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Towards Stronger Communities: Potential Roles for Grant Makers

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Charity as ordinarily practised the charity of endowment, the charity of emotion, the charity which takes the place of justice, creates much of the misery which it relieves, but does not relieve the misery that it creates.

– Joseph Rowntree, (1865) *Founder of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation*¹

¹ Cited in Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain (1995)

Abstract

Think about a world where groups and communities who are disadvantaged meet with those who have resources to effect positive social change. This is not a beautiful dream it is a world at the intersection of disadvantage and the grant maker who adopts a community development focus to try to bring about positive social change.

This thesis explores the intersection of exemplary grant making and community development practice and theory. The thesis set out to achieve three objectives. Firstly to gather information relating to the theory and practice of grant making and community development, secondly to analyse information relating to potential roles of grant makers / philanthropic bodies in contributing to community development and finally to develop a model of grant making that contributes to community development.

In order to achieve these three objectives information was extracted from the literature on both grant making and community development. This was then compared with the interviews of seven interviewees. Four interviewees were international academics or leading grant makers and three were New Zealand based community development practitioners with experience of grant seeking. This mix provided very rich information.

The study also examines the journey of a grant maker who has developed from a traditional grant maker to a more community development focussed grant maker and considers how the information gained can be used to enhance practice.

The conclusions and recommendations show that a community development model is appropriate for a grant maker and makes recommendations about activities that might enhance this role and cautions that it is not an easy path but it is a rewarding one, both for the grant maker and for the community.

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Much good community development begins with serendipity and intuition that is then refined through reflective practice and an application of theoretical principles. This thesis will consider the journey of a grant maker and consider whether the model developed by the Whanganui Community Foundation embodies good community development principles and processes and good grant making practice. The thesis will also examine whether this model is peculiar to only the community in question or whether there are wider lessons for other grant makers.

Grant makers come in many forms and cover a wide spectrum of interests and philosophies. On one hand there are those small philanthropic foundations set up by a benevolent individual with a passionate interest in a narrow field through to large foundations endowed with funds that could be considered to be public money that cover a wide spectrum of activity with the intent of bettering society as a whole. What responsibility do such organisations have to society and community? Is good intent enough? How do grant makers need to work to ensure that communities are better places to live in for all people?

This thesis is based on the premise that a community development model is a possible structure within which a grant maker can work in order to deliver a valid service to the community that meets community needs and encourages a stronger, more just and sustainable community. It is important to consider the arguments both for and against such a premise. If the community development model is valid then it is also important to consider how such a model might be expressed in practice and what the implications for the grant maker might be. This question has evolved from the researcher's role as CEO of the Whanganui Community Foundation over the past eight years. Therefore the researcher is an insider and has published in this area. Where no reference is noted, the reader can infer that it is the author's opinion.

This chapter will consider the context within which the grant maker operates and includes some discussion of both grant making and community development. Within the context of the grant maker definitions that are appropriate to the Aotearoa New Zealand environment will be discussed and finally the thesis structure will be explained.

Societal Context

The sectors making up society can be thought of as government, the business sector or business interests, and the community sector, also known as the voluntary, not for profit or third sector. While each sector has distinct characteristics and culture the sectors do have some overlap and the sectors often work together towards common goals. Grant makers can be found fulfilling roles in each of these sectors and it is possible for a grant maker to position itself within each or all of the sectors. Grant makers are often in the position of having the freedom to situate themselves where they choose. For many the requirements of a trust deed or constitution will create a predisposition to work within a particular sector and this will be overlaid with the philosophies of the staff and board of the grant maker. This sector would normally be the community sector but decisions made or processes used by the grant maker may create a culture that has more in common with the government or business sectors.

