



The Baring Foundation

**AN  
UNEXAMINED  
TRUTH - UPDATE  
2013**

## The Baring Foundation

The Baring Foundation was set up in 1969. Its purpose is to improve the quality of life of people suffering disadvantage and discrimination. It aims to achieve this through making grants to strengthen organisations which serve disadvantaged people and by bringing added value to this process, especially through learning from grant-making.

### The Author

Matthew Smerdon was Deputy Director of the Baring Foundation from October 2004 to October 2013 and led the Foundation's Special Initiative on Climate Change.

### Acknowledgements

The Environmental Funders Network (EFN) has been a crucial resource for the Baring Foundation as we have developed our Climate Change Special Initiative. It has been a constant source of ideas, support and access to knowledgeable people working in this field. Matt Phillips from European Climate Foundation deserves special mention for the work he did to bring together a group of foundations and NGOs around the Energy Bill, helping to drive a highly effective collaboration. We continue to value the partnership with European Climate Foundation, now led by Keith Allott. The recent work being supported has been led by Ed Matthew and his team who are doing terrific work. The Baring Foundation trustees have remained committed to the Special Initiative at a time when the Foundation's resources are under intense pressure, which is thanks to the work of people like Ed. Trustees have recognised the importance of continuing to support work in this field and that progress is not just urgent, but possible.

**October 2013**

## AN UNEXAMINED TRUTH – 2013 UPDATE

### Summary

The Foundation first turned its attention to the impacts of climate change following the publication of the Stern Review in 2006. Early work led to the launch of a Special Initiative where we decided to focus on how to engage non-environmental voluntary organisations in action on climate change.

This reflected a belief that non-environmental voluntary organisations needed to understand how the impacts of climate change would affect their primary charitable purpose. This was not about creating new environmental experts. It was about helping experts on poverty, refugees, vulnerable children or health, for example, to see how their work urgently needed to take account of the impacts climate change.

The Special Initiative has been divided into three phases.

1. 2007-2010: four projects were funded to develop and test methods for engaging different parts of the non-environmental voluntary sector. This helped the 22 participating organisations to make meaningful connections between the impacts of climate change and their primary charitable purpose. It led organisations to take action on reducing their carbon footprints, planning for services to adapt and some organisations developed policy positions. (Baring Foundation contribution £280,180)
2. 2010-2011: we became particularly interested in how to develop the policy contribution of influential non-environmental voluntary organisations. We had seen that some organisations needed additional support and guidance to identify policy priorities and to develop confident positions. Working with a group of other funders, led by the European Climate Foundation, we supported outreach and research to engage non-environmental voluntary organisations in a major policy campaign on energy efficiency. (Baring Foundation contribution £100,000)
3. 2012-ongoing: That work secured major new public policy on energy efficiency but the partners involved saw that a similar large effort was required to secure the public finance to implement this policy effectively. A new campaign, called the Energy Bill Revolution, was developed to call on the government to use the revenues generated by carbon tax to fund home energy efficiency retro-fits on a nation-wide scale. Non-environmental organisations were seen as having an essential contribution to make to the success of this campaign. (Baring Foundation contribution £100,000)

## Conclusions

The Foundation is a generalist funder and had no previous focus on the environment. When we first explored this area, we saw that the impacts of climate change make this so much more than an environmental issue. The focus on engaging non-environmental groups has proved highly productive. It has helped to increase knowledge about how to engage these groups and the closer focus since 2010 on practical engagement around urgent policy issues has helped to bring in new and influential voices into the effort. Much remains to be done to secure the scale of change that is urgently necessary, however new groups are involved in this which we hope will be part of securing these outcomes.

# The Baring Foundation Special Initiative on Climate Change

## IPCC Assessment Report

At the end of September 2013, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published its *Fifth Assessment Report* looking at the scientific basis for climate change. In it, the IPCC strengthens the degree of certainty that fossil fuel burning and other human activities are responsible for the warming of the globe seen over the past half-century, raising its confidence from 'very likely' in the previous report to 'extremely likely' in the current one. The report concludes that 'Continued emissions of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and changes in all components of the climate system. Limiting climate change will require substantial and sustained reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.' For the first time, the IPCC supports setting an upper limit on greenhouse gas emissions, establishing a level at which emissions have to stop in order to avoid irreversible changes to the climate. It warns that the target is likely to be exceeded in a matter of decades without urgent action.

