difficulties faced by small organisations of *'jumping through hoops for a one year grant'*:

'[With] short-term funding; you don't have time to get anything done because if you get [other] funding for one year you get the funding and then you have to start looking for funding [for] the following year; and you don't have time for any strategic planning or development work.'

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES AND BENEFITS OF CREATING CHANGE (PART THREE)

Based on the findings from an online survey, completed by 18 grantee organisations, as well as semi-structured interviews with 21 people from 19 grantee organisations, two Foundation staff and two Foundation trustees, we identified four distinctive features and benefits of the model of funding and support pioneered through Creating Change.

Feature 1: Longer-term funding

'It was really good to know the security was there. Even if it wasn't a lot, it was a centrepiece to build around in terms of our work and other funding. We have just come on leaps and bounds. The six years made such a difference.'

For many grantees, planning for the future had previously been, at best, an occasional luxury and, at worst, impossible. Six year funding created a precious opportunity to move out of fire-fighting mode and into a more considered, developmental space. Grantees found themselves in a situation where they could begin to think and act strategically. Creating Change was a rare opportunity to *'breathe, plan and think what the organisation might look like'*.

Feature 2: Flexible funding

The flexible approach adopted by the Foundation was built around being attuned to the operating realities of small organisations: *'We were able to get down and dirty with 18 organisations. Staff could learn about issues and we could dig deeper with them.'* In this way the knowledge base of the Foundation directly affected the organisations being funded: *'you have to get under the skin of an organisation, challenge them, grow their thinking. A funder needs knowledge to stretch an organisation.'*

In the context of changing beneficiary needs and shifting organisational priorities, the licence to make alterations to targets and budget headings was felt to be vital; for most grantees this was an unfamiliar way of working. What made it possible was the Foundation's engaged and supportive approach: *'We had a proper relationship, face-to-face, over the five years. They were always flexible – if the electricity bill was really high and I needed to transfer money from something else that was okay.'*

Feature 3: Grants plus support

The majority of grantees felt that the training courses were generally well planned and delivered. Some participants stressed the importance of *'compulsory'* attendance at the training courses: *'I do know sometimes you can work at your desk and say, you know, I don't want to attend the training, but the thing is, it is important to go to training because it keeps you updated.'* Linked to this, the participation of board/committee members in training was also highlighted.

Networking focussed on *'bringing organisations together'* to share experiences and exchange intelligence. From the outset the Foundation felt a valuable aspect of the Programme would be *'getting organisations in Northern Ireland to communicate more'*, enabling organisations to find ways to help each other: *'You often think you are the only organisation that has been through something'*.

Feature 4: Active and engaged grant management

Grantees were overwhelmingly positive about their direct contact with the Foundation staff, with consensus about the appropriateness, usefulness and value of communications and monitoring. Within the Foundation too, there was a deep commitment to developing mutually supportive working relationships with grantees:

'Two-way engagement, less about transaction, more about investment. But not only investing in funds, also our time. Funders and grantees can't be equal but we can work at making it more equal. People say we're one of the easiest funders to work with because we'll make changes, but again it's because we want grantees to do their work in their way.' (funder)

'The biggest thing I see is that Lloyds [The Foundation] work with you, not against you. Some funders will fund you but on their terms and they want you to carry out their project and hit their targets, which isn't what we are set up to do. We have a vision and we're running with that vision. With Lloyds [The Foundation] you develop your project and they'll support you in it and let it be the way you want it to be.' (grantee)

THE DIFFERENCES MADE THROUGH CREATING CHANGE (PART FOUR)

'As a result of Creating Change: confidence, profile – it all changed.'

Across all our interviews with grantees, we heard positive stories of new, larger or better activities and services developed as a direct result of Creating Change funding – paid for by the grant and facilitated by the duration and flexibility of the funding agreement, as well as the additional support and wise counsel provided through the training, networking and ongoing contact with the Foundation: *'It gave us the courage and the confidence to do things differently'.*

Grantees also highlighted five ways in which the Creating Change programme had made a positive difference to their organisations: generating income; building stability; achieving credibility; building confidence through trust; and leveraging funding – for every pound invested in grants for Creating Change, a further £5.80 has been leveraged by the groups.

CHALLENGES AND RISKS OF THE CREATING CHANGE APPROACH (PART FIVE)

The principal concern about the approach pioneered through Creating Change relates to managing dependency and preparing for exit. The Foundation adopted four risk reduction strategies:

- **Tapered funding.** 100% of grantees believed the tapering of their grant encouraged them to seek alternative funding for their work. However, it was unable to mask familiar concerns about the stability and survival of small organisations.
- **Targeted training.** The training programme was designed to build grantees' capacity to be more sustainable beyond the Programme: *'All of the training was to enable them to look at their future, around income generation, around fundraising. All of it was for them to survive without us.'*
- **Facilitated networking.** For busy organisations, struggling to meet the day-to-day demands of organisational survival, networking can seem like a luxury or indulgence. Time away from the front line often needs to be justified by the promise of a tangible and fairly immediate return.
- **Encouraging sustainability.** Considerable efforts were made to help organisations become more sustainable over the lifetime of the programme. Whilst our findings suggest that, overall, grantees feel they are stronger organisations as a result of the Creating Change Programme, for some sustainability remains a problem. This is especially the case for grantees who need to cover salary and core costs in order to maintain services that they've developed through Creating Change funding.

IMPLICATIONS AND LESSONS FROM THE CREATING CHANGE PROGRAMME (PART SIX)

In the final part of our report we turn our attention to implications and lessons from Creating Change.

Learning point 1: Exit strategies

In longer-term funding relationships, there may be a case for being more proactive in helping grantees prepare for life after the grant, for example, through one-to-one consultancy support for exit and future planning or, alternatively, adopting a more flexible approach to renewal or continuation funding.

Learning point 2: Rethinking 'sustainability'

For many small organisations, aspirations for 'sustainability' (which can often be code for the diversification of funding) may be slightly unrealistic, given the scarcity of funding bodies prepared to provide core funding or longer-term funding. For many such organisations, some reliance on foundation funding might be viewed as a perfectly legitimate element of a 'sustainability strategy'.

Learning point 3: Foundations as champions

Foundations might consider taking a more proactive and visible role in promoting the work of funded organisations, as well as the challenges and difficulties faced by many of their beneficiaries. Foundations' independence, coupled with the leverage and networks afforded them by their brand and profile, means that they are likely to be listened and responded to. This work need not be adversarial or political; rather, it can be seen as further expression of acting as a responsible funder.

Learning point 4: The benefits of flexible funding

The flexible funding model developed through Creating Change was built around maximising the potential of grantees to make a difference in ways that work for and suit them. It can be seen to have produced real and lasting benefits for grantees and the individuals, families and communities that they serve. For other trusts and foundations, the message here is: consider the most appropriate kind of funding and process to achieve the desired aims, be open to long-term and/or core funding, understand that achieving change takes time (particularly on complex social issues), allow the *'how'* to change during a grant term, and be open to the possible need for additional support to help make things happen.

Learning point 5: The principle of mutuality

How was it that the Foundation appeared able to set aside its obvious power advantage and develop such mutually supportive relationships with grantees? We would point to five critical factors. First, the deep commitment to behaving responsibly: this is as much an organisational value as it is a practice. Second, a concentrated focus on being responsive and useful: this is what enabled interventions to be experienced as helpful, rather than interfering. Third, a real appreciation of grantees' context and circumstances. Fourth, significant investment of internal resources, as well as someone very senior, with enthusiasm and commitment, to engage directly with grantees. Finally, a willingness to trust grantees:

'I felt over the six years that Lloyds [The Foundation] was proud of us. If someone believes in you, then you rise up to that.'

PART

01

INTRODUCTION

‘CREATING CHANGE MOTIVATED ME. CREATING CHANGE INSPIRED ME.’

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings from a study carried out between February and September 2014 by the Institute of Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) on behalf of Lloyds Bank Foundation for Northern Ireland ('the Foundation') to evaluate the Creating Change Programme ('Creating Change').

The evaluation had three aims:

- **To contribute to ongoing discussions and planning within the Foundation about future strategy and priorities for grant making**
- **To identify learning for the Foundation itself about grant making process and practice**
- **To identify learning for the wider foundation field about the challenges and benefits of the model of funding and support pioneered through Creating Change.**

1.2 APPROACH

To address the three aims of the evaluation we carried out fieldwork in two stages. We began with an online survey, completed by 18 grantee organisations[1], using questions drawn from scoping discussions with Foundation staff and trustees, an analysis of earlier monitoring reports and the key findings of the 2011 Measuring Impact report[2]. We then completed semi-structured interviews with 21 people from 19 grantee organisations[3], two Foundation staff and two Foundation trustees (see Appendix One for details).

1.3 REPORT OUTLINE

We refer to those who took part in the evaluation as 'study participants', 'grantees' or 'funder'. Their views are presented anonymously and are illustrated with unattributed quotations (indicated in italics). Where appropriate we indicate if opinions were expressed by a particular group of study participants, e.g. grantees. Given that this was a qualitative rather than a quantitative study, we do not indicate the number of people holding any particular point of view, except when presenting findings from the online survey. Any variation in total numbers to a specific survey question is due to a grantee not having answered that question.