Government Sector

For grant makers, participation in the government sector may be through the "Selleys¹ theory" of grant making or by aligning with government policies or initiatives. Such alignment may be through subscribing to a government initiated contracting and accountability framework. In New Zealand the grant making sector contributed almost \$400 million to the community or third sector in 2001 out of a total \$1634 million (Robinson and Hanley, 2002). The balance being contributed from individual donations, corporate sponsorship and government contracts. When compared with the total government spending in this sector (\$15.035 billion) (Treasury, 2001) it is a fraction of 1%. These numbers make it clear that it is impossible for the grant making sector to fill all of the gaps. More importantly there are philosophical reasons why alignment with the government sector may be a less

¹ Selleys No More Gaps is a building product that is used to fill gaps. The term is used to describe funding to top up the amount of government funding available.

than optimum position for a grant maker. It would mean that the grant maker's vision would be determined de facto by the government rather than the trustees in response to the needs of the community and this may or may not correspond to the real needs of the community. Because of election cycles governments take a shorter term view which may work against long term visions of social justice and may not include the truly unpopular or cutting edge causes. Governments are also risk averse and do not wish to be seen to fail (Burkeman, 2002). Many of the advances in society have occurred because of risky positions being taken.

The contracting and accountability approaches of governments through the advent of Rogernomics or its equivalent have encouraged a competitive low cost regime. (Cheyne et al, 1996, Kelsey, 1995). Poverty, abuse and disadvantage are still with us and there is scant evidence to show that the nature of government interventions over the past 20 years has made a significant difference overall.

Partial funding such as the funding regime of Child Youth and Family may further reduce the ability of community organisations to operate well through requiring compromises in service delivery in order to fit the programme to the funding available or significant effort being diverted into fund raising.

Evidence appears to be emerging that specific targeted interventions that address situations of multiple risk are more effective than piecemeal short term approaches. This would involve interventions that integrate areas such as health, welfare, education, recreation and other sectors (Jacobsen et al, 2002). Such interventions are considerably more expensive but more likely to empower clients and result in positive long term behaviour change (Jacobsen et al, 2002). Thus the contracting regime that rewards low cost interventions may be less cost effective in the long term. Where grant makers subscribe to the low cost approach and attempt to ration funding on the basis of the delivery cost of programmes rather than looking at the likely effectiveness there is a reinforcing of current government policy.

It is a bolder and riskier step for grant makers to make grants to an alternative approach than to top up a government funded programme. Moreover it could be argued that a legitimate role of the community sector is to be involved in the areas where there is community need but no government policy. That is the community

sector is actively adding to social policy through its activities. This is not to suggest that the role of the grant maker is to subvert government policy. However there may be occasions where a proposal that is supported by a well researched and reasoned analysis indicates that there is an alternative to the current practice. Indeed there may also be occasions where risk taking is justified in order that new philosophies can be trialled or activities that push the boundaries of social policy can exist. In these cases the grant maker has a responsibility to ensure that such approaches are carefully evaluated and the resulting information disseminated (Brown et al, 2000, Burkeman, 2002).

It is not unusual for new ideas to be funded initially by the grant making sector and private funding and then to become mainstream activities that attract government funding once they are proven. The issues of Maori health services and Restorative Justice stand out as examples.

It is clear that some philanthropic giving may not be seen as supplementing or complementing the State. Following the downfall of Communism a number of United States based foundations were active in giving to institutions that were attempting to rebuild civil society. The 2002 Annual Report of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation shows a total of over \$US20million being granted to Central Eastern Europe and Russia to promote civil society (Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, 2002). Vaclav Klaus, a former Prime Minister of the Czech Republic was opposed to tax relief for philanthropic giving on the grounds that it subverted the democratic activities of the State (cited in Burkeman, 2002).

Local government is often keen to work with the grant making sector. Many local governments see the resources of the grant making sector as a potential source of resources to supplement the resources of local government in providing community facilities. It is important that grant makers are clear about the extent to which they will supplement local government resources and the philosophy that underpins such decisions.

