

**Our Learning  
Journey**

**Three years on  
2018-2021**



# Overview

**This report provides an overview of Blagrave's learning journey over the last three years.** It focuses predominantly on areas where Blagrave has changed its approach and launched new initiatives. It does not provide an overview of Blagrave's grant-making or showcase the amazing work that Blagrave's partners are doing working with young people. In addition in some key areas it reflects on where Blagrave can strengthen its approach and what has been learned.

All of the learning was collated by independent consultant Jenny Ross based on individual interviews as well as a group learning session with 12 young people.



***"What I've taken from working with Blagrave is to treat everything as a learning experience."***

■ Children England

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# Becoming a youth-led trust

## 2018 Charter

### Mission

**To bring lasting change to the lives of the most disadvantaged young people aged 14–25 to enable a positive transition to adulthood**

### Ambitions

**To promote and empower young people as powerful forces for change, and ensure their voices are heard in matters that affect them**

**To achieve social impact beyond our immediate partners in pursuit of a fair and just society**

*"Blaggrave put young people front and centre. They are really pioneering in terms of getting young people's voices heard."*

■ Zing

Blaggrave began the process of shifting towards being a more youth-led trust from early 2018 when it brought on board its first young trustees. The development of the Blaggrave Charter in mid 2018 focused the Trust's thinking on its core purpose and role.

Through 2018 and 2019, there were board and staff discussions about the challenges that young people were facing in their [transitions into adulthood](#) and what role Blaggrave could play as a funder – beyond providing support to youth-focused organisations.

Two dedicated areas of work were envisaged to support the mission, in addition to funding youth organisations and influencing the wider funding community:

- Influencing policy
- Funding initiatives that give young people a stake in society and support their own social change efforts

The Trust was committed to ensuring that the Charter led to concrete actions as well reflective discussions. The initiatives outlined in this report all align the Trusts actions with its commitments in the Charter – including by:

- Changing the way that the Trust invests its money so that all the trusts resources are supporting its mission ([page 11](#))
- Diversifying the board and creating the young advisor role to translate the Trusts commitment to youth empowerment into action ([page 23](#))
- Influencing others by developing the Young Trustees Movement and the Listening Fund and playing a lead role in the Association of Charitable Foundations, Stronger Foundations initiative (co-chairing the strategy and governance working group) ([page 31](#))

2.0

# Using all our Resources

*"You can't have money that has to be used to better the lives of young people and then invest in companies that are destroying their future."*

■ Blagrave Trustee

# Aligning investment strategy with values

In recent years the investment policy of trusts and foundations have come under greater scrutiny. Over the last two years, Blagrove has demonstrated that it is possible to align your investment strategy with your values and take action quickly – setting an example to other trusts and foundations and a wider groups of investors.

During discussions about developing a Charter, Blagrove started to explore how the Trust could use all of its resources in pursuit of its mission including its investments. There was already a commitment to not investing in the most unethical areas like armaments, porn, gambling.

**Staff and trustees wanted to go further – to ensure that Blagrove’s investments were supporting a future in which young people could thrive.**

In early 2019, Blagrove developed its first responsible investment policy and moved half of its assets from Rathbones to Greenbank – which had a stronger focus on ethical investment. Then towards the end of 2019, with backdrop of the School Strikes and XR protests, Blagrove held a board discussion on how to respond to the environmental and climate crisis. It was decided at this meeting that Blagrove would become a founding signatory to the Funder [Commitment on Climate Change](#). This pledge, amongst other elements, committed Blagrove to reviewing its investment portfolio to consider its climate impact.

*“The sector needs to focus on reinvestment and de-investment - moving investments out of detrimental stocks – you can’t have money that has to be used to better the lives of young people and then invest in companies that are destroying their future.”*

■ Blagrove Trustee



## A fresh approach to innovating practice

In early 2020 Blagrave decided to go further and join with Friends Provident Foundation and the Joffe Trust to look for an investment fund manager who was able to maximise social and environmental return on investment, whilst maintaining a reasonable financial return. The project was called the 'ESG olympics'.

ESG stands for Environmental, Social, and Governance criteria which investors are increasingly applying as part of their analysis process to identify material risks and growth opportunities. The five shortlisted investment management companies took part in a competitive day-long event at the [Royal Institution](#) (like the Olympics) on the 3rd March 2020.

The open and transparent nature of the process was a way of encouraging investment fund managers and others to think about how to develop more and better ESG investment options. 60 applications were received from funds that manage over £15 trillion.

The winner of the ESG olympics was Cazenove's Sustainable Growth Fund – the fund will have a carbon footprint of less than half of the global equity index and will generate five times the social impact. Blagrave has moved the remainder of its investments into this fund.

***"This approach is pioneering. It shows what you can do. There are billions invested by the foundation sector. It needs to be woken up and follow the lead shown here."***

■ Professor Nick Robins  
London School of Economics



***"It has been an absolutely ground breaking event. Bringing together asset owners, asset managers and educating everyone. It's bringing transparency to a process that is normally all behind closed doors. It's made all the managers stretch themselves."***

■ Catherine Howarth  
ShareAction

***"In the spirit of the ESG olympics, which set out to bring investment management out of the shadows and send a clear market signal for higher ESG standards, we will work with Cazenove to continually raise market standards and best practice, and will regularly report on our experience."***

■ Colin Baines  
Friends Provident Foundation

3.0

# Our values



# Our values

## Responsible

Alert to the potential for any negative impacts of our work, always prioritising doing no harm

## Adaptive

Critically assessing our work and evolving in response to what we learn

## Collaborative

Partnering with others, valuing other's expertise

## Intentional

Using all of our resources, in pursuit of our mission

## Transparent

Communicating openly and making our decisions and policies public and accessible

## Trusting

Standing alongside those who face injustice in solidarity, working in an empathetic way

## Progressive

Willing to challenge the status quo in the pursuit of social justice

## Inclusive & equitable

Bringing diverse people together to redress power imbalances

***"Blaggrave made me think more consciously about power. They are very authentic. They apply their principles. They have a belief and wish to invest in young people."***

■ Inspire Chilli

***"There is a power dynamic but I didn't feel that this was the basis of the conversation – it was more about aligning values and a meeting of minds. It was driven by both of us being willing to listen, learn, challenge and respond."***