In Part Two of this report we provide an overview of the Creating Change Programme. Part Three covers the distinctive features and benefits of the model of funding and support pioneered through Creating Change. In Part Four we cover the perceived differences made by Creating Change. Some of the challenges of the model are then discussed in Part Five. Finally, in Part Six, we reflect on learning from the Creating Change Programme for Lloyds Bank Foundation for Northern Ireland as well as the wider foundation field.

[1] During the programme, one grant (funding the Chit Chat Project) moved from Fast Rural Transport to ARC Healthy Living Centre – both organisations responded to the survey.

[2] Lloyds TSB Foundation for Northern Ireland (2011) Creating Change: Measuring Impact Report, Belfast: Lloyds Bank Foundation for Northern Ireland.

[3] In two of the organisations we spoke to two people.

PART

02

ABOUT THE CREATING CHANGE PROGRAMME

'WE'VE ALWAYS SAID THAT AS A FUNDER OF ORGANISATIONS, ESPECIALLY SMALL ORGANISATIONS, THE KEY PEOPLE ARE REALLY WHAT'S IMPORTANT.

INTRODUCTION

The Creating Change Programme awarded a total of £1,880,479 in grants, investing up to £100,000 in 19 voluntary and community sector organisations for a six year period. To be eligible to apply for the programme, organisations had to have an income of less than £250,000 at the time of application, so the programme targeted smaller to medium sized organisations. In the event, aside from Off the Street Community Youth Initiative, who only requested funding for five years, only two out of the nineteen grants did not extend over the full lifetime of the programme: Cancer Choices, whose grant was closed in year three; and Dundonald Family Community Initiative, as the organisation closed in year five.

This was the first time that an independent funder in Northern Ireland had provided such long-term funding. Through Creating Change, Lloyds Bank Foundation for Northern Ireland aimed to *'turn the usual model on its head'*, having previously been 'known for lots of smaller grants'. In particular, the Foundation wanted to respond to the difficulties faced by small organisations through the reduction of European funding and the challenges of *'jumping through hoops for a one year grant'*:

'All we were hearing from the sector was: short-term funding; you don't have time to get anything done because if you get [other] funding for one year you get the funding and then they have to start looking for funding to keep them on the following year; and you don't have time for any strategic planning or development work.'

And for Trustees, Creating Change provided an opportunity for the Foundation to influence 'the way foundations in Northern Ireland do their business and to affect how change happens through grant making'.

Core features of the design of the Creating Change Programme included:

- Funding for a period of six years.
- A mixed rather than thematic portfolio, primarily in order to bring together a range of organisations that *'wouldn't normally meet'* to *'see how it would pan out'*. The Foundation also thought that, within the design of Creating Change, a thematic approach could only ever *'cover pockets of groups'* in Northern Ireland and *'would always be limited in its reach'*.
- Finally, the Foundation wanted to *'add value as a funder'* by also providing non-financial support through training and opportunities for networking ('grants plus').

2.1 SELECTING THE GRANTEES

'As there was no theme or geographical focus, we let the best organisations bubble to the surface.'

In total the Foundation received 167 applications; 30 organisations were invited to interview and 19 selected as grantees. A subcommittee of trustees was formed to interview the shortlist of organisations. Inviting shortlisted organisations to an interview was a way for the Foundation to manage the risk of such a large investment in a relatively small number of organisations:

'To alleviate risk we wanted to see the whites of people's eyes, to see if people had energy, and commitment to the programme. There were strong applications on paper but in the interview they didn't have that spark. Others bounced into the room like Tigger.'

For the Foundation, using the interview to get to know the individuals leading the applicant organisations was crucial:

'We've always said that as a funder of organisations, especially small organisations, the key people are really what's important. It was [about] believing in the leader in the organisation – that they would have the ability to take it forward. We were funding the people. Everyone earned their place and from that the family of the Programme was formed.'

See Appendix Two for a brief description of grantee organisations and how Creating Change funding was used.

2.2 THE GRANTS PROCESS

In our survey, the Creating Change grants process was very positively reviewed:

- 83% (15) of respondents strongly agreed that it was clear and accessible
- 72% (13) strongly agreed that the application pack was clear and comprehensive
- There was particularly positive feedback on funding disbursement, with 89% (16) agreeing strongly that it was efficient and timely (in line with agreed deadlines/timeframes)
- 94% (16) rated grant administration as excellent.

We also heard appreciation for the formal launch of the programme:

'The Foundation began with a sense of celebration. The launch event was a champagne party and the message was: you are already successful.'

PART

03

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES AND BENEFITS OF THE CREATING CHANGE PROGRAMME

'I FELT OVER THE SIX YEARS THAT LLOYDS [THE FOUNDATION] WAS PROUD OF US. IF SOMEONE BELIEVES IN YOU, THEN YOU RISE UP TO THAT.'

INTRODUCTION

We present here our key findings about the distinctive features and benefits of the model of funding and support pioneered through Creating Change, under four headings:

- **Longer-term funding**
- **Flexible funding**
- **Grants plus support**
- **Active and engaged grant management.**

3.1 LONGER-TERM FUNDING

'The thinking behind it was: let's give a range of organisations right across the voluntary and community sector an opportunity to have six years of funding. We'd provide them with additional training that they want along the way, and that will give them the freedom to develop their own organisations.' (funder)

'This was a really strong opportunity to get a decent amount of money over a very long period of time. The fact that you're getting something for six years was something very different. A lot of groups were very excited about it and we were delighted to be in it.' (grantee)

A defining feature of the Creating Change Programme was the opportunity to benefit from longer-term funding. Our findings suggest that there were four main benefits of *'a decent amount of money over a very long period of time'*:

- **Relief**
- **Space to plan**
- **Service changes and improvements**
- **Access to other funding.**

First, a number of study participants noted that they experienced *'relief'* from the anxiety of continually pursuing smaller pots of project funding: *'we didn't have to worry about it'*. This is a familiar situation for small organisations who can remain permanently suspended in survival mode without longer-term or core funding:

'When we embarked on Creating Change, we were still in a precarious situation and not knowing from one year to the next: we've been caught up in yearly funding and trying to get it every year, which is a lot of work. So, six years funding was very important.'

'It was really good to know the security was there. Even if it wasn't a lot, it was a centrepiece to build around in terms of our work and other funding. We have just come on leaps and bounds. The six years made such a difference.'

Second, the security that came from the duration of funding provided time and space to develop, change and grow:

'Knowing they had that salary funding gave them the headspace and the time to develop, because they didn't have to run around [working on] funding applications day in day out. Instead, Creating Change allowed them to spend that time developing and coordinating volunteer services. I think that's probably the same across the board: it has allowed the staff member to do what the staff member was supposed to do.' (funder)

For many, planning for the future had previously been, at best, an occasional luxury and, at worst, impossible. Six year funding created a precious opportunity to move out of fire-fighting mode and into a more considered, developmental space. Grantees found themselves in a situation where they could begin to think and act strategically. Creating Change was a rare opportunity to *'breathe, plan and think what the organisation might look like'*:

'This money gave us a lot of intangible things. The money didn't pay for it but the time [saved] made it happen. The funding was a game changer in helping us to achieve our vision.'

'I would say it was in the fifth year that we could say that we were really running. You can take your time, you can do wee taster sessions, see what works and what doesn't work. Time was spread out. It's not that you would rest on your laurels, but just to be able to sit down and look at programmes – well, it helps you feel more secure and then you can put a bit more effort into it.'

Third, the security and the strategic space opened up by six year funding enabled grantees to make tangible changes and improvements to the substance and delivery of services and activities (this point is addressed in more detail in Part Four). From the online survey (see Table Four), 94% of respondents (17) indicated that Creating Change had increased their capacity to reach more people; 83% (15) stated that there had been very positive change in their organisation in responding to changing needs of beneficiaries.

Finally, a number of grantees talked about the knock-on benefits of six year funding. In particular, an extended period of funding gave other funders the confidence to invest (this point is addressed further in Part Four):

'You have security in the fact that you have six years funding, so you can plan around that. You can also use that funding to leverage other funding, because when other funders see that part of your salary has been paid by Lloyds [The Foundation] for the next six years, they're happier to get on board; and that's happened with us.'

3.2 FLEXIBLE FUNDING

'An organisation may start out with five things and by the end of the first year some might go ahead and others will be lagging behind. In terms of context, is what you are still trying to do valid? A funder's role here is almost being like a critical friend.'

In addition to the commitment to six year funding, the flexible approach adopted through Creating Change had a number of other key elements:

- **Investing in individuals**
- **Core funding**
- **Responsive and informed funding.**

First, as we have described earlier, the Foundation spent a great deal of time and energy on recruitment and were most interested in the individuals that drove and led the applicant organisations: *'we were very much about funding people'*. This approach is particularly important in relation to work done by front line, grassroots organisations, who may well have been founded and kept going by a single person, and who will always rely on the energy and commitment of a small number of key individuals. The Foundation's approach revolved around working with that reality; for grantees, that was both refreshing and liberating.

Second, a number of grantees highlighted the importance and benefits of having salary and core costs covered for a period of time – this was an integral part of the programme design: *'We specifically set it up each year that a maximum 60% could be used for salary so that the other 40% had to be used on either core or development costs so it wasn't just paying for someone to be there. No matter the level of funding, each year the percentage remained the same'*. For the busy and stretched managers of small organisations, this blend of security and space for development was hugely appreciated and led, as we have seen earlier, to the introduction and expansion of services and activities for beneficiaries.