This section summarises the three phases of the Foundation's Climate Change Special Initiative.

### Phase 1 – 2007-2010 learning about engaging non-environmental voluntary organisations

The 2006 Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change prompted our trustees to consider what the Foundation should be contributing to efforts to tackle climate change. As a generalist funder with no previous focus on the environment, we started, very much, with a blank sheet of paper. Our early work helped to emphasise that the human impacts of climate change made this much more than just an environmental issue, requiring the involvement of many different types of organisations. As a Foundation, we already knew some of these types of organisations very well.

The Foundation's main purpose is to tackle disadvantage and discrimination. This means our funding relationships are traditionally with, broadly, social welfare voluntary organisations. We were interested to explore how these organisations might be helped to explore how climate change would affect their *primary charitable purpose*. How would climate change affect, for example, the work of an organisation tackling poverty in London, or an organisation supporting refugees, or an organisation

supporting vulnerable children. And, if a meaningful connection could be made between the impacts of climate change and the needs they were tackling, how could they be helped to respond?

This was not about creating new experts on climate change, it was about helping existing experts on poverty, children, refugees and so on to realise how their work would be profoundly affected. One particular advantage we could see, was the potential for this to draw in new, and possibly unexpected, voices into the climate arena with benefits for practice and for influencing policy.

In September 2008, four projects were funded at a cost of £280,180 to work with different parts of the non-environmental voluntary sector.

**The Big Response**, delivered by the National Council of Voluntary Organisations, Global Action Plan and Green Alliance working with organisations that support vulnerable people. These included British Red Cross, Equinox Care, Friends of the Elderly and the Royal National Institute of Blind People.

**Towards *Climate Smart Children and Youth Organisations***, delivered by National Children's Bureau and the Institute of Development Studies working with children and youth organisations including the Pre-School Learning Alliance, Action for Children and the National Youth Agency.

**Shared Energy**, delivered by bassac, New Economics Foundation, Community Development Foundation, Community Sector Coalition and Groundwork working with nine community anchor organisations.

**The "Climate Refugee" roundtable** delivered by Climate Outreach and Information Network (COIN) working closely with five refugee and human rights organisations, the International Secretariat of Amnesty International, the Refugee Council, Refugee Action, Asylum Aid and Praxis, and having wider engagement with a further 29 other refugee and human rights organisations.

That work generated useful outputs and outcomes:

All four projects designed **new processes to engage the participating organisations**. These included bespoke training, workshops, roundtable meetings, games and exercises, scenario planning and input from climate experts. Each project produced printed material and websites that went on to be publicly available and that were widely distributed to organisations in the voluntary sector.

All the non-environmental voluntary organisations that took part in the project succeeded in making **meaningful connections between the**

**impacts of climate change and their primary charitable purpose.** Levels of understanding about climate change increased dramatically.

Organisations' responses were particularly strong on **planning how future services would have to adapt.** They grasped the importance of adaptation in order to ensure services will meet the needs of their beneficiaries and how these needs might change or become more severe as a result of climate change.

Some organisations also **developed policy positions** and went on to carry out advocacy work with others in their sector, reaching large numbers of organisations through their members and networks, and with local and national policy makers.

Organisations sought to **sustain their work on climate issues** by including it in their strategic plans and by ensuring that trustees include environmental responsibility as part of their remit.

**New partnerships arose out of this work** between a range of voluntary organisations that outlasted that phase of the Special Initiative. For example, NCVO went on to develop significantly its services to members on addressing climate change issues through publications, guidance, events and practical support. In another example, COIN has developed its work exploring the complex relationships between climate change and the movement of people. It established the UK Climate Change and Migration Coalition, a network of refugee, migration and human rights organisations who work together on these issues (see [www.climateoutreach.org.uk/projects-2/climate-change-migration-and-displacement/](http://www.climateoutreach.org.uk/projects-2/climate-change-migration-and-displacement/)).