■ Big Change

4.0

# Governance that reflects who we are

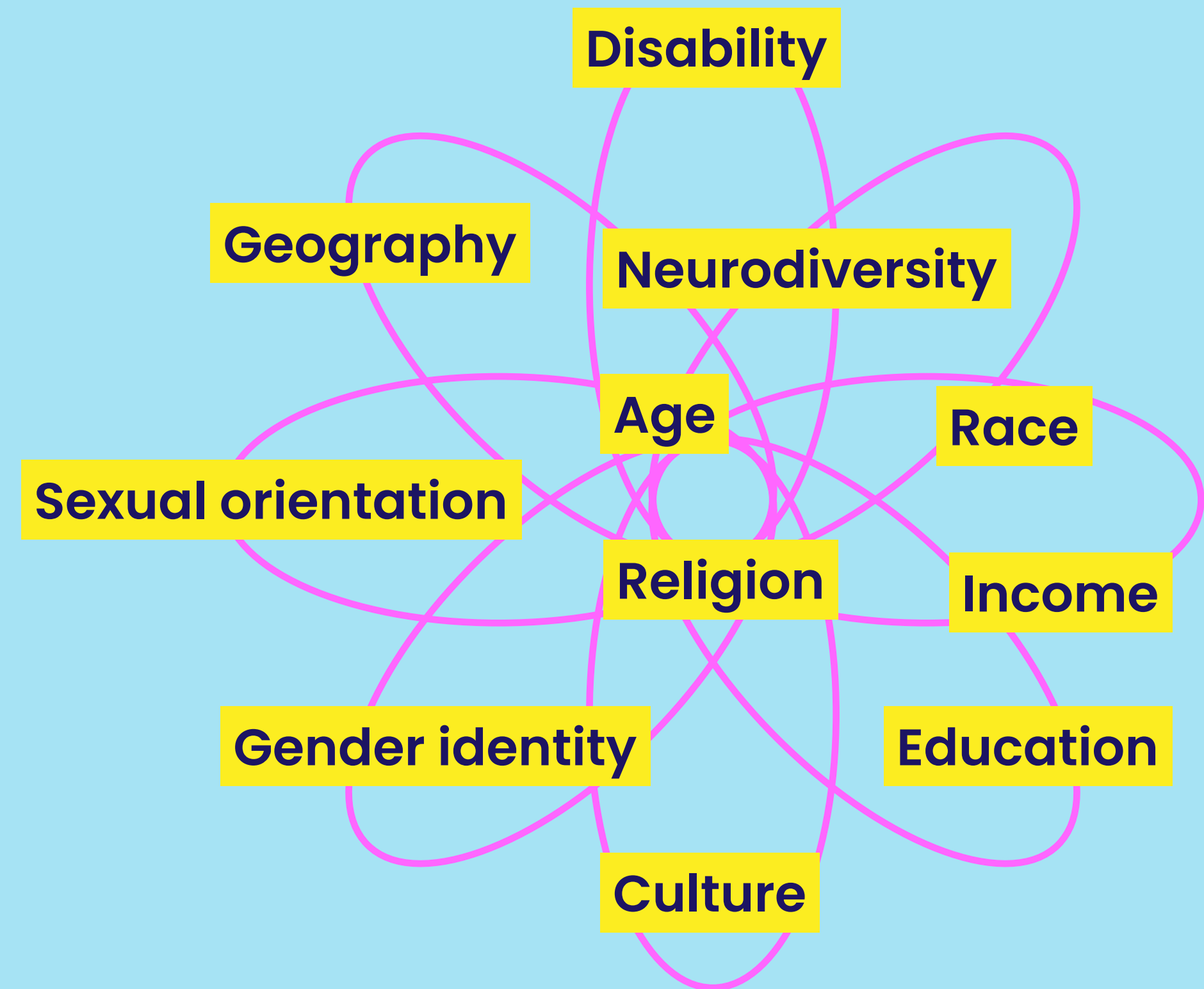
- Diversifying our board
- Influencing others via the Young Trustees Movement
- Sharing power with young advisors



# Diverse, progressive, inclusive & fair



**Blagrove has taken action over the last three years to ensure that it has a diverse board of trustees that includes young people as equals.**



With a mission that centres on change for young people it is essential that young people are at the centre of its governance to hold Blagrove to account.

The Trust has also sought to diversify the lived and learned expertise on its board in order to strengthen its oversight and engagement – looking beyond age to try and ensure diversity in background and experiences.



## Governance reform

### A snapshot of our journey

Blagrove advertised for young trustees and received over 30 high-quality applications, demonstrating a real appetite from young people to engage at this level. Blagrove's first two young trustees (Linda and Tasneem) were recruited through a formal interview process.

December 2017

March 2018

Blagrove (with co-funders) launched the **Listening Fund** providing 22 organisations with grants to improve their listening and accountability to young people. Some have experimented with strengthening their own governance and bringing young people onto their boards.

July 2018

Blagrove funded the Social Change Agency to develop a concept which went on to become the **Young Trustees Movement** addressing the lack of youth representation on boards.

*Research showed that 85% of under 35's would consider becoming trustees but only 0.8% are under 25, with the average age 60+. 92% of trustees are white, rising to 99% in the Trust and Foundations world.*

September 2019

Blagrove appointed a new Chair and Treasurer both passionately committed to youth-led change and significantly younger than most board Chairs and Finance leads. Experience through their day jobs (Youth Endowment Fund and Restless Development) enables them to help the Trust tap into trends and challenges that affect young people.

October 2019

The **Young Trustees Movement** was launched with the goal of doubling the number of trustees under 30 on charitable board by 2024; creating a norm where boards recognise that having young people involved benefits everyone and showcasing the impact of young trustees.

January 2020

Blagrove appointed a further two young people to the board – **Daze and Boudicca**. After an incredible selection of applications the decision was made to interview differently undertaking mock Board meetings, with a set agenda provided in advance. All these trustees have enriched board discussions by bringing different perspectives and experience. Blagrove was also able to learn and model inter-generational collaboration.

May 2020

Blagrove appointed three young advisors to design the application process and select young partners for a new programme called **Challenge and Change**. Daze, a Blagrove trustee, was one of the advisors. Having young people on the board built confidence in the critical importance of giving young people delegated decision making on key areas of work. Young advisors were also recruited for the **Restart Youth** programme and at time of publication a further 10 young advisors have been recruited for **The Listening Fund**.

March 2021

Blagrove appointed a further four Trustees – two under 30, bringing the total to nine. Blagrove now has seven trustees aged between 21 and 38 and four under 26. Whereas 99% of foundation board members are white, this is less than 50% now on Blagrove's board. As the board has become more diverse it has, in turn, attracted more diverse applications as applicants are able to see people they identify with in those positions across all our work.



