

## **Strengthening the Voluntary Sector**

*Supporting effective use of the law and human rights based approaches*

Funding Round 2016

### **Background to the programme**



**The Baring Foundation**

## 1. Introduction

The Baring Foundation is pleased to announce the second round of grantmaking in two open funds under our Strengthening the Voluntary Sector (STVS) programme. This is an open application process that opens on 24 October 2016 and closes on 23 January 2017 at 5pm.

This programme supports effective use of the law and human rights based approaches by the voluntary sector in the United Kingdom. It is a collaboration with The Legal Education Foundation and also, in this second round of funding, with The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

In 2015 we opened these two pilot funds for the first time. The funds were vastly oversubscribed and only 7.1% of applications were successful. We made eighteen grants to the value in total of £1.33 million.

We continue to consider the law and human rights based approaches as important tools for the voluntary sector. They can provide a means to tackle directly the discrimination and disadvantage faced by vulnerable people and to create and protect the space in which voluntary organisations operate, helping to safeguard the freedom of purpose, action and voice of the sector as a whole. There are great examples of voluntary sector organisations who have used these tools effectively in these ways.

However, use of the law and human rights based approaches is far from consistent across the voluntary sector and many organisations see no link between these tools and their purpose, strategy and activities, or are wary of using them. This programme aims to boost engagement and to support organisations within the broader voluntary sector to make effective use of the law and human rights based approaches to tackle discrimination and disadvantage.

The programme focuses on domestic activity in all countries in the United Kingdom only. Applications to support international work will not be considered.

We encourage applications from voluntary sector organisations with little or no history in using the law and human rights based approaches to achieve their mission, as well as organisations with a strong background in this work.

We are not restricting our funding to a particular theme eg homelessness or black and ethnic communities and would like to see applications that aim to use the law and human rights to tackle a broad range of issues causing discrimination and disadvantage.

The two open funds are:

- **training, education and capacity building** – seed funding grants of up to £30,000 over six months to two years that support organisations to understand how their objectives can be achieved through use of the law or human rights based approaches.

[\*Full details are available here.\*](#)

- **applied projects** – grants of up to £150,000 over approximately three years to create new capacity for work that addresses specific discrimination or disadvantage and safeguards

the freedom of purpose, action and voice of the sector, linking the skills of ‘non-legal’ and ‘legal’ organisations to enhance and complement campaigns for social change. Organisations will be expected to demonstrate innovative approaches to using these tools and evidence of how they will collaborate to support a shared agenda.

*[Full details are available here.](#)*

Although our strategic focus on use of the law and human rights based approaches will stay constant until at least 2019, the form and nature of our funding is likely to become more focused in our next, third round of funding and beyond. This will take into account a mid-term evaluation of the STVS programme that will take place after this second round of funding, drawing in part on the lessons emerging from the two rounds of grant making undertaken by us at that point. All successful applicants will be expected to contribute, where appropriate, to our monitoring and evaluation of the programme, although this will not be onerous.

## **2. Applications**

Any charity, registered or excepted/exempted from registration, in the UK may make an application, except those seven organisations who were successful in being awarded an applied project grant in our first round of funding. Those organisations which were awarded a training, education and capacity building grant in the first round of funding are eligible to apply.

In advance of making any application you will need to read the following, [available here](#):

- the guidelines for training, education and capacity building grants;
- the guidelines for applied project grants; and
- our monitoring and evaluation approach for the STVS programme.

**The application requirements for the two funds are different. Please ensure you use the correct process to apply. However the dates for both are the same – the window to apply runs from 24 October 2016 to 23 January 2017 at 5pm**

The guidelines for each fund give full details of how to apply.

If you are considering making an application, we recommend that you consult our list of Frequently Asked Questions, accessible [here](#). You may also find it helpful to look at the grants we made in the first round of funding, a list is accessible [here](#). This will give you an idea of the sort of work we funded in the first round which was run along very similar lines.

Rather than providing telephone support to potential applicants, we will run two webinar sessions where those considering applying to us can ask questions in relation to either fund. The dates of these are 16 November 2016 and 13 December 2016 and details of how to join these will be available on our website from 3 November 2016. We feel this is a more fair and open way of assisting potential applicants than one to one telephone support. If you need technical support only with the online applications process please contact us at [Baring.Foundation@uk.ing.com](mailto:Baring.Foundation@uk.ing.com) or 020 7767 1348.