The principal conclusion of that work was that It is desirable and possible to engage non-environmental voluntary organisations in climate change issues. Non-environmental voluntary organisations have important roles to play – providing services, identifying new needs, planning for emergency responses, engaging people on issues such as behaviour change and influencing policy.

This work was written up in 2010 in a report called *An Unexamined Truth*, available on the Baring Foundation web-site.

## Phase 2 2010-2012 – engaging non-environmental voluntary organisations in a particular policy objective

Work by organisations involved in the first phase on planning how services can adapt was worthwhile. It demonstrated the focus of these organisations on responding to the direct needs of their beneficiaries. Action on reducing energy use and switching to clean energy sources was also useful as organisations could reduce their own emissions. However, we saw that the process of extending engagement like this across the wider voluntary sector, to the point where it was producing benefit on the sort of scale that was required, would require extensive resources, certainly beyond the scope of the Special Initiative.

We had also grown to feel that the most significant contribution that the non-environmental voluntary sector could make to efforts on climate change was to contribute their expertise and influence on policy change. In this, we drew on analysis by organisations such as the European Climate Foundation (ECF) about what strategies could generate most benefit for the least cost.

Throughout the Special Initiative, the Foundation had been drawing on the support of experienced environmental funders through the Environmental Funders Network (EFN), in particular Jon Cracknell. Under EFN's umbrella, a sub-group on climate change had come together, led by Matt Phillips of ECF.

The Baring Foundation was involved in discussions with this group which began plotting out issues on which to collaborate. An exercise had been carried out to consult NGOs in the field about priorities for action. This revealed a view shared strongly by funders and organisations that energy efficiency would be a productive issue on which to work. This was for a number of reasons which fitted well with our previous experience of the Special Initiative:

**Important targets would not be met** – In December 2008, the EU committed to improving energy savings by 20% by 2020. It was clear that the strategy to meet this target was not in place, with the European Commission estimating that existing policies would only meet slightly more than half of this objective. At a UK level, the Department for Energy and Climate Change proposals under the Labour Government and of the incoming Coalition were also insufficient.

**Progress on energy efficiency could make a considerable contribution to meeting these targets** – ECF estimated that a credible programme on energy efficiency would yield 40 million tonnes reduction in carbon emissions. In its view, in the near term, energy efficiency was the most cost-effective means for reducing Europe's domestic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the



most immediate way for the UK to meet its commitments on greenhouse gas reductions.

**Energy efficiency provides many positive entry points for funders and voluntary organisations** – This aspect fitted particularly well with the Baring Foundation’s interest and experience. We saw how energy efficiency was a policy area offering strong justifications for non-environmental voluntary organisations to be involved given its contribution to protecting vulnerable people from high energy bills, tackling poverty, improving living conditions, promoting good health and general well-being and stimulating economic opportunities and employment. It is a particularly productive area where a number of interests coincide.

Plans for an Energy Bill were announced in the Queen’s speech in May 2010. The key NGO organisations working in this field were clear that the proposed legislation would not be ambitious enough and that a policy effort was required to push and secure the level of action that was needed.

A campaign proposal was developed by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Friends of the Earth (FoE). A group of funders, led by ECF, gathered around this proposal. The Baring Foundation offered our perspective on the potential for, and value of, engaging non-environmental organisations in this campaign and agreed to contribute resources that would address that particular element of the strategy. This gave the Foundation an opportunity to test our view that these additional voices could be useful.

In a sense, whilst the focus of the Special Initiative remained absolutely on engaging non-environmental voluntary organisations in action on climate change, we turned the process of the previous phase of the Special Initiative on its head. Rather than helping organisations to make the connections with climate change and then see what action they would subsequently take, an area for urgent action was identified and we thought about which non-environmental organisations could most usefully be engaged in this effort. The key was to identify an issue which was relevant and accessible to many, and energy efficiency ticked the boxes.