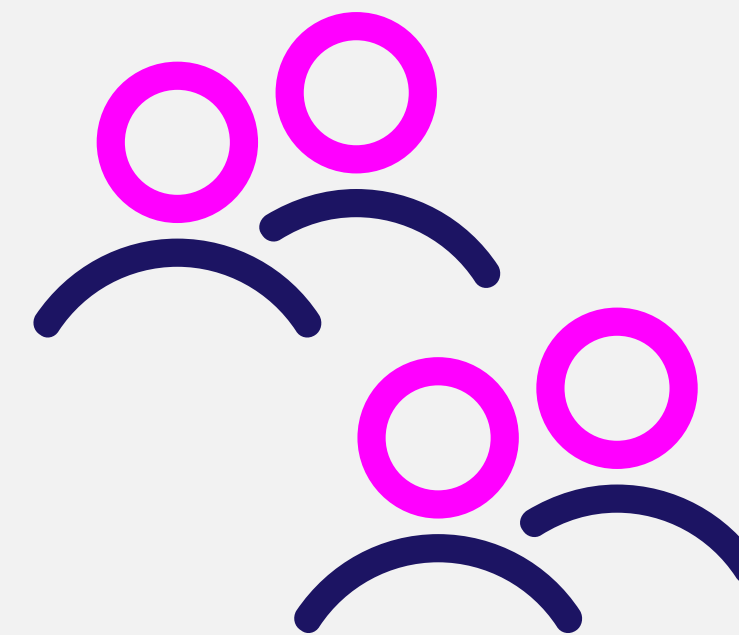
**In three years, the average age of Blaggrave trustees is now 32 with four under 26. Over 50% describe themselves as being from ethnic minority backgrounds. Compared to a sector average of over 60, 99% white.**

The trustee board now has a dynamic, diverse and exciting mix of lived and learned experience as well as technical knowledge and expertise which will enable the Trust to better fulfil its mission and support youth-led change. Blaggrave's experience has shown that a commitment to diversity at board level can be acted on quickly if you are committed to valuing diversity and creating inclusive processes and environments.

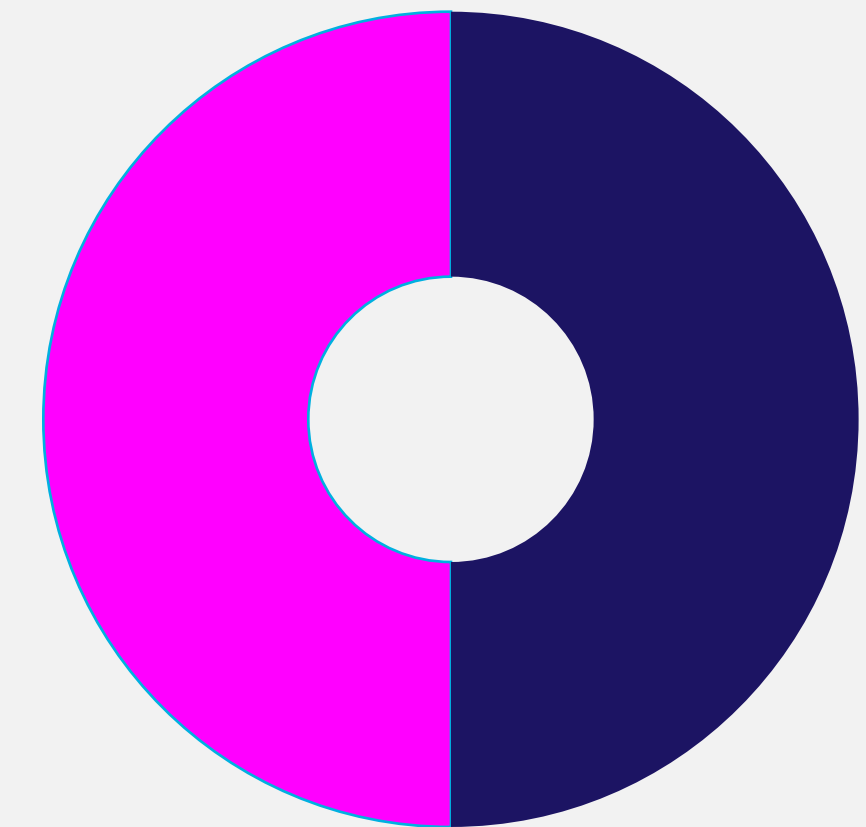
**32**

The average age of Blaggrave trustees

# Putting power and money directly in the hands of young people



Four trustees under 26 years



50% describe themselves as being from ethnic minority backgrounds



*"Blaggrave is very clear on its commitment to young people. It is really inspiring for us as well – it informed our thinking – how can we include young people in our governance – they are leading by example – other funders talk about it on their website – but with Blaggrave you can see and tell it isn't lip service."*

■ Enthum Foundation

*"It was very clear to us that they would not fund anything that didn't have young people at the centre. It's clear they do it and live it."*

■ Big Change

*"They put young people front and centre. They are really pioneering in terms of getting young people's voices heard. They also have young people on their board which is virtually unheard of."*

■ Zing

*"The Young Trustees Movement has really provided a momentum for issues around board diversity, particularly in terms of youth. As Chair of the Stronger Foundations Strategy and Governance working group, Jo has been influential and has pushed others."*

■ Association of Charitable Foundations

## What did Blaggrave learn from having young people on it's board?

*"The real challenge has actually been for ourselves as the adults in the conversation: to think about the extent we are willing to accommodate diverse perspectives and open up our thinking; whether the way in which Board meetings work – their fixed agendas, the Board rooms we meet in, accommodate diversity of thought in the way we aspire to?"*

*Are we trying to assimilate young people to fit our world, or do we want to stretch our own thinking to meet them somewhere new? These are some of the questions that really need reflection if we are to engage not just young trustees but a more diverse group of individuals with lived experience in our work at the level of governance."*

■ Jo Wells

# Young Trustees Movement influencing change

The Blagrove Trust approached the Social Change Agency and asked them to scope out the idea that later became the Young Trustees Movement. When the proposal was developed Blagrove also played a key role in bringing other funders on board by convening a space where the YTM could present their work to a group of funders collectively.

Through the Young Trustees Movement Blagrove was able to use its influence and credibility to push for wider sector change with the mission of doubling the number of trustees under 30 by 2024.

The Young Trustees Movement has a network of ambassadors, champions and speakers and provides support and guidance to young people wanting to become trustees and boards wanting to recruit young people.

Social Change Agency /  
Young Trustees Movement

*“It’s been incredible. I can’t say enough good things about it. We wouldn’t be here without Blagrove. Our impact has been through the roof and the relationship we’ve had with them as a funder has been the most positive of my career.”*

5.0

# Youth-led change The role of Young Advisors

# Young Advisors at the centre of decision-making



■ *"I think it's right to give the power to young people – if adults do it our behalf they are likely to get it wrong. The world has changed since the 1990s and we know our own reality."*

■ Young Advisor

Alongside broader governance reforms and directly investing in young people as changemakers, Blagrave has been experimenting with having Young Advisors play a key role in funding strategy and decision-making. The pool of paid young advisors alongside those funded via [Challenge and Change](#) are examples of where the Trust is reducing the social distance between itself and young people and strengthening its transparency and accountability.