Third, liberated from the restrictions associated with shorter-term funding, Foundation staff were able to respond quickly and positively to changes to the context in which grantee organisations were working. This flexibility was built around being attuned to the operating realities of small organisations: *'We were able to get down and dirty with 18 organisations. Staff could learn about issues and we could dig deeper with them.'* In this way the knowledge base of the Foundation directly affected the organisations being funded: *'you have to get under the skin of an organisation, challenge them, grow their thinking. A funder needs knowledge to stretch an organisation.'*

This responsive and informed approach to funding also extended to the grants plus element of Creating Change (see 3.3 for a fuller discussion): *'Lloyds [The Foundation] are really good at asking what you need. I felt like they were on the ball with shifts in the context here; the training has been quite strategic in developing our confidence gradually over time'*. For grantee organisations, this freedom to adapt and change course, coupled with targeted skills development, was a major factor in helping them to deliver different and better services. And for the Foundation, engagement brought its own rewards: *'We've learnt how to be better funders, how to talk to people, how to pool knowledge and ideas from the sector.'*

3.3 GRANTS PLUS SUPPORT

The principal purpose of the grants plus element of Creating Change was *'to build the capacity of the grantee organisations through non-financial means'*. This *'holistic approach to funding'* was integrated into the Programme through training and networking opportunities as well as more informally by the Foundation's style of grant management (see 3.4). Here, we summarise grantees' thoughts about the relevance and usefulness of the structured elements of grants plus provision.

3.3.1 TRAINING

'I've been in the voluntary sector for a long, long time but that training really concentrated my mind and clarified why we are in existence and where we want to go.'

The organisations attended ten training events arranged by the Foundation in response to needs identified by grantees at monitoring meetings: *'We always asked when we were out on monitoring visits what they would like to see. Sometimes topics were brought from the organisations themselves; if we didn't get something that was appropriate for everyone we made the decision in-house.'* Although most organisations were appreciative of how the Foundation sought their views on training needs, a small number did not feel particularly included in this process: *'We weren't that involved in topic selection so it sometimes felt like Lloyds [The Foundation] were ahead of the game there'.*

In the online survey, training was rated broadly as useful and relevant or highly useful and relevant (see Table One below).

Table One: Grantees' views about the relevance and usefulness of training and support

Answer Options	Highly useful and relevant	Useful and relevant	Some aspects useful and relevant	Not useful or relevant	Not applicable
Monitoring and Evaluation (2008)	6	9	1	0	2
Income Generation (2009)	6	8	3	0	1
Developing a Communication Strategy (2009)	7	9	1	0	1
Public Expenditure Cuts (2010)	4	9	4	0	1
The Tendering Process (2010)	7	10	1	0	0
Social Return On Investment - SROI (2011)	6	6	6	0	0
Governance (2012)	9	7	1	0	1
Social Media (2012)	7	9	2	0	0
Creating a Future – Innovation Strategy and Change (2013)	8	8	1	0	1
Developing a Social Enterprise (2013)	2	10	0	0	1
Networking with Creating Change organisations	10	7	1	0	0
Direct support from Foundation staff	13	5	0	0	0

Survey feedback from organisations on the impact of training and support (see Table Two below) mirrored the responses to the overall ratings set out in Table One, with Governance (2012) and Creating a Future – Innovation Strategy and Change (2013) training rated as having most impact on skills and confidence (although, from the options offered, survey respondents actually rated direct support from Foundation staff as having contributed most), and Public Expenditure Cuts training (2010) as having least impact on skills and confidence, but still some benefit.

Table Two: Grantees' views about the benefits of training and support

Answer Options	Confidence and skills increased greatly	Some benefit to confidence and skills	No benefit to confidence and skills	Negative impact on confidence and skills	Not applicable
Monitoring and Evaluation (2008)	4	12	0	0	1
Income Generation (2009)	2	13	1	0	1
Developing a Communication Strategy (2009)	6	10	0	0	1
Public Expenditure Cuts (2010)	0	13	3	0	1
The Tendering Process (2010)	4	12	1	0	0
Social Return on Investment - SROI (2011)	4	13	0	0	0
Governance (2012)	8	8	0	0	1
Social Media (2012)	6	11	0	0	0
Creating a Future – Innovation Strategy and Change (2013)	7	10	0	0	1
Developing a Social Enterprise (2013)	3	9	0	0	1
Networking with Creating Change organisations	6	12	0	0	0
Direct support from Foundation staff	12	6	0	0	0

When discussing the grants plus element of the programme, the view of most interviewees was that some training days *'inevitably'* weren't *'very applicable'* (in particular, Public Expenditure Cuts training in 2010 and SROI training in 2011) while others were *'spot on'*, with a number of positive examples of attendance leading to action:

- **The Tendering Process (2010)**

  'For me, as a Centre Manager, I've never submitted a tender. After that training, for the first time I successfully submitted and won a tender for £19,500 to my local council. I would never have even thought of undertaking it before.'

- **Social Media (2012)**

  'I knew this was something we needed to do better. We had a website [that] was running for five years, but it just wasn't moving. We went to the course, then went back to the staff and now we have a Facebook account that is active and is updated and is used.'

- **Creating a Future – Innovation Strategy and Change (2013)**

  As a result of the training course a grantee worked independently with the trainer to develop their strategic plan: 'We've just signed off our new five year strategy and this is the first time we've done our strategy with an operational plan. We've never had one so close to our goals and aspirations.'

The majority of grantees felt that the training courses were generally well planned and delivered; grantees appreciated being *'put in a nice venue, with a good lunch and someone who knows how to facilitate – and understands the context we are in – that makes you feel so valued'*. Some participants stressed the importance of *'compulsory'* attendance at the training courses: *'I do know sometimes you can work at your desk and say, you know, I don't want to attend the training, but the thing is, it is important to go to training because it keeps you updated.'* Linked to this, the participation of board/committee members in training was also highlighted:

'I think that requesting a board member attend was good because it allowed the board to have an insight into what my job was about and also their accountability and responsibility towards governance of an organisation – it gave them a more in-depth insight into what is community development. If it wasn't for the training I wouldn't have had the capacity and confidence to move forward with change, and nor would the Chair.'

3.3.2 NETWORKING

'Just being aware of what others are doing and knowing you're not alone – that's helpful.'

Networking focussed on '*bringing organisations together'* to share experiences and exchange intelligence. From the outset the Foundation felt a valuable aspect of the Programme would be *'getting organisations in Northern Ireland to communicate more'*, enabling organisations to find ways to help each other: *'You often think you are the only organisation that has been through something'*.

While specific events were arranged across the six years, training days were the most obvious and organised opportunities for networking:

'There is definitely an element that you are getting a lot of funding from these people so you should attend. But even more than the content of the course, by far the most beneficial aspect of those training sessions was the networking among the groups.'

'The workshops that we all attended were good for us and not just because of what was on offer by a particular facilitator, but because of bringing people together, sharing ideas with each other about what we were doing, concerns and what to do about them.'

Grantees also described the benefits arising from the *'supportive group dynamic'* formed through the training events: *'this wee group, our wee gang.'* This is consistent with the survey findings: seventeen out of eighteen respondents rated *'networking with other Creating Change organisations'* as either *'highly useful and relevant'* or *'useful and relevant'* (see Table One); while all eighteen respondents agreed that networking with other Creating Change organisations increased their confidence and skills (see Table Two).

When we explored the networking aspect of grants plus in more detail, some study participants were more hesitant about the question of benefits:

'It's not very often that you get 20 organisations coming together on a regular basis. But coming together doesn't automatically start a networking process.'

'Like any family, some organisations got on better than others.'

Despite legitimate questions about how much can be achieved with a mixed portfolio of grantees, all with their own preoccupations and existing networks, we heard examples of organisations experiencing unexpected, but significant, benefits from the relationships established through participation in the Creating Change programme. For example, an arts organisation found improved premises with another: *'we have a theatre space, workshop spaces and a communal area now'*. The relationship built as a result of being housed in the same building was a comfort during difficult times: *'to weather the storm – they were going through the same things with funding, training, etc. I honestly don't know if I'd still be here today without having that support during those tough times'*.

To support inter-organisational linkages, Foundation staff made *'a point of groups going to different places and visiting different projects'*; in some cases this opened grantees up to the potential ways in which they could support and learn from each other:

'There is another organisation within the programme and we've been up to see them and they've been down twice to see us – that was Lloyds [The Foundation] that suggested that. They came to see us doing detached work because they do it as well and wanted to learn from us.'

'We were next door neighbours, knew plenty about each other, but didn't really help each other out that much. Not that we were obstructive, but not a lot happened. Then we had the personal contact with the other manager through the events and encouraged by Lloyds [The Foundation]; now it works a treat.'

3.4 ACTIVE AND ENGAGED GRANT MANAGEMENT

'To be honest, I couldn't speak highly enough about them.'

Grantees were overwhelmingly positive about their direct contact with the Foundation staff, with consensus about the appropriateness, usefulness and value of communications, monitoring and availability (see Table Three below).

