

## Shift the Power UK Funder Collective - An Overview

### **Vision/who we are**

Shift the Power UK Funder Collective is an informal group of intrapreneurs<sup>1</sup> from various UK based grant making organisations,<sup>2</sup> driven by the belief that philanthropy should be more effective in tackling structural inequalities and injustice. We seek to challenge and change inequitable grant making practices, particularly in international funding flows, to become more community responsive, accountable, and democratic funders. Not only is this a values driven approach, it is also an effective approach.

### **Maximising the moment to build momentum**

Several funders responded to the COVID-19 crisis by rapidly embracing more flexible, responsive and trust-based funding approaches – practices that have been advocated by Shift the Power members - both within their organisations and through wider networks. The Black Lives Matter movement has also catalysed a long overdue reflection on philanthropy's role in perpetuating a legacy based on racism and colonialism, and we have seen many organisations in our collective make new commitments to fund and challenge structural racism.

Having established a strong membership base since 2017, the Shift the Power UK Funder Collective is poised to capitalise on the momentum to mobilise more and better resources to 'build back better' based on equity and social justice for all.

### **Consolidating our strengths**

The Shift the Power UK Funder Collective was formed in 2017, emerging out of the Future Funding Forum delivered by Global Fund for Community Foundations, which looked at how funders can foster action and conditions required to support civil society in the 'Global South' thrive. As a result, individuals from foundations and funders involved in this forum decided to continue the conversation in a more informal, ongoing and self-organised manner.

Over the last few years, more people joined, and the group now has 53 participants ranging from individual philanthropists to those working in UK based trusts and foundations. Notable collaborations in the first year included the co-funding of projects in East Africa led by and for disabled people; the formation of working groups exploring the role of funders in safeguarding; fostering local philanthropy and developing proportionate due diligence processes for this. Together with the Global Fund for Community Foundations, a symposium, called [the Pathways to Power: New Ways of Deciding and Doing](#), was organised in November 2019, a point of culmination for the Shift the Power processes to date. It resulted in a Manifesto for Change (attached) which highlighted many of the aims and discussions of the group since 2017.

Our approach is one of self-organisation and informality, but to maximise opportunity and to progress our vision, we want to increase our capacity by hiring a facilitator. We envisage the facilitator to be active in both social justice and philanthropy networks. While the role will offer some administrative support to the group's co-convenors (volunteers from the group who currently curate and administrate meetings and actions), its core purpose is to bring strategic support, networks and insight to take a shared agenda forward. Specifically, the role will support the collective to:

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<sup>1</sup> Intrapreneurs influence and promote innovative thinking and approaches within their organisations.

<sup>2</sup> Including individuals from the Alan and Babette Sainsbury Fund, Comic Relief, Global Fund for Community Foundations, The National Lottery Community Fund, Purposeful, and many more UK trust and foundations. This role is being funded by Indigo Trust as part of their commitment to doing things differently.

*i) Build impetus*

Collectively, plan and prioritise, maintain and increase momentum by identifying and delivering key activities. This will help mainstream power shifting approaches in our network and amongst other networks with similar aims; create communication and advocacy opportunities; and provide additional capacity to influence a broader constituency of UK funders.

*ii) Influence*

Ensuring that voices of those most affected by inequalities are driving the conversations by expanding our connections and collaboration with networks of southern based organisations. Engage a broad spectrum of funders; build informal and safe space peer networks; and provide a steady drumbeat of emerging practice examples and learning to help members identify their own levers for organisational change.

*iii) Build integration*

Strengthen and sustain the Shift the Power UK Funder Collective reaching out to movements in the Global South and internationally with shared vision and aims, to learn from and collaborate with; provide opportunities for funder collaborations which are people centric and challenge structural inequalities; and donor decision makers to action social justice and transformative change in their own practice.