The first group of Young Advisors were recruited to develop the Challenge and Change programme with support from the Trust and the Centre for Knowledge Equity in mid 2020. The three young people made all of the major decisions relating to the programme – from its name, the design of the fund, to its application process through to which young people received the grants.

Six Young Advisors were recruited to support on a new initiative called [Restart Youth](#) which was funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and provided small grants to organisations in the South East of England who wanted to give decision making power to young people in response to the pandemic. This group of six young advisors were involved in decision-making and shaping the second round of funding and application processes. Around the same time during the development of the recruitment of the second cohort of the Opportunity Fund, the first cohort were involved in designing the recruitment strategy and the application materials.

A further group of ten were recruited in mid 2021 as part of the Listening Fund Phase 2 to design the grant making strategy for a pot of funding worth at least £300,000 and input into funding decisions.

***“We like the laid back approach of the trust – supporting young people and leaving them to do their thing. But we could do with clearer structures to help us do it a bit better.”***

■ Feedback from focus group with Young Advisors and young people funded as part of youth-led change

***“The Centre for Knowledge Equity and the Trust were really helpful, they gave us as much support as we needed, they wanted us to take the lead. They helped us to think through why we made decisions, to justify our choices, without intervening or doubting our choices. They had confidence in our decision making and it was nice not to be told what to do.”***

■ Young Advisor

***“It’s radical giving agency to young people. But it takes a level of stewarding and support to enable young people. You can help them to understand and encourage them to fill the gaps in their knowledge.”***

■ Centre for Knowledge Equity

# Learning – Working with young advisors

## Creating a safe space

Through **Restart Youth, Challenge and Change** and **The Listening Fund**, the Trust has deepened its understanding about how to recruit and support Young Advisors and how to ensure that their parameters, roles and responsibilities are clear. Groups of Advisors need to time together supported by facilitators to get to know each other and create a collective safe space and agree ground rules before having to make collective decisions. The Trust has become more confident about where it can provide guidance, what expertise it needs to bring in or develop in-house and how to best use the time and resource of Young Advisors.



*"The meetings were long, and that can be annoying. But I would rather have a long productive meeting. It never felt like the meetings weren't productive. I understand the fatigue and tiredness. I would rather we were cohesive in our decisions than rush it. Maybe if we set a timetable more strictly, in many cases a lot of us got side-tracked by our passion for certain projects and that made things a bit more pedantic at times.*

*I would have loved some data around young people as well. We're in our own echo chambers. Even though we are three young people, it felt like a hard decision for us to say what young people wanted and how we should fund it."*

■ Challenge and Change Young Advisor



## **Be prepared to be challenged**

Bringing young people into decision-making and showing them how philanthropy works has been challenging as young people question existing ways of doing things – but it is this kind of challenge which will help the Trust drive change. The Trust has had to discuss with its Board and other funders how power is being shifted or shared:

- Are young people taking decisions or inputting into them?
- What happens when adults disagree with young people?
- What information do young people need to make informed decisions and how is that different (or is it different) from the information that adults need?

These questions are getting to the practicalities of what it really means to ‘shift power’ and be willing to lose control.

The Young Advisors have appreciated the opportunity to drive decision-making and have been inspired by what they have seen other young people doing.

*"As part of our Restart Youth we talked about the importance of moving away from tokenism – the Trust helped us think that through using the ladder of engagement. We saw the opportunity to put young people at every stage of the organisation – the need to be imaginative and creative and being willing to take risks and being OK with that."*

■ Restart Youth Advisor

***"It's such an empowering thing and you see what people are proposing – there are so many people doing so many amazing things. It's exciting when you can see where they are coming from. I learned about what happens behind the scenes and how to get funding for projects – it gave me such an insight into all the things you have to consider. I'd 100% recommend the experience – it's given me new skills and made me think about my accountability and how I need to explain/justify what I think when talking to other young people."***

■ Challenge and Change, Young Advisor

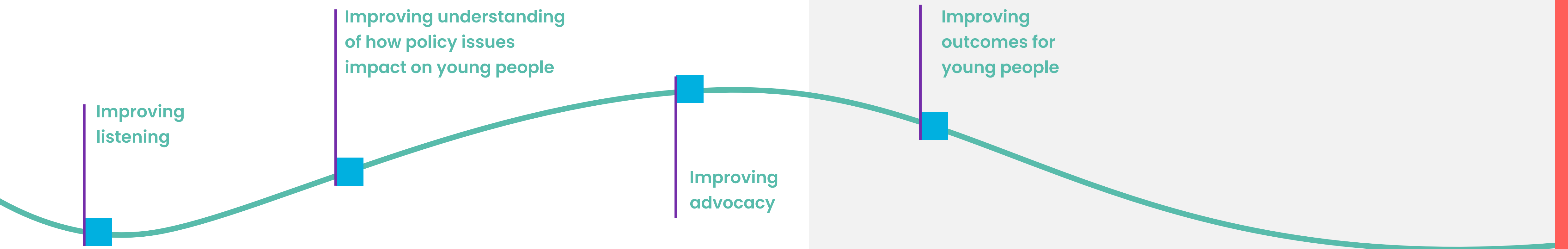
**The Listening Fund started with a simple idea. To provide organisations working with young people with small grants of twenty thousand pounds, to improve their listening practice. Blagrove Trust developed the idea of the Listening Fund and brought on board other funders.**

Listening is seen as a first step to improve outcomes for young people by systematically using feedback to improve organisational practice. The Listening Fund has proven to be a practical entry-point to what has become a much more accepted idea in the last three years – that organisations and funders should reflect and be more accountable to those they ‘serve’.

The Listening Fund has been a driver of Blagrove’s learning and thinking about giving power to young people at all levels and in funding youth-led change.

In addition the Listening Fund established Blagrove as an innovator who other funders were willing to trust and invest with. It also allowed Blagrove to scale its influence – particularly through the focus on funder listening.

Blagrove’s track record managing the Listening Fund has supported it in securing additional funding for further pooled/shared initiatives. The effective collaboration between TLF’s four funders established a productive, bureaucracy-light initiative which has pushed funder practice.



## Phase 1

The first two year grants were made in March 2018

### Funders

Big Lottery (now National Lottery Communities Fund)  
Comic Relief  
The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation  
Blagrove Trust

Funded partners  
22 organisations

Total investment  
£945,000



## Contribution and Impact (2018 – 2020)

- Strengthened listening practice within partner organisations
- Improved decision-making within partner organisations and shift in attitudes to young people's role.
- Improved outcomes for young people.