Business Sector

For grant makers participation within the business sector may involve subscription to the principles of the market. This subscription would take the form of

encouraging business practices within community organisations such as inappropriate forms of strategic planning, governance and management split, competitive and hierarchical employment practices, competition for government contracts and accountability as well as seeing outcomes based results in quantitative terms that measure more about efficiency of delivery than about quality and sustainability of results. The intention of the promotion of such practices becomes critical; few would dispute, for example, that sound planning process within an advocacy campaign would not enhance the likely success of the plan. However it can be argued that accountability requirements that create a hierarchical power relationship between grant maker and grant seeker, rather than adding value to the grant seeker, ultimately weaken the power of the community. The first example would position a grant maker within the community sector, while the second would position the grant maker within the private sector. Capacity building has become a recent buzz word and provision of professional development, mentoring services and similar activities is an area that some grant makers are seeing as a potential role. Professional development that promotes managerial concepts (business sector concept) or advocacy and community development (community sector concept) are likely to have very different impacts on the community.

If one believes that strengths based practice and respectful relationships between organisation and client are important, the existence of a competitive and hierarchical environment are likely to undermine such practice as well as inhibiting a reflective approach through pressure of time. This is not to suggest that community organisations and grant makers should not be managed effectively and efficiently, however it is important that the processes, systems and concepts are considered critically to ensure that they are consistent with approaches that value community.

Community Sector

Participation by the grant maker within the community sector may be characterised by either a community development perspective, or a charity model.

The researcher believes that the charity model is premised upon a patriarchal, noblesse oblige philosophy which is underpinned by the view that the benefactor will dispense largesse and in return the recipient will be grateful. Allied to this are

Victorian concepts of the deserving poor, remnants of which still linger within society, and while they may bolster the sense of being generous on the part of the donor, ultimately undermine the recipient and the community in general.

While programmes, especially those that are targeted and government funded have received a large amount of evaluation and assessment the area of evaluation that is lacking in New Zealand is an independent expert critique of aspects of the operating environment such as the legislative framework that reflects social policy (Jacobsen et al, 2002). There is often critique of the legislation and policies of previous governments by incoming governments but independent and expert critique is confined to academic research that must be funded, invariably by government who determine the parameters of the research. This suggests a role for the grant making sector in funding such studies. The work of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, undated) in Britain in commissioning, funding and disseminating research into housing practices, policies and legislation has been influential as has the research and dissemination on crime and justice of the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation (Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, 2002). To date, in Aotearoa / New Zealand there has been no social policy research that has been commissioned by grant makers and made public.

Grant Making

Most grant making has focussed on funding the delivery of programmes and projects. There is an argument to be made for funding areas that underpin the structure of communities. Brown et al (2000) make a convincing case for the promotion of active citizenship in their book *Rhetorics of Welfare*. The promotion of active citizenship would include encouraging generosity of time, money and spirit as well as strengthening participation in the democratic institutions of communities through generic voter education, developing disempowered groups to facilitate their participation in democracy, promoting public debate on community issues and other strategies.

It is clear that, while many grant makers would consider that they are firmly part of the community sector, the reality may be that they are also operating in the government and business Sectors.

A considered approach must pose the question; Is the grant maker part of the community sector or should it sit alongside the community sector as part of civil society, or is there a fertile ground in the midst of all three sectors that the grant maker must occupy? While it may be difficult or uncomfortable to sit at the intersection it is an area that has considerable potential for grant makers.

Community Development

Ann Jeffries (2000) postulates that good community development is dependent on two elements. These are the extent and nature of association and awareness in communities: and decision making processes and participation practices that impact on them.

What does this mean for a grant maker who wishes to use a community development approach and what will their activities look like? It is my opinion that they will embody the four principles listed below.

Those grants that are made will be for projects that are designed to empower the ultimate beneficiaries. It will be important to ensure that the organisations to whom grants are made have a philosophy and processes that encourage reflection, empowerment, and participation. Projects and programmes that are funded should be designed to promote long term systemic social change rather than place a loving band aid across the problem.