The most highly rated aspects of support/training from the Creating Change programme was *'direct support from Foundation staff'* (see Table One); similarly, all survey respondents agreed that contact with the Foundation had helped to increase their confidence and skills (see Table Two). This view was confirmed in all of our interviews with grantees, with huge appreciation expressed for the *'human face and regular contact'* across the six years of the programme. Five aspects

Table Three: Grantees' experience of the Foundation

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Communication and support from the Foundation staff was regular and supportive.	16	2	0	0	0
The Foundation demanded too much communication and feedback.	0	0	0	10	8
There was insufficient communication and support from Foundation staff.	0	0	0	5	12
Communication with Foundation staff was flexible and responsive.	13	4	0	0	1
Monitoring and evaluation reporting for the programme was excessive.	0	0	0	10	8
Monitoring and evaluation for the programme was proportionate to the funding we received.	9	8	0	1	0
Monitoring and evaluation approaches of the programme were useful for our organisation to learn from (our own and others') experience.	5	12	1	0	0
We did not have the time or capacity to reflect on learning from the monitoring and evaluation process.	0	0	1	14	3

of the Foundation's approach to grant management were highlighted:

- **Joint, annual setting of objectives**
- **Proportionate and useful monitoring**
- **Flexibility**
- **Practical and useful support**
- **A commitment to mutually supportive working relationships.**

First, a number of grantees described the annual verification visits (to review and discuss their organisation's aims and objectives) as both thorough and relaxed: *'they were approachable and flexible, so long as we had informed them along the way'*. Even when other funders *'are very approachable, you wouldn't have the face-to-face relationship you get with Lloyds [The Foundation]. You don't have the personal relationship.'* This incremental approach to the setting of objectives, rather than tying organisations down in advance, was a conscious and deliberate choice by the Foundation:

'Joint annual objectives are like a marriage in a way. Seven years ago, who could say where they would be in three or six years? Can you really set six year objectives? Surely, they aren't worth the paper they are written on.'

Second, although some participants found elements of the formal reporting requirements a bit repetitive, there was general consensus that the monitoring of Creating Change grants was not unnecessarily cumbersome and, for many, the process proved to be useful and valuable: *'Reporting and targets were not dictatorial – it was a joint process.'* In some cases, monitoring visits helped to drive projects forward:

'I just think Lloyds [The Foundation] take an interest in the project; they focus on the outcomes of the project and help you to get there.'

'Funders sometimes say 'there you go and do it' and then come back three years later and say you did not meet the target. But the annual reviews with Lloyds [The Foundation] really kept you on your toes, in a good way. Looking back, they helped to manoeuvre the targets to drive us forward and that was super.'

Third, grantees were universally positive about the Foundation's flexible approach to the Creating Change grants. In the context of changing beneficiary needs and shifting organisational priorities, the licence to make alterations to targets and budget headings was felt to be vital; for most grantees this was an unfamiliar way of working. What made it possible was the Foundation's engaged and supportive approach:

'Because they were with us, watching over us if you like, we were able to take risks and refocus, pushing where it felt right.'

'We had a proper relationship, face-to-face, over the five years. They were always flexible – if the electricity bill was really high and I needed to transfer money from something else that was okay.'

'We had got to our short list for interview. When we interviewed for the youth worker we found three great people. So I called [the Foundation] and asked if we could use some of our funding to take an extra person on. They agreed and that person is great and still in post.'

Fourth, participants noted that, beyond verification visits, grantees were always supported by the Foundation through informal phone calls and advice: *'They were only ever a phone call away. They were there to help you to make the best out of the money that you are getting.'* This supportive input was not just reactive, it also had a 'proactive intentionality' to it: *'The contact was so deliberate. They were very conscientious in their visits to us – they'd prompt you to reflect on the work and consider what we're doing.'* And it was also very practical: *'If we were stuck for funding for the homework club, they advised us about another funder or pointed us in the direction of events and networks or introduced us to people who have influence'.*

Thus, contact was extended beyond the traditional, formal boundaries and accountabilities of funder-grantee relationships. Grantees talked about the Foundation's grant management not just being reassuring but also helping them to reflect and problem solve. For example, the Foundation linked one organisation up with additional training on how to run a committee to bring service users into their organisation and establish a youth committee:

'It made such a difference. They [the youth committee] came up with diversionary activities and organised themselves to deliver them. It is a great asset for us because they are doing the same work as two or three youth workers would otherwise have to. They learned a lot about youth work too – one girl we've known since she was 12 and she'd never really say much but now she's heading up the committee. She presented to the board meetings and now she's hoping to go to university. [The Foundation] pushed us to do this work.'

Fifth, and linked to the point above, there was a commitment within the Foundation to developing mutually supportive working relationships with grantees:

'Two-way engagement, less about transaction, more about investment. But not only investing in funds, also our time. Funders and grantees can't be equal but we can work at making it more equal. People say we're one of the easiest funders to work with because we'll make changes, but again it's because we want grantees to do their work in their way.' (funder)

'The biggest thing I see is that Lloyds [The Foundation] work with you, not against you. Some funders will fund you but on their terms and they want you to carry out their project and hit their targets, which isn't what we are set up to do. We have a vision and we're running with that vision. With Lloyds [The Foundation] you develop your project and they'll support you in it and let it be the way you want it to be.' (grantee)

Grantees were clear that this commitment to mutuality was more than rhetorical. For example, one of the participating arts organisations was motivated by the Foundation's continual interest in their work: *'They have been to every performance for six years and that means an awful lot. It means that they understand what we're about and it also helps me in explaining the benefits of what we do'*. And for the Foundation, the reciprocity shown by organisations wanting to include them in their successes – *'when an organisation won an award or something, they made us feel part of it'* – was highly rewarding.

Finally, our sense from conversations with the Foundation staff and grantees that ending the Creating Change programme has left people with *'a sense of loss'* is a powerful testament to this having been a shared endeavour:

'We shared good times and concerns, we didn't fight fights, but supported, offered solutions and alternatives, and sometimes offered a shoulder to cry on, especially two or three years ago when the recession hit and it was a difficult time.' (funder)

'The day they [Foundation staff] left we presented them with two bouquets of flowers. We nearly cried and it wasn't about the funding, it was about the relationship that had been built with them as two individuals and we felt such a sense of loss that we wouldn't be seeing them again. They were always at the end of the phone when there were any difficulties.' (grantee)

PART

04

DIFFERENCES MADE BY CREATING CHANGE

'IT GAVE US THE COURAGE AND THE CONFIDENCE TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY'.

INTRODUCTION

In Part Three we set out our key findings about four distinctive features and associated benefits of the Creating Change Programme: longer-term funding; flexible funding; grants plus; and engaged grant management. We now turn our attention to specific examples of the differences made by the programme, first to services and, second, to the organisations themselves. Across all our interviews with grantees, we heard positive stories of new, larger or better activities and services developed as a direct result of Creating Change funding – paid for by the grant and facilitated by the duration and flexibility of the funding agreement, as well as the additional support and wise counsel provided through the training, networking and ongoing contact with the Foundation.

4.1 DIFFERENCE TO SERVICES

'It gave us the courage and the confidence to do things differently'.

From our survey findings about the difference made by Creating Change to grantees' beneficiaries (see Table Four below), three points need highlighting:

- 94% of organisations (17) indicated that Creating Change had increased their capacity to reach more people
- 83% (15) stated that there had been very positive changes in their organisation in terms of responding to changing needs of beneficiaries
- There were also strongly positive responses to the difference Creating Change has made to organisations' ability to advocate and demonstrate the difference their project is making to the local community.

Table Four: Grantees' views about the difference made by Creating Change to their beneficiaries

Answer Options	Very positive change	Some positive change	No change	Negative change	Not applicable
Increased capacity of our organisation to reach more people.	17	1	0	0	0
Helped our organisation in responding to the changing needs of beneficiaries.	15	3	0	0	0
Contributed to greater community cohesion as a result of the project.	13	5	0	0	0
Networking with other organisations led to a more integrated approach to the delivery of services.	5	12	1	0	0
Increased our organisation's ability to advocate and influence on behalf of beneficiaries.	12	6	0	0	0
Increased capacity to measure and demonstrate the difference our project is making in the community.	11	7	0	0	0

Presented in this section are eight examples of the differences that Creating Change made to grantee organisations' services. In each case, our findings suggest the critical importance of organisations having the freedom to adapt over time, without the burden of unrealistic targets or expectations. The spirit and practice of experimentation has allowed ideas to take shape and evolve, to the benefit of individuals, families and their communities.

4.1.1 MEETING DEMAND

Over the past six years **Belfast South Community Resources (BSCR)** has seen demand for, and use of its services *'increase massively'*. Throughout this period Creating Change funding has covered their core costs, including utilities. The Lloyds [The Foundation] grant meant that BSCR were secure in the knowledge that they were not under pressure to cut core costs; the difference that this made is significant: *'we now see 350 or 400 people coming through every week. Without the Lloyds [The Foundation] money they wouldn't have a building to come into, the lights wouldn't be on, it wouldn't have heating. The funding makes the rest of it work. It's also helped us to look leaner in ESF [European Social Fund] bids because 90% of the money would go towards delivery'*.

4.1.2 TAKING TIME

Creating Change funding was awarded to **ECF Links** at an early phase to support development and expansion of their youth activities. The organisation runs several residential programmes and drop-ins, and undertakes detached youth work. One such programme, 'Call of Duty', takes young boys on survival training and is facilitated by ex-military personnel, with the aim of supporting the transition from youth to adulthood in a positive way. For ECF Links, *'we've been allowed to do all this because we had youth staff that were being funded'*. The organisation stressed the importance of working with long-term funding because it reflects the way ECF Links needs to work: *'to do this work successfully, to engage young people, we need to build up a relationship, have a constant presence, build trust over the long-term. It's about being there. The Lloyds [The Foundation] funding fitted with this idea of working long-term'*.