### Impact in practice

#### Services and outcome for young people

##### Changes to existing services

The Magdalene Group in Norwich revisited the framing of their services around Child Sexual Exploitation as young people fed back that it can make them feel blamed for the exploitation they have suffered

##### Development of new services

Newark CASY have launched a new counselling service for siblings based on young people's feedback

##### Greater influence of young people on policy

Beatfrecks' survey of young people in Birmingham, Brum Youth Trends resulted in National Express making bus travel in the city cheaper for young people

## **Learning from Phase 1**

### **The first two year grants were made in March 2018**

- It takes time, resources, commitment and skills to shift organisational culture and practice – for both partner organisations and funders.
- Partner organisations often did not have the time/resource to actively engaging in collective learning activities.
- The Fund did not have sufficient capacity to document ongoing learning and share it with a wider audience to extend the reach and influence of the learning about listening and accountability to young people.
- The opportunity to share learning across partner organisations and funders and address shared obstacles to listening and challenges of organisational change was underexplored.

*"The twenty thousand they gave us was really significant – they believed in us. You felt their presence. They nourished our roots. They spend time in getting to know us and seeing what we were doing – they ran alongside us."*

■ Enthum Foundation

*"One of the surprising benefits of creating our Youth Forum was that national organisations wanted to reach out. The young people were able to get involved in lobbying MPs around family reunification and when COVID hit and organisations had to work in different ways it put us more on the radar – young people were able engage with national organisations and get new opportunities to be heard."*

■ Listening Fund Partner

## Developing Phase 2

Feb 2021

The proposal for the Listening Fund Phase 2 was developed in early 2020 and applications for Phase 2 grants opened in November 2020 and grants were awarded to 9 organisations in February 2021. Phase 2 splits funding between funding youth organisations and giving power to a panel of young people to design a funding strategy [rather than a design application process] and make decisions about where half the funding should go. This is the Fund living its values – seeing young people as the leaders of the change – rather than service recipients of the organisations they are investing in.

Partners will also receive additional funding to participate in learning events and also to act as ‘Ambassadors for listening’ and there will be additional funding to broker expert support and training for partner organisations. Phase 2 of the Listening Fund seeks to more explicitly question and challenge existing power dynamics.

### Funders

Blagrave Trust  
The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation  
BBC Children in Need  
The Tudor Trust  
National Community Lottery  
Foundation

Funded partners  
9 organisations

Total  
investment  
£1.7million

*“Without both the funding and the learning input from The Listening Fund, we would not have been able to explore these ideas. It isn’t just the funding that supported us to do this, but also the space given to us by TLF – the space to explore, to realise mistakes and rework our ideas without the threat of losing funding.”*

■ Listening Fund Partner

*“Often you are given very little on top of activity budgets to cover the management/overheads – you might want to involve users in developing and delivering services but it has a cost. It doesn’t work if its just a bullet point on someone’s wider job description. If you want to integrate the approach (rather than being tokenistic) then it takes investment. The funding we were given really helped.”*

■ Listening Fund Partner

*“Some of this goes back to the funders themselves. They often will only pay 10% to cover management costs – that doesn’t provide enough funding to make it all user-led. When we are looking for funding for services – we have to demonstrate how marginalised and needy the young people are – it’s a deficit model. We are not asked what young people could achieve if we had the resources to engage and support them.”*

■ Listening Fund Partner

## Timeframe

The Listening Fund in both Phase 1 and 2. (March 2018 - 2024)

## Purpose

KRAN works with young refugees and asylum seekers in Kent as well as with adults and younger children and is committed to making sure the voice of young people are heard in its own work and by other services.

## Funding

The funding provided by Listening Fund Phase 1 enabled KRAN to dedicate time and resources to strengthening its practice and provided access to other organisations' learning and experience.

## Design of Initiative

KRAN focused on the development of young people as leaders and advocates, creating a youth forum, youth ambassadors, traineeships and safe spaces where young people and professionals can discuss and address issues. They held residential retreats for youth forum members to build their confidence, deliver relevant support and training and to get to know each other. They also supported and prepared the young people to engage with professionals in key services like the police, local colleges and social workers.

Once the young people were ready and confident, KRAN created safe spaces for them to discuss and develop ideas about how to resolve issues alongside professionals, making sure lived experience and knowledge was seen as equally valuable to the expertise of the adult professionals.

## What is the anticipated difference that the initiative will make?

Youth involvement in decision-making has been integrated within KRAN's five year strategic plan – with the ambition being that 'Young People are the Voice of KRAN'.

Attitudes towards the young people began to shift as professionals began to understand the challenges they were facing in their lives and rapport and empathy between the two groups grew. They were able to move beyond stereotypes and judgements to a place of better mutual understanding.

As well as the Youth Forum and Action Learning Sets, [three youth ambassadors](#) were appointed who are or have been refugees or asylum seekers, with additional funding from the Act for Change fund to support their work.

The Youth Forum and Youth Ambassadors meet monthly and are actively involved in shaping KRAN's work with young people. Staff work with the young people to translate ideas into projects and advocacy initiatives. Contributing to funding bids, co-producing, delivering pilot projects and giving talks and presentations at a wide range of events and community activities. They have also written blogs and given media interviews for national television and local press.

One of the benefits of developing the Youth Forum and Youth Ambassadors has been that national organisations (Refugee Action, Safe Passage) have reached out to KRAN and provided opportunities for young people to get involved in lobbying MPs around family reunification.

## Challenges

Some issues were quite challenging to talk about and there were concerns about safeguarding and confidentiality. For example, the police wanted to talk about sexual exploitation. Young people were supported to talk about their perspectives in ways that were comfortable and safe for them.

6.0

# Funding young people directly



This overview traces the background to the three main initiatives that fund young people directly that have been developed by the Trust and highlights questions and challenges.

The **Opportunity Fund** and **Social Justice Advocates, Help Us Move On** were both launched in early 2020 and the support has had significant impact despite the coronavirus pandemic. The development of **Challenge and Change** was a direct response to the pandemic providing support to young changemakers at a point of crisis.



## What shifts in thinking have shaped Blaggrave's approach over the last three years?<sup>1</sup>

- A growing conviction that funding young people creating change directly is a missing piece in the eco-system of social change with untapped potential
- A belief that young people need to be supported to drive their own change for the benefit of their wider communities and that requires direct investment
- Recognising that funding young people directly provides an opportunity to reach beyond organisations and particular geographies and consider who is being reached and how
- That funding directly provides a way to reduce the social distance between the Trust and young people can strengthen learning and accountability

## What does Blaggrave hope to achieve by funding young people directly?

- Building collective power to effect external change through grassroots groups, networks and movements
- Re-balancing whose voices are heard in decision making
- Opening space for exploration of, and progress towards, solutions that address structural barriers holding young people back, challenging thinking around what is possible and achievable

The Trust has been working at an accelerated pace to develop three initiatives (**Help Us Move On**, the **Opportunity Fund**, **Challenge and Change**) over the last two years and scale up grant-making to youth-led groups. There are impressive results already emerging from these initiatives as well as learning.