The grant maker will provide support for community organisations that enables them to develop in ways that are consistent with good community development. As part of skills development / capacity building it will encourage the learning of skills that will enable community groups to create the structures and processes within the community that will lead to a quality of life, increased participation and self determination

The grant maker will exercise community leadership around facilitating dialogue about important community issues where appropriate. And will, where the

community would be vulnerable, be prepared to advocate on behalf of the community.

The grant maker will operate in a way that listens to what is important for the community.

As a consequence of this manner of operating there is potential for the grant maker to find itself at odds with other institutions in society. It is not a path for the faint hearted.

Definitions

The issue of definitions used in the grant making sector are problematic in the Aotearoa New Zealand environment. Most writing has been from overseas and there are distinct differences between countries. For some terms there are complex legal definitions that, while useful for legal purposes, need some explanation for the uninitiated. For this reason definitions have been related to the Aotearoa New Zealand context and expressed in lay language. Where possible references have been given to show the derivation of these definitions. In other cases the terms are currently being debated within the sector with no conclusion and no publications as yet. In this situation I have tried to convey the debate as accurately as is possible.

Terminology within the grant making sector also varies from country to country. In the United Kingdom, where the concepts as understood in the western world originated, the term philanthropy is used in the context of the giving of donations, typically of money to a deserving cause. Charity would generally define the delivery of services to those who are in need. Philanthropic giving can be by a one off donation or through the setting up of an endowed vehicle which has perpetual life. The Greek origin of the word, philanthropy, implies a love of mankind and this motivation is often associated with the use of the word.

It is interesting to note that to be described as philanthropic the gift would be large; the rich are philanthropic and those of more modest means give to worthy causes. While it is true that many philanthropic gifts are given to humanitarian causes the concept of a deserving cause, as defined by the donor, may also include causes that

those who are better off benefit from disproportionately. These would typically include ballet, art, music (but usually only opera and symphony orchestras), museums, education (usually universities), health, often for research, and missionary work, which has become less common of recent times (Hodgkinson, 1997) .

Research regarding giving in the United States shows a distinct socioeconomic pattern with those who are richer being more likely to give to the arts, universities and hospitals while those who are less well off are more likely to give to welfare causes (Hodgkinson et al, 1990, 1997). The less well off also give a higher proportion of their disposable income, that is the income left over after the necessities of life, such as shelter, food, energy and necessary clothing have been provided for.

The terminology in the United States is very different, charitable giving is to those organisations that seek to alleviate symptoms of need (grants to provide food parcels for the needy) while philanthropic giving is to those organisations that seek to identify and address the causes of need (funding research into the causes of food poverty). Most grant makers self define themselves as philanthropic.

Within the Commonwealth countries, and to a lesser extent in the United States, there has been a move away from both of these terms. Victorian concepts of charity that stressed the concept of the deserving poor are now seen as unenlightened, patronising and disempowering. The term grant making is preferred as a more values neutral term.

Since 1970 there has been a growth in the number of legal vehicles set up to distribute to the not for profit sector. While most utilise the charitable trust as the legal vehicle not all of these have a trust as their legal structure, for example charitable companies and to a lesser extent incorporated societies have been used. Some have expressly chosen not to gain charitable status in order to be free of the restrictions imposed by the legal definition. Nor are they all endowed, for example, the setting up of organisations to distribute the proceeds of national lotteries or corporate sponsored foundations. They are no longer set up solely by the wealthy with the statutory trusts in New Zealand and the world wide growth in community

foundations being examples of new forms of grant makers. The term grant making is used as an all encompassing term to describe the activity of granting donations by an institutional donor, as opposed to an individual donor. Just as the term charity has value connotations so too does the term philanthropy and many prefer the term grant making as a more neutral term. An important question to ask is that if we see Victorian charity as unenlightened, patronising, and disempowering, how will the grant making of today be seen in a further 100 years?