4.1.3 PROGRAMME EXPANSION

With Creating Change funding, **Caring Breaks** have been able to expand activities available to adults with physical or learning disabilities, and further meet the needs of their beneficiaries (predominately the elderly parent-carers of adults with disabilities): *'before we thought we had a range of activities but actually it was a narrow choice'*. When the salary cost of an Events/Activities Coordinator was funded by Creating Change, the group were able to research new activity options, subsequently adding weekend breaks to the range of outings offered. However, *'some people were not signing up for weekend breaks and we wondered why. After talking we discovered that, for some, a full day was all they could cope with'*. In response, the organisation also started supporting day trips whilst retaining their weekend break option. Day trips meant that *'Mum and Dad were still getting [their children] home at the end of the day – some parents were nervous and apprehensive about a weekend trip'*. Having the choice of day or weekend breaks has made a real difference. And, for some, day trips have paved the way to embarking on a weekend break.

After weekend breaks, Caring Breaks found that some service users have become more independent: *'This may seem basic, but they are major achievements. Parents tell us that when they come back, they [their children] say they want to do this or that by themselves – deciding what clothes to wear, food to buy or what to have for breakfast. It's all about choice.'* This in turn means that parents or carers *'feel less fearful about the future because their son or daughter is capable of making a choice.'* Creating Change funding meant Caring Breaks had the *'courage'* as well as the capacity to try new activities to meet the needs of carers in the best possible ways.

4.1.4 INCREASING REACH

Creating Change funding provided the salary for **ARC Healthy Living Centre** to employ a part-time Chit Chat Support Worker to operate a telephone support service tackling social isolation (the service is also linked to a social car scheme): '*We were able to phone up 50 people every day and that meant that we felt part of it* [addressing isolation]'. As a result of the Chit Chat programme there were fewer missed appointments, due to the combination of telephone reminder and transport provision: *'What difference did the funding make? It was a matter of life and death for a couple of people (one lady had fallen and another had a stroke). We phone three times and if there is no answer, we go out there. The lady who had a stroke, the nearest neighbour is two miles away, so she would be dead if it weren't for Creating Change'*.

Cookstown and District Women's Group (CDWG) mission is to provide a *'Centre of Excellence'* for most vulnerable participants within the Cookstown District Council Area. They target single mothers, long-term unemployed, those with mental health problems and young offenders through vocational, non-vocational and recreational courses. With Creating Change funding covering staff salaries and running costs for the first time, CDWG were able to do what they referred to as *'rural outreach'*, and offer capacity building and development support to five or six smaller women's groups in the local area.

With funding for a Development Worker, **Homestart Antrim** were able to build on existing projects and run parent and child group sessions as well as provide volunteer home visits to two new geographical areas – Ballyclare and Toomebridge: *'the experience was already there of running the scheme in the Antrim Borough Council so it was only the matter of getting the money to employ another person to take that model to two different areas that had nothing'*. By expanding into these areas, Homestart Antrim is now providing services where there was no similar prior statutory or voluntary provision.

For Homestart Antrim, the opportunity to develop across different locations has allowed them to widen their expertise on tackling poverty, as well as strengthening their networks: *'it has taken us into another council area which meant our contacts were expanded'*. The organisation credits Creating Change for this opportunity to grow: *'We had money from Lloyds [The Foundation] in the very first instance in Ballyclare and that led to two years funding from the Trust to keep us in that area. The timing [of Creating Change] was perfect for this and we had a strong proposal to make there and then'*.

4.1.5 VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Learmount Community Development Group (LCDG) was set up by a group of local residents in the small rural village of Park. Creating Change provided the salary for the Volunteer Promotion and Recruitment Officer to develop and maintain a wide range of volunteer led services. At the start of the grant LCDG *'had a couple of volunteer led services already but they had this big vision [that] they were going to have various services all across the community'*. Creating Change enabled LCDG to substantially grow volunteer involvement: *'Volunteering [at the start of Creating Change] was new for us. That was what our application was about. It was to get policies in place, recruit volunteers. Creating Change has raised the standard of volunteering and our profile'*. LCDG now have approximately 190 volunteers and 20 volunteer services that have been created to meet the needs of their residents: *'it is what community spirit is about'*. Through Creating Change they have also started new projects including a guitar and fishing club for fathers and sons to spend time together: *'voluntary action in Park has built a thriving community – residents are volunteering because they want a community working together'*. The success of their volunteer involvement was recognised by a Queens Award for Volunteering and, in 2013, LCDG came second in the International Awards for Liveable Communities held in China.

4.1.6 BUILDING NEW SERVICES

Over the period of the Creating Change grant, and as a result of its contribution to the Project Manager's salary, **Kilkeel Parish Bridge Association (KPBA)** were able to 'plan ahead' and develop a new detached outreach service for young people. Through 'Nite Lite', KPBA has trained staff to go out onto the streets and work with young people to ensure they get home safely, with the option to come back to the youth centre. Nite Lite developed from the understanding that there is a proportion of young people who are not going to come into a youth centre without some kind of incentive or direct encouragement. Creating Change funding meant the Project Manager had time 'freed up' to set up the Nite Lite project: *'I was able to invest into that personally and develop it myself and then I brought in people who could be trained and run it properly'*. Nite Lite has grown to the extent that: *'Just on Saturday night, we've got two to three people on a team and one or two teams out at night, dependent on the demands … There'll be some nights where they'll deal with 50 people [Kilkeel is a small town of only 6,500 people] on the street between the ages of 12 and 20.'*

4.2 DIFFERENCE TO GRANTEE ORGANISATIONS

'A seal of approval and breathing space has made us stronger.'

Turning to the difference made by Creating Change to the grantee organisations themselves, we can highlight three key points from our survey findings (see Table Five):

- There were strongly positive responses to the legacy of the Creating Change programme for participating organisations, most clearly for increasing organisations' ability to meet the needs of beneficiaries (100% either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement) and in building the capacity of organisations to plan and develop for the future (100% either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement).
- There was less agreement about the programme's legacy for organisations' capacity to raise funds for their work. Three organisations (16%) neither agreed/disagreed or disagreed with the statement that Creating Change had resulted in increased capacity; the same number of organisations were also uncertain whether they were in a stronger position financially and operationally following involvement in the programme, with one indicating that they were not in a stronger position.
- However, 94% (17) of organisations stated that they had been able to lever further funding as a result of Creating Change funding.

Table Five: Grantees' views about the impact of Creating Change on their long-term outlook and prospects

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Our organisation is stronger financially and operationally as a result of participation in Creating Change.	9	5	3	1	0
Creating Change has built the capacity of our organisation to plan and develop for the future.	8	10	0	0	0
As a result of Creating Change we have increased capacity to raise funds for our work.	8	7	2	1	0
We have been able to lever further funding as a result of Creating Change funding.	8	9	0	1	0
Our organisation is better connected with other stakeholders as a result of the Creating Change programme.	7	11	0	0	0
Our organisation is more able to meet the needs of beneficiaries as a result of the Creating Change programme.	10	8	0	0	0

Building on these survey findings, grantees highlighted five ways in which the Creating Change programme had made a positive difference to their organisations:

- **Generating income**
- **Building stability**
- **Achieving credibility**
- **Leveraging funding**
- **Building confidence through trust**

4.2.1 GENERATING INCOME

We heard from a number of study participants that the Foundation's direct support enabled them to improve their understanding of fundraising. For example, one grantee explained that Foundation advice made clear the possibilities of income generation from activities:

'I'd be inclined to just run a programme and not ask them [young people] to contribute. But it was pointed out to me [by the Foundation] that we would really need to start generating income. For example, the existing Scottish dancing group, that's now self-sufficient [through charging], bringing in funds to get the facilitator, whereas before that I was paying everything out of the Creating Change money. Now we can show that we are running this but we are not relying on a funder, that kids contribute towards it. [The Foundation] would keep driving all year that you've got to go down this road, and there are projects I wasn't charging for which we now charge for.'

During the Creating Change Programme another grantee lost some of their core funding and, as a result, realised the need to focus on diversifying their funding portfolio: *'we've achieved this. We've moved away from a grants focus and tried more social enterprise'.* The Creating Change training helped them to *'focus and refine our ability to plan for the unexpected and to look ahead, to think about planning for an expanding membership. It was breathing space'.*

4.2.2 BUILDING STABILITY

Grantees also identified tangible financial benefits from the increased stability of their organisations as a result of Creating Change. One grantee, operating a telephone support service, explained that having secured the salary for an Advice Worker, Creating Change enabled the group to obtain funding for a multi-line phone system to expand their services: *'knowing that the system is in place, it has made us able to build up funding. Without it, we would never have been able to do that'.* The new phone system opened up the possibility for the group to obtain funding in order to carry out further projects. For another grantee, the stability provided by Creating Change allowed their organisation to build up reserves for the first time: '*We've been able to put away money that can be used to respond to emerging needs'.*

4.2.3 ACHIEVING CREDIBILITY

For most grantees, being part of the Creating Change Programme was itself a significant reputational asset. The imprimatur of the Foundation provided a kind of seal of approval and authentication:

'It's difficult to put a figure on it or a percentage because you fill in an application and you put it away and it's hard to get the feedback from that funder to find out why they didn't give you the money. We've always been told that it has been a big factor with a lot of funders that if they see a major funder on board, then they are more likely to get on board and part fund the rest of it. We accessed £200,000 from International National Fund for Ireland and I would say Lloyds [The Foundation] was a factor and input in that.'