<sup>1</sup> For further exploration of how previous learning and contextual factors fed into the development of these programmes see Annex A

# What fed into Blaggrave's decision to invest in young people directly?

Trust engagement	Reflection and learning
<b>Listening Fund</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The challenge for many youth-organisations to be more responsive and accountable to young people</li> <li>A desire to move beyond professional experts speaking on behalf of young people – why not fund young people directly?</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback from support partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback that they were not able to address the root causes of young people's challenges through their services and support – the deeper structural and systemic issues</li> <li>On the whole, they did not feel equipped to lead the advocacy and influencing work on policy issues</li> </ul>
<b>Direct engagement with young people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people who were expressing frustration with many youth organisations and the issues they focus on</li> <li>Growing confidence that there was a group of young people who Blaggrave could invest in directly</li> </ul>
<b>Thinking about how to make strategic policy-focused grants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenge of bringing focus by choosing specific issues or groups of young people – what could be Blaggrave's distinct added value in the ecosystem?</li> <li>Growing enthusiasm for the idea of focusing on youth-led policy influencing and/or innovating in the space</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback from national advocacy and policy partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback from partners like the Advocacy Academy and Campaign Bootcamp about the lack of support for young people with potential to enable them to focus on their changemaking</li> <li>This creates an inequality of opportunity – where only some young people are able to continue their changemaking journey</li> </ul>
<b>Governance reform and board engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the process of recruiting for Blaggrave's new young trustees, it became increasingly obvious the sheer numbers of talented young people who could be better engaged and supported</li> <li>Discussions about how Blaggrave could innovate in the funding space accelerated as Blaggrave's governance shifted to being more youth-led. Governance reform and work on the charter provided a framework that supported greater investment in young people directly</li> </ul>



Wider contextual factors	
<b>Shift the Power funder discussions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions within funding space on shifting power but a frustration within Blagrove about lack of concrete action</li> </ul>
<b>Climate Crisis and Funders Climate Pledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing focus on climate with XR and school strike protests</li> <li>Blagrove funded UK Student Climate Network in July 2019 and this commitment supported the decision to sign the <a href="#">funders commitment on climate</a> and think further about what its role should be in the climate space</li> </ul>
<b>Covid 19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The pandemic accelerated internal discussions about funding young people directly with a board discussion in April 2020 about launching what became the Challenge and Change fund</li> </ul>
External support and advice	
<b>Inspire Chilli report – January 2019 – Funding individual changemakers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report provided a proposal for direct funding of changemakers that evolved into the Opportunity Fund which launched in March 2020</li> </ul>
<p><a href="#">Youth led change in the UK research – Understanding the landscape and the opportunities</a>  Natasha Adams &amp; Jim Coe  December 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research showed that there was a gap in direct support to young people and a need for new approaches and responses</li> <li>Highlighting the importance of the intention/purpose behind funding e.g. building collective power, rebalancing whose voices are heard, opening space for exploration of/progress towards solutions that address structural problems</li> </ul>

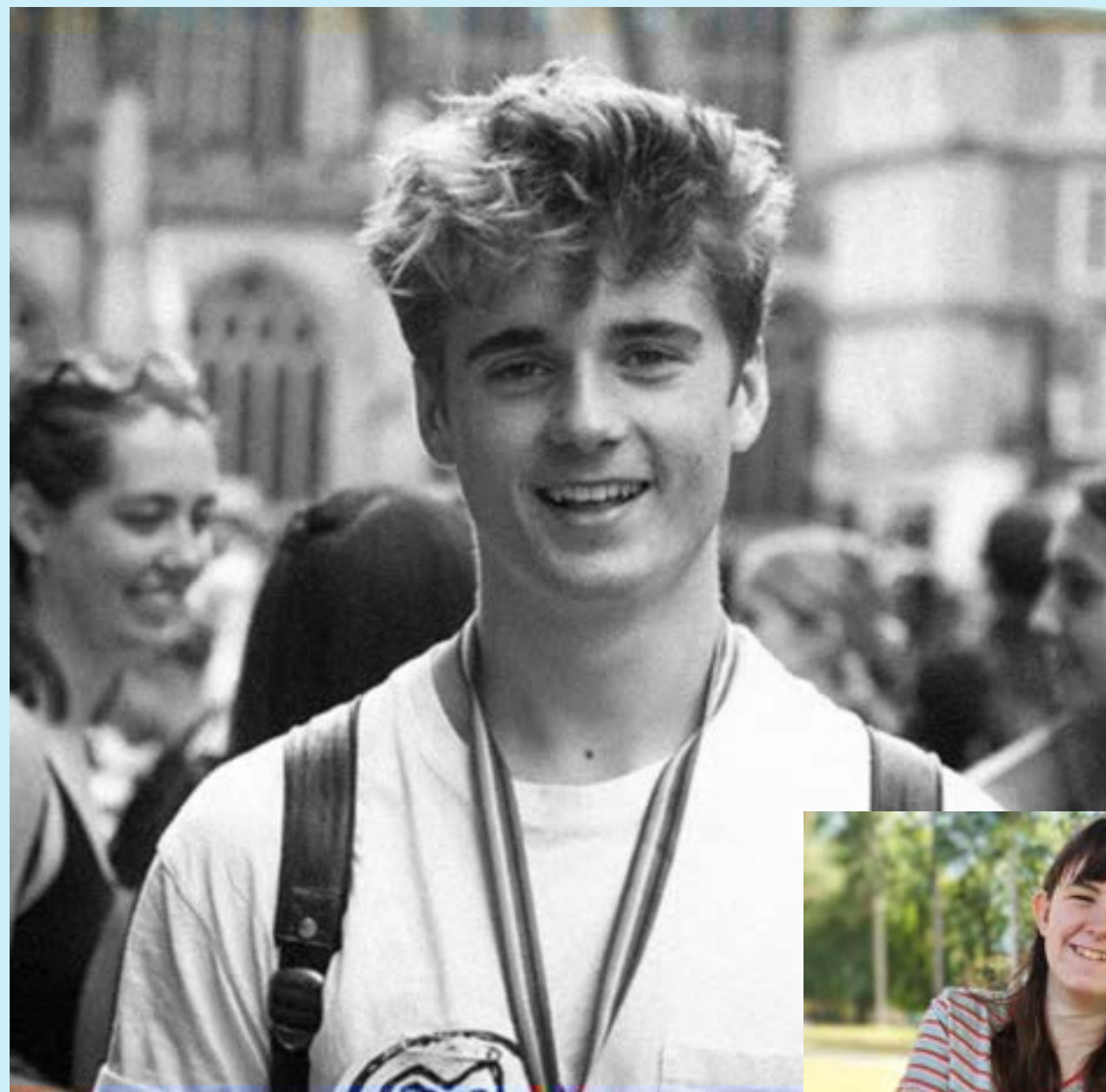
7.0

# Funding Young People Directly: Case Studies

Example of investing in young people directly – a grant

CASE STUDY ONE

# Nothing Without Young People



*"We work as a movement to ensure that young people with lived experience of youth violence are involved in key conversations that affect them and that they are compensated for their time. The grant we received enabled me to be paid to work two days a week and get some support from a freelance consultant. It can be lonely running something like this and sometimes you can want to give up or think that what you are doing doesn't matter. You need support and help from people who've been through it.*

