

The Kestrelman Trust



KT Trustees Report 2016/17

Achievements and performance

In the year to August 2017, the Trust approved grants of just under £470,000. This was a similar level to the previous accounting period and again in line with the desired annual range of between £300,000 and £500,000.

Just over half of the total granted went towards environmental causes, both in the UK and abroad. The two second largest areas, representing around a quarter of the total each, were social inclusion and relief for refugees and those in need. A small amount went towards education and the arts.

The trust remains focused on giving to a relatively small number of organisations with whom the trustees have existing relationships and where there is a strong understanding of each other's respective objectives. As such, the number of separate organisations receiving grants fell when compared to last year, from 35 to 31. This is a trend which is expected to continue and as a result, external ("cold") applications are rarely successful.

The trustees are aware that organisations can become dependent on any one source of funding. One of their aims is to avoid a situation whereby an organisation is dependent on the Kestrelman Trust. So whilst the Trust will often agree to making a series of grants to the same organisation over a multiple year period, the trustees encourage recipients to find alternative sources of funding before the end of the grant giving period. The trustees believe this is a sustainable approach which promotes longevity. Existing beneficiaries are expected to provide updates to the Trustees at least every 6 months.

Grants are categorized as either "strategic" (organisations or projects trying to make a fundamental change to the way something is done, a longer-term focus) or "sticking plaster" (a short-term fix to solve a small part of what is often a much larger issue). As in previous years, most grants made (around 90%) fell into the first category and the trustees are comfortable with this split.

In the main, grants are made to organisations working in areas of personal interest to the Trustees. These include the preservation of the environment, sustainable and democratic economic growth and degrowth, researching longstanding alternatives to traditional natural fuels, the integration of marginalised individuals and communities and combatting exploited, often underprivileged societies.

Some examples of organisations in the environmental sector were Client Earth and their work to stop illegal logging in the Bialowieza Forest, The Climate Coalition and their "Speak Up Week of Action", Wildlife & Countryside Link, Synchronicity Earth, The London Wildlife Trust and Platform (London).

Under the social inclusion category were beneficiaries including Crisis and their Skylight project, St Mungo's Putting Down Roots gardening project and Landworks and The Clink Charity who both run work-based training schemes for ex-offenders.

Two local charities supported this year include the Library of Things, an organisation founded on the principle that "borrowing not buying" makes for a happier and healthier community – targeting those in less-privileged parts of London. The project has so far helped people start their own companies, create shared gardens and orchards, organise local markets and put on parties and festivals, which have all brought people together.

In the same vein of bringing people together, London-based East End Trades Guild have created a community of small independent businesses and the self-employed. EETG members not only offer goods and services to the public but share social spaces where they can create and build

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personal and commercial relationships (as neighbours) to, they say, make the local area a safer and better place to be.

Relief for refugees and those in need remains a key theme for the Trustees; City of Sanctuary, whose vision is for the UK to be a welcoming place of safety for people fleeing violence and persecution, and Freedom United, which is fighting against modern slavery where people, not just in the UK, are working for little or no pay, controlled by threats, debt, and violence.

Another area of interest for the Trustees relates to the democratisation and openness of trade negotiations; groups such as Trade Justice Movement and Global Justice Now are calling for full transparency and for the right to public consultation. The trustees expect their support for such groups to continue.

Two other, long standing, beneficiaries that were again granted to this year were Medicine Sans Frontiers and TEMWA.

Plans for future years

The trustees will continue to focus on giving to strategic projects in the environmental, social inclusion and sustainable development sectors. The Trust will continue with its divestment from areas with a high exposure to fossil fuels in favour of sustainable and low-carbon based investment funds, which their financial advisers are helping to facilitate.

The intention is to carry on supporting refugees, ex-offenders, the local community and movements working towards sustainable international economic development and alternative fair trade systems.