## The campaign

The aim was to carry out a campaign to promote home energy efficiency and to reduce emissions from the housing sector. The main focus of the campaign was the government Energy Bill introduced in 2011. The Bill sought to present a coherent package of measures that the government would adopt in order to deliver on carbon and energy demand reduction from existing homes.

The collaboration aimed to push the policy so that the following outcomes would be secured:

- a reduction of CO2 emissions by 42m tonnes per year by 2030;
- the creation of a major new market for the energy efficiency sector of hundreds of thousands of dwellings needing energy efficiency “retrofits” i.e. work such as adding insulation, replacing windows and heating systems, that improves the energy efficiency of a building – in turn driving green growth in the economy; and
- a major contribution to addressing the disadvantage experienced by UK households that suffered from fuel poverty and to preventing excess winter deaths.

In order to secure these outcomes, the organisations collaborating on this work needed to secure:

- a credible energy efficiency programme capable of overcoming the multiple barriers to uptake;
- appropriate public finance mechanisms; and
- new regulation, for example minimum energy efficiency performance standards for private rented accommodation.

In the first wave of the work through 2011, ECF coordinated a group of funders including Tellus Mater Foundation, Schroeder Foundation, Polden Puckham Charitable Trust and Network for Social Change. Contributions covered the core work by WWF-UK and Friends of the Earth as well as efforts by the environmental organisation E3G to work on the public finance issues relating to energy efficiency, the Green Deal.

The particular role for the Baring Foundation funding was to secure the meaningful and effective involvement of key non-environmental organisations in the campaign. The mechanics of engaging these organisations would build on the expertise and resources developed by the work of the Special Initiative up to that point. A grant of £100,000 was used to:

- fund an outreach worker based at Stop Climate Chaos to engage and support non-environmental organisations to bring their expertise and

their constituencies to bear on this issue;

- research and publish *The Health Impacts of Cold Homes and Fuel Poverty* by the Marmot Review Team at UCL as part of providing the evidence base for new NGOs to engage on energy efficiency and the campaign; and
- make grants to National Children's Bureau and Transform UK to enable them to develop their work on energy efficiency policy.

## Principal outcomes

The main outcomes of the work included:

- a significant achievement was secured by the work when the Government agreed to amend the Energy Bill so that it would include mandatory energy efficiency standards for private rented accommodation by 2016. This means 692,000 dwellings will need to have their energy efficiency improved. This will, in turn, create much improved housing for many as well as a major new market for retrofit providers;
- this also permanently removes the problem of vulnerable citizens in poor quality private rented accommodation not being able to improve the efficiency of their home, thereby addressing one of the major causes of fuel poverty affecting these households;
- it also establishes a precedent for government to set minimum efficiency standards which is of international significance both for the private rented sector, but also in due course for all properties at point of sale.

## Other outcomes

Engaging and mobilising non-environmental organisations was a major theme of the effort and there was good evidence that this has permanently engaged social welfare organisations in energy efficiency policy. The key triggers for this were the publication of the Marmot Review Team report and the presence of a dedicated resource (an outreach worker) to engage and support organisations to get involved.

A draft of the Marmot Review Team's report was discussed at a seminar organised by Friends of the Earth in Westminster in April 2011 to build support for the report and its conclusions ahead of its public launch. This was attended by over 40 people including representatives of the National Childbirth Trust, National Children's Bureau, Save the Children, Child Poverty Action Group, Royal College of Nursing, Royal College of Physicians, British Medical Journal (BMJ), UK Public Health Association (UKPHA) and Climate and Health Council (CHC). Following the seminar a number of organisations agreed to co-sponsor the final report including

Save the Children, National Children's Bureau, Citizens Advice, UKPHA, CHC and the Faculty of Public Health (amongst others). By co-sponsoring the report they were able to use it within their own organisations and policy communities and thereby deepened their involvement in this area of work.

