

The Kestrelman Trust



KT Trustees Report 2015/16

Achievements and performance

In the year to August 2016, the Trust approved grants of around £465,000. Whilst this was slightly higher than in the previous three years, it remained within the desired range.

As last year, our priority for grant giving is to the environmental sector – broadly defined – in the UK and elsewhere. Our interest remains primarily in supporting the sustainable use of resources in socially equitable ways. Other areas of major interest are in fair and sustainable economic growth/managed degrowth, the social inclusion of marginalised communities and in providing opportunities and vocational training to disadvantaged individuals and groups.

By and large within all sectors to which we donate, decisions on the level and direction of grants relate to the Trustees' personal interests. Only rarely are external applications accepted. However, all projects of whatever provenance are assessed prior to approval, with the expectation that grantees will provide regular reports. Moreover, for reference purposes, we continue to segregate grants into what we have called "strategic" and "sticking plaster" to distinguish and maintain a balance between both function and time-scale. Whilst strategic projects have been strongly favoured in the past, there was a finer balance this year between these two areas. Going forward, we will focus on making lasting differences to peoples' lives, favouring the strategic classification.

Over the reporting period, the number of recipients remained higher than we would like with around 35 separate beneficiaries. This includes those charities who received more than one grant in the 12 months. In value terms, support for the environment represented just under forty-percent of the total, with social inclusion and relief for refugees and those in need, around a quarter each.

Close to home we continued to support the restoration work at Wiltons' Music Hall in Shadwell, London. We also shared the vision of Greater London National Park (GLNP), which is looking to ensure there are sufficient wild and natural spaces throughout the city, and that its existing open green spaces remain so. Similarly, we contributed to London Wildlife Trust's Wild London Future Fund who are protecting London's wildlife and nature reserves now and for future generations.

Two other groups with a more local presence were Time and Talents, who run targeted community projects for those in the need including the elderly and disabled, and Bede House, both organisations with the objective of creating a strong, resilient, happy, and supportive community.

In Penzance, we continued to fund the salary of a YMCA outreach worker, who is providing invaluable assistance to troubled youngsters in an area that is blighted by homelessness, crime and drugs, perhaps as a consequence of the seasonality of employment.

Also within the UK, we contributed to the work of Crisis and in particular its Skylight project for training homeless people and young offenders in order to help them start rebuilding their lives. St Mungo's, who also operate in this field, are another organisation which we continue to fund.

Another of the Trust's priorities is to fund innovative and 'challenger' groups such as the New Economics Foundation.

More generally in the environmental sector, the Trust is working with charities to support renewable energy, wildlife conservation and assist both in the mitigation and adaption to global climate change. Groups supported in this area included Platform (London), John Muir Trust, Green Alliance, Client Earth and the Marine Conservation Society.

Overseas, the Trust supported Afrikids in their work to empower girls with a voice and to give

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them choice and control over their own bodies by teaching them about sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The Trust again supported Temwa, a charity operating in remote, rural areas of Northern Malawi with a focus on solving issues related to food shortages, the availability of basic education and infrastructural issues including access to healthcare, transport facilities and controlling deforestation which leads to flooding and displacement.

The Trust supported some more mainstream charities, such as Medicins Sans Frontieres, the RNLI and Mountain Rescue England & Wales, as well as some more niche areas. For example, we have continued our funding of a project to publish a map of informal communal taxi routes in Mozambique's capital to formalize their role in commuting (vis a vis the private car).

The Trustees have longstanding connections with Poland and have provided funds to Otwarta Rzeczpospolita, a well-established human rights group. Other Polish projects included Red Nose, which sent clowns into children's wards in several of Warsaw's hospitals as well as the restoration of a number of organ pipes in the Franciscan Church of the Holy Trinity in Gdansk.

In the year 2015-16, the Trust saw an increase in the number of grants made. Going forward, the intention is to reverse this trend, and give larger sums to fewer beneficiaries. Whilst the Trustees are interested in all grants being of a meaningful size, the trustees are aware that charities can be destabilised by inflows which are considerably larger than those which they may have been accustomed to. We plan to maintain our focus on strategic giving in the environmental social inclusion/justice and sustainable economic development areas.

Plans for future years

Over the next four to five years, the Trust has pledged to divest from fossil fuels and instead invest in solutions such as clean technology and energy efficiency, within the framework of Divest Invest Europe. Although existing investments in oil, gas and coal were already very low, the Trust's exposure to these areas continues to fall, as monitored by our financial advisers. Generally, the way the Trust has and will invest is consistent with its charitable objects.

For the coming year we will continue to support a range of schemes including Client Earth, a non-profit law organisation who work to protect the environment through advocacy, litigation and science. We intend to continue our support for refugees, ex-offenders, the local community and movements working towards sustainable international economic development and fair and free trade.