*We've had a series of conversations with the Mayor and local authorities – it's been slow progress but we are being listened to. We are very wary of being used like puppets at events and conference – co-production isn't practiced properly. Young people are the ones that know what is going on.*

***What I've found helpful as a result of the grant is the space to breathe and learn and make mistakes.***

*Blagrove have been flexible – we've changed our strategy quite a few times. I've worried that it made us look like we don't know what we are doing – but they have been able to reassure us and they are happy as long as we keep them informed.*



Recently, the Met Police contacted us and asked if I could do some cultural awareness training focused on stop and search. I insisted that the young people involved should be paid. The feedback has been amazing. I talked about my positive and negative experiences of Stop and Search – it opened up a conversation about how they should be conducting themselves.

What made the difference I think was our approach – we wanted to be solutions focused. This is a conversation (about Stop and Search) that has been going on for decades. I started by talking about my positive and negative experiences of Stop and Search – recognising that they have a job to do.

**We were meeting as equals – me with my experience and then with theirs – this was the first time many officers have had a real conversation with someone who is an ex-gang member and ex-convict.**

They loved it – there was question after question – they were having a whale of a time. They want to do more workshops now. And they want to feed it into nationwide discussions and experiment with young people as community ambassadors."

■ Oluwatosin Sowemimo



*"It's a powerful model for social change – where young people with lived experience partner with adults with relevant experience – to transfer campaigning and advocacy skills – whilst they remain in charge of decision-making."*

■ Southern Policy Centre

## Timeframe

Grant agreed August 2019. Young people employed from January 2020. Original grant for two years support.

## Purpose

To support young people to lead advocacy to secure policy changes in line with the Help Us Move On report – predominantly in relation to housing and employment.

## Design of Initiative

Blagrove Trust with Southern Policy Centre and No Limits.

## Recruitment and Selection

The young people who were involved in the research project were invited to join the advocacy initiative. Three of the four young people chose to do so. They were originally engaged through a care leavers group.

## Implementation partners

Southern Policy Centre and No Limits.

## Young People involved

Three young people who had been involved in the research for the Help Us Move On report were supported for two years to lead advocacy at the local level to secure changes to local provision of housing, employment and other services. In Year 2 a fourth young person was recruited with research skills to join the group.

## Investment in Young People (financial)

The young people involved were employed by No Limits for one day a week to lead the advocacy work.

## Investment in Young People (non-financial)

The young people involved were supported by a full-time staff post at No Limits and for the first-year support on advocacy and engagement with the Local Council was provided by the Southern Policy Centre. In Year Two, additional training was provided by Sheila McKechnie Foundation in campaigning.

## Total cost

£154,000 over two years

## What difference did the investment make?

**Policy impact:** The Youth Advocates have had an impact on Southampton City Council's policies on housing and employment – particularly in the case of shared and supported housing and encouraging the Council to adopt a housing first model.

**Personal impact:** The Youth Advocates have benefited from being engaged in the project. It was for many of them their first paid employment and provided some stability through the pandemic.

*"We've come a long way. We were in hostels when the project started. I think it helped being able to share my own experience. We met a councillor – I basically said how it is – the system is a mess and it needs changing."*

■ Youth Advocate

*"At the outset of the project none of the Youth Advocates had ever met a councillor. They have ended up addressing a full council meeting and meeting the leader of the Labour Party."*

■ Southern Policy Centre



## Timeframe

Cohort 1: March 2020 until September 2022, Cohort 2 recruitment May 2021

## Purpose

To provide support (financial and non-financial) to young people with lived experience/from disadvantaged background who had the potential and ideas to run campaigns or a business with wider social impact

*"I had a model in my mind – focused on certain groups of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds – those who weren't ready to create their own charity or businesses. What would happen if you gave them the time and space to focus on themselves and their idea – when currently they don't have the chance.*

■ Inspire Chilli

## Design of Initiative

Blagrave Trust and Paul Hamlyn Foundation based on report by Inspire Chilli which was co-produced with young people.

## Recruitment and Selection

## Implementation Partners

Launch It (supporting young people engaged in setting up a social business) and Peer Power (supporting young people leading a campaign) – with Inspire Chilli in a facilitator role.

## Young People involved

Cohort 1: 8 young people

Cohort 2 (being recruited): 12 young people

## Investment in Young People (financial)

A monthly payment of £651 to support their living costs and provide stability to pursue their social change work over 18 months and an additional £1000 towards project costs

## Investment in Young People (non-financial)

Launch It and Peer Power provide a range of wrap around support including training, relevant training and legal advice, mentoring and access to therapeutic services. Funders offer access to other stakeholders.

## Total cost

£400,000 over 3 years

## What is the anticipated difference that the initiative will make?

**Social impact:** A range of social impacts are envisaged across the young people, either in developing campaigns to create change or in setting up social purpose businesses.

## Personal impact:

Young people are invested in and given stability over an 18 month period, impacting their growth, skills and experience, confidence, networks and more.



*"We've learned from our role in the Opportunity Fund. We think it's a great model and a great opportunity for young people. We now are thinking about how to include upfront investment in our programmes (normally we have business pitch down the line). Because of COVID, we've also learned how to deliver a virtual incubator programme."*

■ Agent Organisation

***"This is a fantastic model opportunity for young people. Grants like this are few and far between."***

■ Agent Organisation

*"They are ambitious and innovative. The Opportunity Fund is an example of applying their principles."*

■ Inspire Chilli



## Timeframe

Launched July 2020

## Purpose

To invest in young people with lived experience affected by injustice to lead their own initiatives focused on structural change.

## Design of Initiative

Young Advisors with support from Blagrave Trust and Centre for Knowledge Equity

*"Young people crafted and designed the Challenge and Change Fund – they decide the name and the criteria. It wasn't co-design or co-production – they decided."*

## Recruitment and Selection

*"I thought it was really nice and inclusive. I did a video application and I really enjoyed it. It was easier and more creative than other applications – sometimes you have to give your life story, your blood type, your shoe size."*

## Funding Partners

Zing and the Ellis Campbell Charitable Foundation

## Young People involved

29 young people

## Investment in Young People (financial)

Funding between £2,700 and £10,000

## Investment in Young People (non-financial)

Support from Centre for Knowledge Equity.