A parliamentary launch was held in May and the report was covered extensively in the press. Sir Richard Thompson, President of the Royal College of Physicians said:

*"This report, with its powerful evidence of the harm cold housing does to health should be the catalyst for strong government action to help people insulate and heat their homes, particularly to protect children and older people."*

The report was also the subject of the lead editorial in the BMJ which concluded:

*"Britain... is saddled with obsolete housing stock many decades, if not centuries, old. These inadequate homes are a waste of energy, a health hazard, and (given today's levels of national wealth) a shameful relic for their part in fostering persistent, avoidable, social inequity. For many reasons—economic, ethical, environmental, and epidemiological—governments should heed the call in this timely report."*

The report proved highly influential, being quoted on numerous occasions in Parliament during debates on the Energy Bill and it was a core piece of evidence in the interim findings of the Hills Review looking at the causes and impacts of fuel poverty.

One important example of the Marmot Review Team report engaging social welfare organisations in energy efficiency in new ways was Save the Children UK. This organisation had a strong track-record of work on child poverty and had traditionally oriented its energy policy advocacy towards efforts on income measures such as keeping fuel prices low. Following the Marmot Review Team report, Save the Children reconsidered its approach and recognised the direct impact on its constituency of energy inefficient homes and the need to adopt efficiency retrofit as the solution.

More broadly the outreach element of the work created a coalition of more than 100 organisations, unprecedented on energy efficiency. The coalition embraced social organisations (such as National Children's Bureau, Age UK, Citizens Advice, National Energy Action, Locality, Christian Aid, Tear Fund, Cafod), consumer organisations (Consumer Focus), blue chip business (B&Q, Tesco), green organisations (FoE, WWF, Greenpeace, RSPB) and others. Within this broad coalition are a number of the 22 organisations that took part in the first phase of the Foundation's

Special Initiative. Given that one of the lessons of previous work was the lack of confidence organisations had in taking up new policy positions, this programme on energy efficiency certainly provided a practical way for these organisations to take forward their interest in climate change in effective ways.

Other policy outcomes were achieved through the legislation. Whilst overall government spending on energy efficiency through its previous scheme called *Warm Front* had been cut by the Treasury, financing arrangements through the Supplier's Obligation on utilities (now known as the Energy Company Obligation) was retained. The availability of low cost finance was also been enhanced through a formal clause requiring the Green Investment Bank to be involved in energy efficiency finance.

Finally, a group of UK funders aligning their funding did achieve leverage and demonstrated the value of this sort of collaboration. A workshop was held at the conference of the Association of Charitable Foundations (the umbrella body for UK trusts and foundations) and shared lessons both about this work and about the experience of funder collaboration.

### What was not achieved

Having achieved progress at the policy level, attention then turned to how policy would be implemented. The Government has put its faith in its Green Deal programme. Some aspects of this are helpful (principally the ability of householders to pay back a loan to carry out energy efficiency improvements through energy bills). It is also clear that the main business and energy efficiency stakeholders want the scheme to work. However, the proposals presented in the Bill were in a half-formed state with no purpose or performance expectation. While progress has been made on the latter, there still remained a major gap around the financing of energy efficiency and the delivery model.

### Conclusions 2010-2011

The success of this work supported the original assumptions underpinning the Special Initiative about the role of non-environmental voluntary organisations in action on climate change, namely:

- that these organisations have a direct interest in understanding the impacts of climate change;
- that, having made the connection between the impacts of climate change and their charitable purpose, they want to put this knowledge to use;
- that they benefit from having support to do this;
- that focusing action on the policy arena helps to secure much

more widespread benefits than focusing on organisations' own environmental footprint or on how their own services might adapt;

- that when engaged in this way organisations can provide valuable additional evidence and influence in order to encourage positive action on climate change;
- that energy efficiency provides a very productive area on which to make connections and to collaborate – the outcomes secured have significant environmental, social, health and economic benefits.

One striking outcome is that whilst we embarked on this work principally to see how non-environmental organisations could help to promote pro-environmental action, the benefits of success have certainly flowed the other way. A housing organisation that had been battling to improve the quality of the worst rented housing may never have imagined the role a new Energy Act could potentially play in helping to realise this objective.

