



Funding Advice for the Voluntary and Community Sectors

What difference does it make?

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- Learning from 5 case studies exploring practice in the provision of funding advice to the VCS
- Explore *both* good practice and provision, and the difference it makes; *and* look at needs and opportunities in historical gap areas

Identifying the Case Study areas

- group discussions with funding advice workers (FAWs)
- analysis of 30 short survey forms and
- 26 telephone interviews with a range of key stakeholders

Needed a mix of urban and rural locations

A number of other 'good practice' locations could easily have been chosen

The Case Study areas

- Torbay Development Agency
- Charities Information Bureau and partners
- Bristol
- Somerset
- Gloucestershire

Setting the Scene: Who is giving funding advice to the VCS?



Two complementary sets of skills and resources:

- Funding advice and help
- Organisational development /
Capacity building - 'development work'

Is funding advice and support important to the VCS?

- Finding the Funding. SW Foundation 2006
- County Durham Study 2004
- The changing approaches to funding the VCS - tipping towards fee income ('shopping') and trading.

Learning: 3 sets of findings

- What are the benefits of funding advice and support?
- What works in funding advice and support?
- Building funding advice infrastructure

What are the benefits of funding advice and support?

- Investment in funding advice linked to organisational development can unlock significant income for the VCS
- The leverage of funds and volunteer time into an area by a well-funded VCS is considerable - a significant contribution to the local economy and resulting in wider community benefits

For example:

- last 18 months - £8 million was raised by the VCS helped by the Torbay Development Agency worker
- last year- the Bristol City Council Regeneration Team helped the VCS to raise over £2.2 million
- In 2003/4 - Gloucester City Council's grants to 20 key organisations levered in an additional eightfold of additional resources into the area



- Where there is limited funding advice and capacity building, VCS development in that area including:
 - the number of groups
 - the range of issues they cover
 - their accessibility and effectivenessis much more limited
- The level of inward investment levered into these areas by the VCS is much lower



What works in funding advice and support?

An approach which combines capacity building and organisational development *with* funding advice, available locally

- helpful for new and small to medium sized organisations, available over long period
- larger organisations also benefit from more sophisticated help
- produces strong funding applications, thus avoiding wasted time for funders and applicants

- Organisational development work is essential underpinning for the use of good funding advice - database access or signposting funders usually not sufficient
- Users of funding advice services not concerned about who delivers funding advice and support services - need them to be approachable, visible, consistent, flexible, and seamlessly interface with capacity building help

- Strong co-ordination, signposting and clarity around roles and responsibilities between statutory and VCS agencies essential
- Model of integrating capacity building and funding advice provision into single workers or agencies is persuasive, BUT the sophisticated level of knowledge and skill needed in funding advice may be difficult for the development worker to maintain without specialist support

Building funding advice infrastructure

- Lack of staff continuity and short term funding for FAW and development work; takes time to develop knowledge and credibility
- Access to funding advice + development support needed for to hard to reach communities in rural and urban areas e.g. BME groups

- If history of investment in the VCS + positive relationships, the process of developing a strong local VCS can withstand the loss of individual worker; where no such history, progress hard to sustain
- Some organisations put significant effort into identifying the leverage and additional resources, that *both* their direct funding of the VCS, *and* their resourcing of funding advice and capacity building, brings into area

- Internal quality standards, including access to supervision, and monitoring and evaluation, are generally weak
- GEORGE, the FANs and the accredited training programme are valued by FAWs
- Network Development Fund grants through the South West Foundation and Funding SW have been important in developing the FAWs
- The dialogue between the funded, funders and funding advisers needs to be resourced

Conclusions:

- Clear benefits of good quality funding advice + organisational development work, provided 'seamlessly'
- Support impacts BOTH on the strength of the VCS and its capacity to grow, AND plays role in local regeneration
- Funding advice in a fragile state with resources arriving and departing over relatively short time scales; few examples of committed, long-term investment in funding advice linked to VCS capacity building
- Importance of the FANs and provision of FAW training
- Clear need for stronger evidence base on the impact of funding advice + development support

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