### **3. What we mean by ‘the law and human rights based approaches’**

Definitions of the law and human rights based approaches vary, but in this programme we use these terms in a broad and practical way.

We have a particular focus on the intersection between social justice and the law, this will include public interest law and regulation that impacts the voluntary sector explicitly. However, we are interested in how any part of the law can address discrimination and disadvantage – we recognise that this means the work of our grantees may touch on local, national and international law, as well as judicial decision making. We encourage applicants and partners to be creative in the way they use the law to achieve their objectives.

Similarly, we want human rights based approaches funded under the STVS programme to innovate and adapt, but we agree with the definition used by the Scottish Human Rights Commission:

*A human rights based approach is about empowering people to know and claim their rights and increasing the ability and accountability of individuals and institutions who are responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling rights.*

*This means giving people greater opportunities to participate in shaping the decisions that impact on their human rights. It also means increasing the ability of those with responsibility for fulfilling rights to recognise and know how to respect those rights, and make sure they can be held to account.*

*A human rights based approach is about ensuring that both the standards and the principles of human rights are integrated into policymaking as well as the day to day running of organisations.*

In line with this purposive approach to the law and human rights based approaches, we frequently refer to them as ‘tools’ that the voluntary sector can use to achieve their objectives.

Importantly, we recognise that these are two tools among many. Use of the law and human rights based approaches will only be effective when rooted within broader social change work.

### **4. What we want to achieve**

There are two long term goals of the programme which link closely with the overall purpose of The Baring Foundation:

- disadvantage and discrimination experienced by people in the UK is addressed more effectively; and
- an effective civil society in the UK able to act with independence of purpose, action and voice.

We aim to support voluntary sector organisations to:

- understand when, how and where the law or human rights based approaches can be effective tools to tackle directly discrimination and disadvantage and safeguard the freedom of purpose, action and voice of the voluntary sector;
- build sustainable collaborations and partnerships between organisations that leverage existing expertise within the sector to use the law and human rights based approaches;
- develop additional capacity to use the law and human rights within broader movements for social change;
- translate frontline activity into effective advocacy and policy change; and
- create the evidence base to support new streams of funding for this activity.

The Foundation has developed a monitoring and evaluation approach for the programme which is accessible [here](#).

## **5. Further background to the STVS programme**

Established in 1996 the STVS programme has shifted its focus periodically. For the first ten years the programme focused on the organisational development of voluntary sector organisations. In 2006 this shifted to prioritise the independence of the voluntary sector, with an increasing concentration on the advice sector. In 2012 the Foundation chose to focus exclusively on supporting advice organisations to build a future system of effective social welfare legal advice services through the Future Advice programme.

Future Advice worked to support the building of a future system of effective social welfare legal advice services – this programme continued until 2015.

We reviewed our approach to the STVS programme in 2015 with the aim of identifying a new focus that offered:

- a clear link to the purpose of the Foundation – to improve the quality of life of people experiencing disadvantage and discrimination;
- the potential to strengthen the voluntary sector in a real and lasting way;
- the best fit with our supportive and engaged approach, responding flexibly, creatively and pragmatically to the needs of our partners;
- opportunities for the Foundation to establish itself as a thought leader and a distinctive funder in the area - to encourage communication of knowledge and to influence others; and
- options for innovative grantmaking, particularly at the macro-level.

The Foundation made its choice from a wide range of different themes and approaches, informed by a series of roundtables attended by participants from the sector. We also commissioned research on shortlisted themes (available on our website). Of the shortlisted options, it was decided that support for effective use of the law and human rights based approaches was the best fit for the Foundation.

In part, this decision recognises our experience with the advice sector – our grantees have demonstrated the many and varied ways that the law and human rights can be used as tools of social change – protecting at risk individuals, bringing to light the complexities of disadvantage and championing community interest.

However, in the scoping research for this programme, Neil Crowther also suggested that:

*outside what might be described as the 'legal voluntary sector' engagement by the voluntary sector with the law and human rights appears to be mixed. That action and activity which does exist is at a relatively embryonic stage. The law does not seem to have commonly assumed a central place in the thinking of organisations otherwise involved in individual advocacy or the pursuit of wider social change.*

The programme aims to explore and address this low level of engagement and support organisations within the broader voluntary sector to consider and use these tools in a wide variety of ways.

**24 October 2016**