Another important point to note is the mix of sophistication and dogged determination that went into the planning and delivery of this work to build the evidence and use it successfully to influence the policy. A significant side benefit of this work for the Baring Foundation was in seeing how the environmental sector goes about influencing policy. A number of lessons have been taken from this work and applied to other areas of our work.

However, the positive policy gains now needed to be implemented and the concern was that the government had not allocated the necessary resources.

Meanwhile, energy bills were rising, creating considerable public concern and creating a fuel poverty crisis. It was estimated by the organisation *Consumer Focus*, using figures produced by the Department for Environment and Climate Change, that by the end of 2011 6.4 million households in the UK (equivalent to 1 in 4) would be in fuel poverty, spending 10% or more of their income on energy. In Scotland the figure was 1 in 3. UK's reliance on fossil fuels for its energy needs makes UK households vulnerable to rising and volatile fossil fuel prices. One important way of lessening these impacts is to be using less fuel by improving energy efficiency.

### Phase 3 – 2012- the present continuing to push the role of non-environmental voluntary organisations in securing large-scale change

To make every home in the UK energy efficient requires much greater financial support from the UK Government than was planned. In 2012, the government was backing a scatter-gun approach dependent on individual householders, taking up measures such as the Green Deal, rather than programmatic approach of street-by-street initiatives backed by grants, no-interest loans and supply-chain economies of scale. Such programmatic approaches are known to work, but require public finance. At the same time fuel poverty levels continued to increase as a result of rising gas prices and the fact that the UK's poorly insulated homes waste so much heat. Measures to boost household income via winter fuel payments or measures to set the costs of energy are short-term fixes and the only permanent solution to rises in the cost of energy and fuel poverty is home insulation and other waste-reduction measures. These permanently reduce the requirement for heat in the first place.

As a result, in 2011, Transform UK began work to develop a major campaign on securing public finance for energy efficiency. In the economic climate, securing major public finance for energy efficiency is a tough objective. In fact, there are a number of rational reasons in support. Most importantly, government was on the verge of dramatically increasing the revenues it receives from household energy bills. This is because from 2013 it introduces a carbon floor price which means that every CO2 tonne emitted will result in a payment to HM Treasury. Over the life of this policy, and the Emissions Trading Scheme of the EU, HM Treasury will receive more than £60 billion in revenues via this route. This is additional revenue, based on a policy that increases bills. The case is therefore clear to argue that a proportion of the revenues should be recycled to energy efficiency programmes in order to mitigate the impact.

In 2012 the Foundation agreed to continue collaboration with ECF to create a meeting point of environmental, social and consumer interests to encourage the government to back energy efficiency programmes. This depended on persuading organisations that energy efficiency, rather than a focus on prices, is the permanent solution to fuel poverty. Since 2012, work has focused on establishing the coalition and its evidence and infrastructure that will drive it.

Specifically the Baring Foundation has provided funds to:

- (i) contribute core funding to the campaign team's work to mobilise non-environmental organisations. This team comprises the campaign director, a communication and activism manager and a parliamentary campaign manager. A high quality campaign website has been set up (see [www.energybillrevolution.org](http://www.energybillrevolution.org)). This includes a petition

which has been agreed with the alliance partners. It enables petition signatories also to email their MPs. It keeps track of MPs' responses and tailors replies accordingly, includes all news and reports from the campaign and keeps an updated list of alliance members. It also provides information on fuel poverty levels in all UK constituencies and will provide information on public meetings about the campaign being held around the UK this winter.

- (ii) support Barnardo's to produce a short film on the impact of fuel poverty on children available on the Energy Bill Revolution web-site.
- (iii) fund the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to extend research looking at the segments of the population most vulnerable to cold homes.

By October 2010, the campaign comprised over 100 organisations and a host of campaigning, media and research activities. Supporters include unions, green groups, children's charities, 30 major businesses, leading consumer groups, energy switching companies, women's groups, disability groups, homeless groups, health groups, youth organisations and old age groups. It represented by far the broadest and biggest energy efficiency/fuel poverty alliance that has ever been created in the UK.