4.2.4 LEVERAGING FUNDING

The Foundation asked the Creating Change groups to record each year the amount of monies leveraged, as a result of being involved in the Creating Change Programme. Information collected by the Foundation confirms that the programme made a positive contribution to grantees being able to leverage further funds (see Table Six below).

This gives a ratio of 1:5.8, so for every pound invested in grants for Creating Change, a further £5.80 has been leveraged by the groups.

Highlights include:

- In 2010 Caring Breaks was awarded a grant of £890,000 from the Big Lottery Fund to run the Natural World Challenge project, a five year programme. Caring Breaks believe that the Creating Change funding went a long way to demonstrate how *'stable we were. This is a good indication for future funding.'*
- In 2013 the Cookstown and District Women's Group secured nearly £500,000 from the Big Lottery Fund: *'I think it speaks a lot about the reputation of the organisation when someone has funded them for six years because they're seeing that they can fund this organisation on a long-term basis. They're not looking and wondering if we'll be around in two years' time so there is a certain amount of trust in that they funded us for six years and I think that has spoken a lot to other funders.'*

Table Six: Monies leveraged by grantees as a result of the Creating Change Programme

Year	Foundation Investment	Additional monies leveraged
Yr 1 April 08-March 09	£378,440	£1,454,500
Yr 2 April 09-March 10	£378,915	£2,411,986
Yr 3 April 10-March 11	£364,780	£781,636
Yr 4 April 11- March 12	£268,836	£1,695,332
Yr 5 April 12-March 13	£270,033	£2,118,816
Yr 6 April 13-March 14	£155,959	£2,154,538
Total	**£1,816,963**	**£10,616,808**

4.2.5 BUILDING CONFIDENCE THROUGH TRUST

Finally, we can highlight the positive contribution made by Creating Change to building the confidence and self-belief of grantees, principally through the Foundation trusting and valuing individual leaders and the work of their organisations:

'They acknowledge that we have the skills to deliver and trusted us to do that in the best way we can. I never had to think about what I said to them, in a good way. We've had meetings with other funders before that are [just] coming in and checking up on you. With Lloyds [The Foundation] it was always a real pleasure.' (grantee)

'As a funder to have that level of personal interaction with the individuals within organisations makes your job so much easier because they are not afraid to lift the phone. People phone me to ask how they should interact with another funder and I think that's really important that they have that trust, that they can phone here and have a conversation about what their problem is and take some advice. That for me has been a massive thing and I think that has helped with the management of it.' (funder)

For most of the organisations involved in Creating Change, this approach was highly unusual. The multiple elements of the support provided by the Foundation over the lifetime of the programme contributed significantly to both organisational health and well-being during a time of considerable uncertainty and instability:

'It's been very scary to be a small charity in this environment but the confidence that Lloyds [The Foundation] gave us made a big difference.'

'As a result of Creating Change: confidence, profile – it all changed.'

This suggests a virtuous circle, with the Foundation's pride and confidence in their grantees translating into stronger organisations, better placed to serve their community and improve the quality of people's lives. For example, one grantee described the positive legacy of their Dads and Kids programme: *'The friendships that were made through the programme have made a real difference to the estate. It was a space for relationships to foster that goes beyond the life of the organisation. It has had a ripple effect on the estate'.*

PART

05 CHALLENGES AND RISKS OF THE CREATING CHANGE APPROACH

'IT WAS A BRAVE STEP AND IT WASN'T EASY FOR US TO DECIDE TO DO THIS. WE WERE SPLIT A THIRD, A THIRD, A THIRD. A THIRD THOUGHT IF WE CAN'T TAKE A MEASURED RISK, WHO CAN? A THIRD DIDN'T MIND. AND A THIRD DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT.'

INTRODUCTION

A six year grant programme investing up to £100,000 in just one organisation was a *'totally new culture of funding for the foundation'*. The Foundation Board considered the programme for 'three or four years before it happened': it was a *'big risk to take such a large sum from the Foundation for one programme'*. As discussed earlier, the emphasis within the selection process of meeting applicants and 'seeing the whites of their eyes' was a key element of the Foundation's risk management strategy.

In the event, aside from Off the Street Community Youth Initiative, who only requested funding for five years, only two out of the nineteen grants did not extend over the full lifetime of the programme: Cancer Choices, whose grant was closed in year three; and Dundonald Family Community Initiative, as the organisation closed in year five. Given the inherent risks of such a long-term commitment in small organisations, this drop-out rate seems reasonable, despite some obvious disappointment within the Foundation.

From our interviews, the principal concern about the approach pioneered through Creating Change relates to managing dependency and preparing for exit. Below we discuss four risk reduction strategies adopted by the Foundation and their relative success for grantees:

- **Tapered funding**
- **Targeted training**
- **Facilitated networking**
- **Encouraging sustainability.**

5.1 TAPERED FUNDING

Creating Change grants were tapered as part of a deliberate exit strategy to reduce organisational dependence on Foundation funding and help them to identify and secure additional/alternative funding.

Our survey results show that 100% of grantees believed the tapering of their grant encouraged them to seek alternative funding for their work, while 83% (15) strongly agreed or agreed that this encouraged the development of new forms of income generation, for example, charging for services. There was more of a split looking at the future for organisations – 22% (4) felt that tapering would result in uncertainty for the future; 61% (11) disagreed or strongly disagreed that tapering created future uncertainty.

So, whilst tapering itself can be seen to have had a positive effect on organisations' attitudes to fundraising and income generation, it was unable to mask familiar concerns about the stability and survival of small organisations. And, for some, it would seem that there was always likely to be some kind of negative fallout at the end of the grant period, perhaps because of it having been such a positive, but atypical, experience: from the survey we can see that 23% of organisations were concerned about the future of their organisation as a result of reduced funding. The extent to which this challenge is both inevitable and unavoidable is discussed further in Part Six.

5.2 TARGETED TRAINING

Alongside tapering, the training programme was also designed to build grantees' capacity to be more sustainable beyond the Programme: *'We looked at what we felt was appropriate at where they were in the funding. It was always to be about areas that were going to support them beyond Creating Change, basically capacity building; writing tenders, thinking about social enterprise, getting to grips with fundraising. The kind of skills they could take on and use and, importantly, putting those skills into practice earlier than the end of Creating Change so they weren't left high and dry at the end. All of the training was to enable them to look at their future, around income generation, around fundraising. All of it was for them to survive without us.'*

5.3 FACILITATED NETWORKING

In Part Three we highlighted some of the tangible benefits brought about through networking across the Creating Change grantees. For some, there was real virtue in there being a mixed (rather than thematic) group for networking: *'I like the diversity and I think the diversity was good when it came to the training programmes because everybody was hearing things about different sectors and people were picking up ideas. If it's the same theme everyone knows exactly the same funders, everybody knows the same processes and I think it's good to have that range of backgrounds, issues and problems.'*

However, a number of interviewees expressed reservations about this aspect of the programme. For busy organisations, struggling to meet the day-to-day demands of organisational survival, with only limited time for addressing their own organisational needs and concerns, let alone those of others, networking can seem like a luxury or indulgence. Time away from the front line often needs to be justified by the promise of a tangible and fairly immediate return. For these organisations, interaction with organisations active in their fields or localities offered the promise of greater rewards.

5.4 ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABILITY

As we have seen, considerable efforts were made to help organisations become more sustainable over the lifetime of the programme – through the ongoing contact and dialogue between the Foundation and grantees, and training and networking. Whilst our findings suggest that, overall, grantees feel they are stronger organisations as a result of the Creating Change Programme, for some sustainability remains a problem. This is especially the case for grantees who need to cover salary and core costs in order to maintain services that they've developed through Creating Change funding:

'Sustaining this in the face of huge demand will be challenging.'

'Five years ago we hadn't got 400 people through the door so now we've got the pressure to keep delivering on this level. We had time, because the Lloyds [The Foundation] grant was over that many years, time to plan but the needs we are meeting aren't going away.'

'For us, sustainability is difficult because we do not have a 'product' or 'service' to generate income with.'

With regard to the challenge of achieving sustainability through alternative funding routes, some grantees raised the question of possible further funding from the Foundation: *'I think Lloyds [The Foundation] should let us re-apply for funding if what we're doing is felt to be important.'* This raises questions about the Foundation's funding guidelines which we will address in Part Six.

PART

06

IMPLICATIONS AND LESSONS FROM THE CREATING CHANGE PROGRAMME

'LLOYDS [THE FOUNDATION] ARE VERY AWARE WHAT SMALL ORGANISATIONS NEED TO SURVIVE. IT'S NOT GLAMOROUS, BUT IT'S WHAT WE NEED.'

'IT GAVE US THE SPACE TO EXPERIMENT AND DO THINGS WE WOULDN'T HAVE OTHERWISE.'