Use of terminology in New Zealand is variable but it would appear that the term grant making is tending to gain currency with philanthropy being reserved for private foundations as opposed to statutory trusts or those where there is a perception that the funding comes from more "public sources" such as gambling proceeds. There is also considerable ambivalence over the use of the word charitable with a growing movement wishing to use the word only in its strict legal sense and context, and preferring terms such as community or voluntary organisation to charitable organisation.

Philanthropy

The act of giving donation(s) to a party independent of the donor with the objective of increasing the public good. The Concise Oxford dictionary definition includes the words "1 a love of mankind. 2 a practical benevolence esp. charity on a large scale (Oxford University Press, 1990).

Charity

The Statute of Elizabeth (Charitable Uses Act 1601) has defined an organisation as charitable if it is set up to carry out any of the following purposes

- (a) The relief of poverty
- (b) The advancement of education
- (c) The advancement of religion
- (d) Any other purpose which benefits the community, but is not covered under the other three headings.

It should be noted that clause (d) must be within the spirit of the three preceding clauses and is not a catch all phrase. This definition is also reflected in New Zealand taxation legislation. This definition is currently under review both in New Zealand and in other Commonwealth jurisdictions (Tax and Charities

Working Party, 2003). The researcher was a member of the Tax and Charities Working Party.

Grant maker

An institutional organisation that exists to make grants to community based organisations that have the objective of increasing the public good.

Not for profit sector

A grouping of organisations that exist with the primary aim of addressing the needs of either the wider community or the needs of members typically in the areas of welfare, recreation, spiritual needs or education. It does not have owners to whom any surpluses are returned instead applying surpluses to the common good. In the United States the term non-profit sector is used, and in Canada the voluntary sector.

Community sector

Used interchangeably with the not for profit sector, third sector or voluntary sector. The term community is thought by some to be descriptive of the qualities of the sector.

Voluntary sector

Again, used interchangeably with the not for profit sector or community sector. In past generations this sector existed because of voluntary gifts of time. Over recent years this sector has become increasingly professionalised and many feel that the term does not adequately honour the professionalism of the sector.

Third sector

The third sector is often used to define anything that does not fall within the government and business sectors. It can be considered to be wider than the community sector.

There is considerable debate about the terminology with good arguments being raised in favour of all of the above terms.

Foundation

Salamon and Anheier (1997) define a foundation as having the following characteristics; Non membership based organisation, private entity, self governing, non profit distributing entity, and serving a public purpose.

Most foundations or trusts have some form of endowment from which they derive income, or have an ongoing income from a regular covenant (such as some company foundations) or solicit donations from the community in order both to receive operating income and build up an asset base (such as many community foundations).

Foundations typically choose either to support others in order to achieve their objectives or to deliver services directly. Foundations generally fall into three categories; grant making foundations that often have some form of endowment and engage in grant making for specified purposes, operating foundations that operate their own programmes and may also do some grant making; or mixed foundations which have both a grant making programme and also operate their own programmes.

In New Zealand the use of the term foundation has become more prevalent in recent years. The foundation is based upon a founding deed or constitution that gives the entity both form and purpose. It will typically have some permanence of organisational structure such as a board of trustees, relative permanence in its goals or objectives, and meaningful operational parameters.

Foundations are usually outside the institution or control of government. Moreover they do not exercise statutory authority in order to carry out their objectives. Foundations have autonomy and control over their own governance procedures. They have their own separate financial accounts in that their assets and expenditures do not form part of government accounts or corporate balance sheets

Trust

A legal structure created by a settlor whereby property is transferred to a trustee or trustees to be held in trust for the benefit of the beneficiaries for objects set out in the trust deed. Many grant making foundations are charitable trusts although those wishing to operate outside the scope of what is considered charitable may choose to

forgo charitable status in favour of freedom to pursue other objectives. Prime examples would be a trust set up to advocate for social or legislative change, or a grant maker wishing to make grants to sporting or other recreational organisations (Trustee Act 1953).