The following is a selection of comments by organisations that have been engaged:

*"Cold homes are not only leading to the deaths of thousands of older people each winter, they are costing the NHS in England £1.36 billion a year due to the devastating impact on people's health. Using the money raised from carbon taxes to overhaul the energy efficiency of the UK's housing stock would offer a lasting solution to the scourge of fuel poverty."* Michelle Mitchell, Age UK's Charity Director General

*"Millions of families are struggling to pay their energy bills across the country. Cold homes have terrible impacts on children, affecting everything from respiratory problems and mental health through to educational attainment: this is a national disgrace. The National Children's Bureau is a leading partner in the Energy Bill Revolution campaign, and together we are calling on the Government to use carbon taxes to drive down bills and end the suffering caused by cold homes."* Dr Hilary Emery, Chief Executive of National Children's Bureau

*"A warm home should be a basic right and is as essential to families as food, drink, shelter and education. Our recent study run in conjunction with the Energy Bill Revolution showed nine in ten families are now rationing heating use for fear of not being able to pay the bills – this is not acceptable in 2013. The Government*



*needs to rethink energy policy to provide a sustainable system for future generations, which means making UK homes much more energy efficient. This is why Netmums and our million members are proud to support this call.”* Sally Russell, founder of the UK’s largest parenting site Netmums

To bring the story up to the present day, the achievements so far have included:

**Campaign Website:** An interactive campaign website has been set up which includes a campaign petition linked to an email action to Members of Parliament, details of alliance members, research findings, data on fuel poverty in every UK parliamentary constituency, details of public campaign events and a capability for the public to leave messages about their concerns regarding energy bills and fuel poverty. See [www.energybillrevolution.org](http://www.energybillrevolution.org).

**Biggest Ever Fuel Poverty Alliance:** The biggest and broadest fuel poverty alliance in the world has been formed in support of the campaign. It now includes 150 major national organisations, including 30 major companies, all the major unions, all the major children’s groups and old age groups, all the major green groups as well as leading consumer groups, youth groups, women’s groups, disability groups, housing groups and health bodies.

**Parliamentary & Political Impact:** The Campaign was launched at an Energy Bill Revolution seminar in Parliament and a successful reception has also been held in The House of Commons in partnership with the National Children’s Bureau who have trained up children as spokespeople for the campaign. After one year there are now 200 Members of Parliament in support of the campaign. A letter from the CEO’s of over 100 of the alliance members was sent to the Prime Minister in January 2013. It received front page coverage in The Times newspaper and led to direct discussions between The Energy Bill Revolution and No. 10. The Prime Minister pledged in February 2013 that he wants the UK to be the most energy efficient country in Europe.

In August 2013 the **Liberal Democrats** published a major new policy document, ‘Green Growth, Green Jobs’, which included a policy commitment to adopt the Energy Bill Revolution campaign ask. This was approved at the party conference in September 2013 and is now official party policy. This represents a major breakthrough for the campaign with one of the three major political parties in the UK committed to the campaign objective.

In October 2013 the **Labour party** announced that it would freeze energy prices for 20 months if it won the 2015 election. However, importantly they also announced that they would scrap the Green Deal and the

Energy Company Obligation and replace them with more effective energy efficiency schemes. This is partly as a result of the political pressure and engagement achieved by the campaign over the last 18 months and represents a major political opportunity to achieve the support of the opposition party. The next nine months will be critical in delivering on this opportunity.

**Activism Partnerships:** Partnerships have been set up with key alliance organisations to secure the support of their members for the Energy Bill Revolution campaign. During the first Winter Push (2012/13) activism support was provided by Age UK, Netmums, Unite, Unison and Friends of the Earth. The campaign now has 26,000 supporters who have joined the campaign petition and emailed their MP. A new activism strategy for the Winter of 2013/2014 is in place which includes planning for a Week of Action. The aim is to achieve the support of at least 200,000 members of the public for the campaign.