INTRODUCTION

The evaluation had three aims:

- **To contribute to ongoing discussions and planning within the Foundation about future strategy and priorities for grant making**
- **To identify learning for the Foundation itself about grant making process and practice**
- **To identify learning for the wider foundation field about the challenges and benefits of the model of funding and support pioneered through Creating Change.**

In Parts Three to Five of this report we have highlighted key findings from our evaluation about the distinctive features, benefits and challenges of the model of funding and support pioneered through Creating Change, as well as setting out some of the differences made to grantee organisations by their involvement in the programme. We hope that the learning from these findings extends beyond Lloyds Bank Foundation for Northern Ireland to other trusts and foundations in the UK.

In this final part of our evaluation report, we briefly turn our attention to two matters:

- **Implications for the Foundation going forward**
- **Wider learning about grant making.**

6.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FOUNDATION GOING FORWARD

This evaluation of the Creating Change programme is a story about a bold, groundbreaking initiative. Bold, because at the time of its inception, 2008 and the economic crash, anxiety levels within many charitable funders about expenditure and long-term commitments were rising and, in some quarters, decision-making was becoming more conservative and risk-averse. Groundbreaking, because very few UK foundations had yet embarked on the kind of flexible funding embodied by the Creating Change model.

Despite our many and varied attempts to uncover more problematic and less successful aspects of the programme, our findings confirm unambiguously that grantees were hugely positive about the opportunities afforded by the blended investment of six year funding, grants plus support and an active relationship with Foundation staff. Whilst we were not charged with assessing the 'success' of this initiative, we are in a position to comment on the very significant contribution it has made to participating organisations and, in turn, their services and activities. Creating Change reflects extremely well on Lloyds Bank Foundation for Northern Ireland as an engaged, responsive and responsible funder, as well as on the grantee organisations, all of whom are carrying out exceptional work in their local communities.

In thinking about implications for the Foundation going forward, we can offer three tentative suggestions.

6.1.1 CREATING CHANGE MARK 2

One obvious way forward for the Foundation is to initiate Creating Change mark 2, albeit with some adaptations (see below), in order to build on the success of the recently completed programme. In addition to considerations about investment levels and the wider portfolio of grants made by the Foundation, we would suggest that any decision about a successor programme would need to take careful account of two factors:

- First, the time commitment required by Foundation staff to make engagement meaningful. Despite the overwhelmingly positive feedback from grantees and the associated benefits for the Foundation, the time and effort required is considerable and is likely to exceed initial expectations and plans. With such an approach, there may be a small risk of too much attention being diverted away from other areas of work within the Foundation.
- Second, the composition of programme grantees. Although some linkages were made across the mixed group of Creating Change organisations, it's possible that more practical and tangible exchanges would occur within a group of organisations that were more connected through geography or function. (That said, it might be argued that collaborative learning may be more likely without the distraction of competition that inevitably comes with less mixed groups.) Either way, the Foundation might want to consider the possibility of targeting particular organisations – criteria for inclusion

in a similar future programme might include an organisation's potential to achieve significant change for specific groups of beneficiaries or in particular geographical areas. If such an approach were taken, it would be important to avoid becoming too rigid or prescriptive and undermining the essence of the model developed through Creating Change.

6.1.2 GRANTS PLUS

From our earlier work on grants plus[4], we can identify a number of critical success factors which the Foundation might want to take account of when thinking about any future initiatives in this area (either through a successor programme to Creating Change or more widely):

- In order to inform thinking about the focus and method of additional support, funders need to think about its purpose. In particular, is it to strengthen individuals, projects, organisations, or a combination of all three?
- Interventions designed to support the stability and sustainability of smaller organisations need to be bespoke and not prescriptive in either aims or content. In a context of uncertainty and change, off the shelf 'toolkits' or online solutions are likely to be of only limited use. Instead, organisations benefit most from flexible, tailored support that they can access when needed. This has implications for processes for identifying and agreeing topics to organise support around.
- There is a strong case for arguing that it might be most beneficial to focus support on forward thinking and planning, with a particular emphasis on mission review and renewal. We have found elsewhere that organisations that are able to adapt and develop are those which review and renew their mission in a changing environment. Organisations that seem to understand their mission best are those that are strongly rooted – with a clear sense of where and how they fit into the greater scheme of things.[5]
- The distinctive nature of smaller organisations is such that the delivery of support may best be carried out by people with experience of organisational development work in such organisations and a clear understanding of their role, accountability and reporting relationship with both funder and grantee.
- Given that the implementation of change can be complex and stressful, support might need to be offered over a period of time to allow for learning and adjustment, as appropriate.

These factors raise two particular questions in relation to Creating Change. First, could the core element of 'plus' be adapted to take account of the need for, and benefits of, more bespoke support? And, second, is there a particular case in longer-term funding relationships for being more proactive in helping grantees prepare for life after the grant, for example, through one-to-one consultancy support for exit and future planning? Such an approach might address some of the concerns highlighted in Part Five of this report, notwithstanding the inevitable, and perhaps unavoidable, reality of small organisations always struggling to secure funding. Alongside this more bespoke support, our findings suggest that there may be a case for the Foundation considering its approach to renewal or continuation funding. If a service is deemed valuable, worthwhile and effective, and if the goals of the organisation providing it align with those of the Foundation, whose interests are being served by the current policy 'where three years' consecutive funding has been received, at least two years must be left before re-applying'[6]? For many small

organisations, aspirations for 'sustainability' (which can often be code for the diversification of funding) may be slightly unrealistic, given the scarcity of funding bodies prepared to provide core funding or longer-term funding. For many such organisations, some reliance on foundation funding might be viewed as a perfectly legitimate element of a 'sustainability strategy'.

6.1.3 ENGAGED AND SUPPORTIVE GRANT MAKING

Finally, if the Foundation is committed to preventing small organisations from suffering or failing unnecessarily, then it may be appropriate to conceive of grants plus less as a project or programme and more as a way of grant making. By breaking down the barriers between grants and additional support for some specific parts of the Foundation's portfolio (e.g. grants above a certain size; investment in specific geographical areas; work with particularly vulnerable client groups), it might be possible for the Foundation to extend the benefits of the Creating Change approach. One relatively low-cost aspect of this might be a more proactive and visible role in promoting the work of funded organisations, as well as the challenges and difficulties faced by many of their beneficiaries. In our earlier work on the impact of the recession on small social welfare voluntary organisations in England, we found that there was huge enthusiasm for foundations to act as champions and advocates.[7] Their independence, coupled with the leverage and networks afforded them by their brand and profile, means that foundations are likely to be listened and responded to. This work need not be adversarial or political; rather, it can be seen as further expression of acting as a responsible funder.

6.2 WIDER LEARNING ABOUT GRANT MAKING

What messages do the experiences of Creating Change grantees and staff at Lloyds Bank Foundation for Northern Ireland have for other trusts and foundations? We can highlight three.

[4] IVAR (2011) Beyond money: funding plus in the UK, London: IVAR

[5] IVAR (2013) Turning a corner: transition in the voluntary sector, London: IVAR

[6] www.lloydsbankfoundationni.org/programmes/community-grant-programme/frequently-asked-questions, accessed 27.08.2014

[7] IVAR (2012) Duty of care: supporting voluntary organisations through difficult times, London: IVAR

6.2.1 THE BENEFIT OF FLEXIBLE FUNDING

In looking back at our fieldwork findings, we were struck by the repeated references to 'flexibility' and its importance to the process and outcomes of the grants made through the programme. Flexibility ran through the design and management of the programme. First, in relation to plans: *'Don't be rigid. Allow flexibility within the annual objectives and annual budget'*. Second, around expectations: *'allow the organisations to develop and evolve.'* Third, around duration of funding: the kind of complex challenges being tackled by many of the grantee organisations legitimately require more extended investment than traditional three year funding agreements. Fourth, through the blended package on offer: funding, additional support and engaged relationships. This flexible funding model, built around maximising the potential of grantees to make a difference in ways that work for and suit them, can be seen to have produced real and lasting benefits. For other trusts and foundations, the message here is: consider the most appropriate kind of funding and process to achieve the desired aims, be open to long-term and/or core funding, understand that achieving change takes time (particularly on complex social issues), allow the 'how' to change during a grant term, and be open to the possible need for additional support to help make things happen.

6.2.2 THE PRINCIPLE OF MUTUALITY

How was it that the Foundation appeared able to set aside its obvious power advantage and develop such mutually supportive relationships with grantees? We would point to four critical factors. First, the deep commitment to behaving responsibly: this is as much an organisational value as it is a practice. Second, a concentrated focus on being responsive and useful: this is what enabled interventions to be experienced as helpful, rather than interfering. Third, a real appreciation of grantees' context and circumstances – this chimes loudly with an observation we made in Turning a Corner[8]: *'Funders who have an understanding of the dynamic nature of the current climate are more likely to form mutually supportive working alliances with delivery organisations that enhance and support – as opposed to depleting – their capacity to be self-determining, entrepreneurial and focused on the ultimate needs of beneficiaries. This more emergent approach, rather than a race for impact, may be well suited to upheaval and transition.'* Fourth, we can see from our findings that this approach requires significant investment of internal resources, as well as someone very senior, with enthusiasm and commitment, to engage directly with grantees.