Perpetual Trust

A trust which is set up as a public trust to benefit the community at large or a significant section of the community. In contrast to a family trust which has a maximum lifespan of 80 years a perpetual trust will exist indefinitely or until the trustees choose to wind up the trust (Trustee Act 1953).

Endowment

Property settled on a trust or foundation from which it derives income to be used for the benefit of the beneficiaries; "assets, esp. property or income with which a person or body is endowed" (Oxford University Press, 1990).

Grant

An amount given, usually in response to a request for which there is often a clear expectation that the amount will be spent for a specified purpose. There is a trend for the term grant to be used in conjunction with institutional sources of funding.

Donation

A donation can be defined as a gift or contribution. It will normally have no conditions attached. The term donation is more likely to be used to describe gifts made by individuals. There are criteria used for taxation purposes to define a donation that is deductible or rebateable.

Funder

Any body that provides funding for a community organisation. This term is wider than grant maker and includes for example central or local government agencies who would provide funding by way of contracts.

For the purposes of the thesis the following terms will be used:

- grant making, because it is a more values neutral term that avoids the connotations of charity or philanthropy. The term grant also carries the

implication that this grant offers more discretion than a contract. The term funder is a wider term which includes contracts between government departments and community organisations. Such contracts are often more about achieving government policy than community aspirations and as such are outside the scope of this thesis.

- community sector rather than voluntary to recognise that much of the work in the sector is paid and professional, rather than not for profit sector which defines what the sector is not, rather than third sector which many feel relegates the sector to third place and which is not descriptive. The term community sector is a positive description of the nature of the sector
- foundation rather than trust because it avoids the need to differentiate between the legal sense of the word trust and the generic use of the word. It is recognised that legal vehicles are not always trusts and can be incorporated societies or charitable companies. As well the term foundation seems to becoming more widespread.

Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 Introduction

The introduction has set the context and defined the parameters of the research.

Definitions within the grant making sector are not generally agreed so it is appropriate to discuss the common terms, including a justification for the choices of terms where alternatives are available. Many of the terms used within the grant making sector give subtle messages about values and philosophy. Terms chosen from alternatives have been selected to reflect a community development philosophy.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The literature relating to the two areas of study, grant making and community development is documented and discussed along with other relevant areas such as organisational capacity.

Chapter 3 Exemplary grant making processes and practices

There is no theory of grant making. Instead the study explores what is generally accepted as exemplary practice and documents the dilemmas grant makers face in making both philosophical and operational decisions about grant making. A sample set of guidelines describing good grant making practice that relates to this chapter is included as appendix one.

Chapter 4 Community Development Theory and Practices

In contrast with the area of grant making there is well developed theory of community development which is included. Because of the nature of the thesis this chapter also includes material about the practical application of community development principles.

Chapter 5 Case Study

The case study is included as part of the context within which the thesis is set. The Whanganui Community Foundation is used as a case study of a grant maker that has worked to try to implement a community development framework. The case study will examine the journey of the Foundation as it has gradually come to a greater understanding of how it needs to operate to be true to the community development model. It will also examine how the Foundation has linked the theory and practice.

Chapter 6 Methodology

The methodology for the research presented a number of issues and these are described including justification for choices made. Ensuring rigour while being an insider raised a number of concerns and these are discussed.

Chapter 7 Results of Interviews

This chapter documents and discusses the results of the interviews. Common themes and differences are explored. The chapter is organised to reflect the questions asked in the interviews.

Chapter 8 Analysis of information contained in the literature, theory and interviews.

The material from the literature review, exemplary practice grant making and community development theory is used to assess how a grant maker might operate if a community development based practice model were to be used. This is then

compared and contrasted with the results to determine the degree of consistency between what the literature and theory suggests and the views of the interviewees. Where appropriate material from the case study is used to illustrate points made. Material from the case study is used as examples.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

This chapter brings the thesis to a conclusion and recommends the types of activities a grant maker will be involved in if a community development model is followed. It also examines the model developed in the case study and suggests further development for the future.