**Public Meetings:** During the winter of 2012 to 2013 25 public meetings were held in key parliamentary constituencies across the UK to promote the aims of the campaign. These meetings addressed the issue of fuel poverty, the energy bill crisis and related solutions and have been critical in galvanising support from the constituency MPs for the campaign. A smaller number of meetings are being planned for 2013/2014 with the aim of targeting the UK's major cities and attracting even larger audiences.

**Health Sector Engagement:** A dedicated health project has led to several major health partners joining the campaign including the Royal College of Nursing, UK Health Forum and the Council for Disabled Children. Strong engagement has also been achieved with the National Institute of Clinical Excellence and Public Health England. A seminar with the health sector is planned for November 2013.

**Economic Research:** As noted above, research by Cambridge Econometrics has found that investment in energy efficiency programmes is better for growth and jobs than any other public investment or equivalent tax breaks.

**Other Research:** Other important research has been commissioned and published. This has revealed that the UK Government has reduced funding for the fuel poor, that the UK has the worst record on fuel poverty in Western Europe. Further research has also been commissioned from the UK's leading academic body investigating health impacts of fuel poverty, the London School of Hygiene, to assess the impacts on children of living in cold homes and the number and type of hospital admissions attributable to fuel poverty.

**Media Coverage:** A high level of media coverage was secured during the first Winter Push with the support of Portland PR agency. The partnership

has generated over 50 news reports covering the campaign including two front page articles. It has also received coverage in over 100 local newspapers and on 30 local radio stations across the UK.

**Business Steering Group:** A steering group has been set up in partnership with 12 major business partners.

To be continued...

The key elements of the next phase of the campaign are as follows:

1. **General Election Target:** The aim is to secure manifesto commitments from all major political parties in the lead up to the General Election in 2015 to use carbon revenue to super-insulate homes of the fuel poor.
2. **Alliance:** To build the biggest, broadest and most effective fuel poverty alliance ever created in support of the campaign. The challenge is to maximise the active participation of the organisations already engaged to generate political support for the campaign. This will involve the following during 2014:
  - implement a new activism strategy to make it easier for alliance members to provide activism support (see Public Mobilisation below).
  - seek priority levels of engagement from 10 high profile groups including Age UK, Barnardo's, National Energy Action, Consumer Futures Association for the Conservation of Energy and Federation of Master Builders.
  - focus expansion of the alliance on those groups that have the potential to advance the campaign politically. This includes aiming to achieve the support of the Women's Institute, the Church of England and Citizens Advice Bureau.
  - aim for the alliance, dominated by non-environmental groups, to write together to all the major party leaders during the winter of 2013/14.
  - ask social charities to generate case studies demonstrating the severe impacts of fuel poverty.
  - work with health experts and health bodies to communicate the health impacts of living in cold homes to leverage a higher level of political support.
3. **Research:** To back up the campaign with further credible analysis and research, in partnership with some of the UK's leading fuel poverty, economic and health institutions.

4. **Public mobilisation:** To work with alliance partners to activate 200,000 people to support the campaign by signing the campaign petition and engage their MP. The aim is to secure the support of the majority of MPs from all the main parties ahead of election 2015 through public meetings and a Warm Homes Week of Action in February 2014 to achieve public support for the campaign and media coverage.
5. **Business mobilisation:** To work with alliance business partners to highlight the economic benefits of investment in a major energy efficiency programme funded by carbon revenue, making the case for it to be the UK's priority infrastructure investment. To be backed up by further economic and financial research.
6. **Political engagement:** To encourage alliance partners to engage with all key Government departments, including Ministers, lead officials and advisors as well as the opposition.
7. **Communication:** To keep the campaign website updated and to adopt and implement a communication and media strategy to demonstrate why a major energy efficiency programme is the best solution to fuel poverty.

## Conclusion

The Special Initiative has developed in interesting ways since it was launched. The Foundation has gone from engaging organisations in rather general ways, to thinking very strategically about where to prioritise action to achieve environmental and social benefits, and then consciously to bring together the voluntary organisations that can help achieve that. The Foundation feels that it has offered encouragement to seek a deeper connection between non-environmental actors and climate solutions and that this has made a useful contribution.



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