6.2.3 TAKING TIME

We recognise that there is always a risk in exhorting trusts and foundations to do more, particularly where there are implications for internal costs. And we are mindful of the very legitimate concern that some people have about the unexpected costs of adopting grants plus – *'What is your grants plus? Work out how much time it will take and it will take you more time'* – as well as developing more engaged relationships. Indeed, for many small voluntary and community organisations, the most precious contribution a funder can make is an unrestricted grant with minimum demands and proportionate reporting requirements. Relationships and additional support are neither desirable nor necessary for all. However, if we reflect back on the findings presented earlier in this report, we can see both the practical and psychological impact on organisations of their interactions with the Foundation: it made a profound and practical difference to individuals, organisations and their services. To that end, there is a message here about the huge potential of such careful, patient and trusting approaches to grant making.

[8] IVAR (2013) Turning a corner: transition in the voluntary sector, London: IVAR

APPENDIX

07

APPENDIX ONE: INTERVIEWEES

APPENDIX TWO: CREATING CHANGE PROGRAMME GRANTS

APPENDIX ONE: INTERVIEWEES

CREATING CHANGE GRANTEES

Tiernach Mahon, *ARC Healthy Living Centre*

Garnett Busby, *Belfast South Community Resources*

Janine Sayers, *CAB Strabane*

Madeleine Mulgrew, *Cancer Choices*

Dolores Finnerty, *Caring Breaks Ltd*

Jeanette Warke, *Cathedral Youth Club*

Tracey McCreanor, *CO3*

Mary Hogg, *Cookstown and District Women's Group*

Sally Campton, *Dundonald Family Community Initiative*

Paddy McEldowney, *Easilink Community Transport*

Alain Emerson and Mervin Johnston, *ECF Links*

Kirsten Kearney, *The Educational Shakespeare Company Ltd*

Margaret Thompson and Mary O'Connell, *Homestart Antrim*

Grainne Woods, *Kids in Control*

Ivan Henderson, *Kilkeel Parish Bridge Association*

Caroline Lynch, *Learmount Community Development Group*

Joni Millar, *Newbuildings Community and Environmental Association*

Catherine O'Donnell, *Off the Street Community Youth Initiative*

Ruth Cooper, *Replay Productions*

LLOYDS BANK FOUNDATION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Janet Leckey, *Trustee*

Gary Mills, *former Trustee*

Sandara Kelso-Robb, *Executive Director*

Sinéad Tierney, *Assistant Director*

APPENDIX TWO: CREATING CHANGE PROGRAMME GRANTS

ARC Healthy Living Centre — **£99,899**

(Grant formally held by FAST Rural Transport)

ARC Healthy Living Centre provides a range of community services to cater for children, parents, adults, and older people within the community. The elderly and isolated of Irvinestown in Co. Fermanagh benefitted from the Chit Chat Worker funded through the grant, who called them each morning to check on their well-being. The service was also able to co ordinate community transport for the participants and inform them of services or events which may be of interest to them.

www.archlc.com

Belfast South Community Resources — **£100,000**

This community-based education centre in Sandy Row, a disadvantaged area of South Belfast, provides training and educational programmes, and supports a range of lower capacity community groups in the Sandy Row area. Covering core costs through the Creating Change grant, enabled them to attract additional project support and work with a wider range of disadvantaged people.

www.bscr.co.uk

CAB Strabane — **£100,000**

CAB Strabane provides advice and support to members of the public around a whole range of areas including welfare support and benefits, debt and money advice, housing support and employment rights. The grant was to support a Telephone Advice Worker to enable them to increase use of telephone based advice to the largely rural community in the Strabane area.

www.citizensadvice.co.uk/pages/strabane_cab

Cancer Choices — **£100,000**

(Grant was closed by the Foundation in year three)

Cancer Choices provides support to anyone affected by Cancer. They are an independent patient-led organisation who run a dedicated holistic healing centre in Dungannon. The Creating Change grant was towards the Development Manager's post, core costs and to support the delivery of some of their services, such as the provision of a range of complementary therapies by volunteer therapists.

www.cancerchoices.org.uk

Caring Breaks Ltd — **£96,000**

Caring Breaks provides educational and recreational activities to adults with learning disabilities as well as day trips and respite weekends to enable their carers, normally their parents, to have some time to themselves. The grant part-funded an Events/Activities Coordinator to expand and diversify the activities available to adults with a learning or physical disability. As the organisation developed, the grant later contributed towards the Programme Manager's post to oversee the increasing programmes and activities being delivered.

www.caringbreaks.com

Cathedral Youth Club — **£100,000**

This is a youth and community centre based in a small Protestant area on the city side of Derry/Londonderry. The grant supports the Youth Worker who provides a range of programmes and activities for the young people of the Fountain area including educational programmes, volunteering opportunities, outdoor pursuits, music and arts projects and cross-community programmes.

www.cathedralyouthclub.com

CO3 — **£100,000**

CO3 is a membership organisation providing publications, training opportunities, mentoring and support to senior staff in the voluntary and community sector. The Creating Change grant enabled them to provide a specific mentoring programme to Chief Officers in the third sector and in particular to those overseeing smaller charities where less internal support is available. They were also able to provide workshops and training on relevant topics affecting CEOs of small voluntary organisations.

www.co3.bz

Cookstown and District Women's Group — **£100,000**

Cookstown and District Women's Group runs a centre dedicated to supporting women and men to reach their full potential. They provide essential skills training, personal development and volunteering opportunities, in a warm and welcoming environment. The grant enabled them to deliver training programmes to three specific target groups, lone parents, adults with learning disabilities and ex-offenders.

www.positivestepscommunitycentre.org

Dundonald Family Community Initiative £90,000

(Grant ceased at end of year five due to organisation closure)

Dundonald Family Community Initiative provided activities mainly for children, young people and parents who needed additional support. The organisation was based in the disadvantaged area of Ballybeen, but unfortunately, due to reduced funding had to close its doors in December 2012. For the first five years of the grant, however, the Manager and Family Support Worker were part-funded to enable them to develop a Dads and Kids Club encouraging relationship building with dads and their children, especially dads who do not live full-time with their children.

Easilink Community Transport £100,000

Easilink provides affordable, accessible transport to those who are rurally isolated with poor or no access to public transport. The grant allowed them to lease and run an additional minibus to provide regular transport services to disadvantaged people in two additional rural areas of Plumbridge and Castlederg.

www.easilink.org

ECF Links £100,000

ECF Links runs a purpose-built youth and community centre in a neutral location in the centre of Lurgan. The grant was to support their Youth Workers to enable the development and expansion of youth activities both within their centre and detached youth outreach work on the streets in Lurgan.

www.linksproject.org

The Educational Shakespeare Company Ltd £100,000

ESC works with people experiencing extreme marginalisation in society, specialising in mental health and criminal justice. The grant allowed them to expand their work with ex-offenders. This included providing training in a range of arts but particularly the medium of film.

www.esc-film.com

Homestart Antrim £100,000

Homestart is a voluntary, home visiting scheme supporting parents with at least one child under the age of five, in families suffering high levels of social isolation and loneliness with little or no family support. The grant enabled Homestart to expand their services into two new rural geographic areas of Ballyclare and Toomebridge, to offer both group and one-to-one services, providing support to mothers with young children.

www.home-start.org.uk

Kids in Control £100,000

KIC is a professional theatre company that values children and young people of all abilities. KIC is a unique physical theatre and dance company in that it is fully inclusive and cuts through traditional divisions of physical and learning ability. The Artistic Director and Assistant Director were both part-funded through the Creating Change grant, to allow the organisation to nurture and develop key programmes.

www.kicproject.co.uk

Kilkeel Parish Bridge Association £100,000

Kilkeel Parish Bridge Association runs a purpose-built youth and community centre in a central location in Kilkeel. The Project Leader's post was supported by the grant to allow the continuation and development of their youth activities, in particular, their youth outreach and cross-community work.

www.thejimsproject.org.uk

Learmount Community Development Group £100,000

Learmount Community Development Group was set up by a group of local residents seeking to meet the needs of the rurally isolated village of Park. The grant mainly supported the Volunteer Promotion and Recruitment Officer to develop and maintain a wide range of volunteer led services meeting the needs of the rural community of Park and its surrounding area.

www.learmountcommunitycentre.org

Newbuildings Community and Environmental Association £100,000

Newbuildings Community and Environmental Association provides a range of services including IT classes, older people's luncheon club, a gym, a range of sports tuition and healthy eating support to residents from the very young to the oldest members of the community in this rural village. The grant originally helped to fund a Health and Promotion Officer and later an Administrator to help deliver a range of programmes around health in the community and to train and support Volunteer Health Workers.

www.newbuildingscommunity.org

Off the Street Community Youth Initiative **£90,000**

(Organisation only applied for a five year grant which completed in March 2013)

Off the Street operates seven nights per week on the streets of Greater Shantallow in Derry. They engage young people and build positive relationships and offer young people programmes and activities that reduce risk-taking behaviour and foster intergenerational working. The grant supported some core staff costs and programme costs to enable them to reach more disadvantaged young people through their outreach work on the streets.

Replay Productions **£100,000**

Replay Productions is a theatre company which uses drama as an educational tool to explore specific issues and themes for disadvantaged or disabled children and young people. The grant supported mainly the post of the Executive Director who oversees the development of the issue specific drama productions which are delivered in schools and community settings right across Northern Ireland.

www.replaytheatreco.org

design: edenstudios.co.uk

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