## Total cost

Thus far Challenge and Change has cost £235,297 including £162,297 in grants directly to young people

## What is the anticipated difference that the initiative will make?

- Young people will have greater agency and ability to influence decisions that affect them
- Learning about young people designing funds and taking the important decisions
- Learning about different ways to support young people to be heard to share with other funders/charity sector
- Learning about support structures young people need to lead change



8.0

# Reflecting on funding young people directly

Jenny Ross

- Strengthen clarity of purpose and language
- Strengthen cross-initiative learning and connect it to the strategy
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities
- Which young people?
- Providing the right level of support
- How are young people supported?

# Opportunities to learn and adapt

**In early 2021 Blagrove Trust commissioned Jenny Ross to review and document learning from the Funds key initiatives. This section covers the questions that emerged from her review of Blagrove’s direct support to young people.**

The scale and pace of change for Blagrove in shifting to funding young people directly has been impressive. For example, it only took five months for the Challenge and Change Fund to be realised from conceptualisation to grantmaking.

The Trust now needs to give itself breathing, thinking and reflecting space. It needs to bring greater clarity to its own thinking about what it is testing and learning through its youth-led work and what results it expects to see as part of its investments. The tensions that exist and the trade-offs that are being made need to be surfaced as learning evolves and fed into a transparent strategy moving forwards.

Greater clarity will build the confidence and resilience of the Trust to operate in this new space and to be in a better position to support young people to lead change. This section will be divided around key questions for the Trust to consider when thinking about investing in young people directly.

## **Strengthen clarity of purpose and language**

With the youth-led change initiatives there was some lack of clarity and/or differing perspectives about the expected impact or change or other key terms.

Examples of areas where purpose/priority/language can be clarified:

- Being youth-led
- Activating lived experience
- Addressing structural issues
- Social enterprise
- Whether the purpose is - change for young people involved and/or social change

This caused tensions around language and definitions which in some cases fed into the recruitment and selection processes and board discussions. Bringing greater clarity will support learning across the initiatives and allow for deeper understanding of the implications for future initiatives, grants and cohorts.

Initiatives	Objective
<b>Help Us Move On</b>	Policy change in line with the Help Us Move On report
<b>Opportunity Fund</b>	Progress towards a sustainable social enterprise or campaign
<b>Challenge and Change</b>	Young people are resourced to lead change and develop their campaigning work and have greater agency and ability to influence decisions that affect them



## **Strengthen cross-initiative learning and connect it to the strategy**

It would be good to build on this learning document and create a framework and dedicated time for learning across the initiatives and other relevant grants. There are amazing stories about what young people are doing with support from Blagrove which can inspire young people and other funders – but consolidating learning will be important for scale-up and improving effectiveness. With social change work – there is limited control over achieving outcomes but learning is an area which can deliver tangible outputs and is more within the Trust and partners control.

The Trust might want to consider choosing two or three key reflection and learning questions that it returns to on a regular basis to support consolidation of learning. With a small and busy team, it is important to document learning across initiatives and for the Youth-led Change lead to have a forum to bring the team together to share experience. The Trust may want to specifically think about how it is intending to learn from Challenge and Change – given the light touch support and minimal reporting. Learning from the Listening Fund shows that asking partners to share their learning and engaging in reflection/evaluation activities does take up partner time and communicating learning and stories of change requires investment.

*"Probably the learning element of Challenge and Change is key. All of the 29 initiatives will have their plans and different ways of measuring progress. But what will have the most impact is learning whether this type of approach works and what type of wrap around services appear to be having the most impact and then iterating and adapting it so that it can be scaled or reused."*

■ Zing

### **Tensions and trade-offs need to be transparent**

Youth-led vs. structural issues: Being youth-led could mean focusing on the areas where young people are most passionate. This may leave gaps in relation to structural issues. However, if young people are not intrinsically motivated to lead change in these areas and are not applying that can leave the Trust in a difficult position. Some other organisations/funders do run thematic cohorts or reserve places for particular issues/or marginalised groups (e.g. Clore Leadership, Bootcamp, NEON) which can help to draw out different types of application.

Another response would be to look across the Trusts portfolio to consider the mix of issues it is addressing (rather than within specific initiatives) – it may be that structural or complex issues are best addressed through grant-making to organisations that co-produce with young people rather than granting directly (e.g. Children England's ChildFair State, Clearview Research on YE2030). Embedding some of the work on structural change within organisations may also be more sustainable over the long-term as these changes can take decades and may require a mobilising and connecting with a broad movement of people.

### **Tensions around having lived experience and marginalisation as a criteria for investment**

Some young people may not want to have to share these elements of their lives with 'strangers' in order to qualify for funding/be considered legitimate applicants. They may also want to be valued for their skills and passion rather than feeling that they have to prove that they are deserving.

The Trust may want to be more transparent about trade-offs and tensions at different levels in this work in the future e.g. between funding politically radical projects and charity law/board comfort levels, between speed (of developing and implementing initiatives) and clarity/completeness, between publicising recruitment widely and having to sort through hundreds of applications/disappoint more young people, between including the most marginalised and having the skills, resources and structures in place to ensure that initiatives are safe for them and Do No Harm.

*"I think we are as a generation focused on ourselves – we campaign on issues that are personal to us – there is a kind of hyper individualism. We are passionate about anti-racism and homophobia – but ending discrimination in these areas won't solve your problems if you are sleeping on the streets, if you can't pay rent.*

*A lot of us aren't discussing tangible economic issues, we find ourselves talking about identity – because it's at the forefront of our experience. But we aren't addressing the structural issues that shape young people's future."*

■ Challenge and Change Young Advisor

## Clarifying roles and responsibilities

There have at times been challenges in terms of roles and responsibilities and confusion about where Blagrove is leading, where it is relying on the expertise of others and where it is setting the parameters within which others are taking decisions.

When working with young people on Challenge and Change, the Trust has been very conscious of the power dynamic and being clear about who decides (young people) and who implements (the Trust). When working with agent organisations (Opportunity Fund) it has been more complex – with the Trust (with PHF) setting clear parameters and being involved in key decisions (like selection and recruitment) and the Agent organisations implementing.

Whilst the Trust has been open to adapting the initiatives there is a need to actively try and counteract power dynamics to support greater transparency and to draw on Agent organisations expertise. It is also important to recognise that although core components of the Agents role might be the same (paying young people, providing support) the nature, and intensity, of that support is likely to diverge given that setting up a sustainable business and running a campaign drawing on your lived experience are different undertakings and will attract different young people.

The Trust also needs to consider where it needs to either strengthen its own expertise (working with young people directly, facilitation) or more openly ask for support/recognise others expertise (youth-led social change work). It also needs to ensure that it is bringing in the expert organisations to support young people – particularly in core areas around understanding social change and campaigning.

<b>Help Us Move On</b>	Southern Policy Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy advocacy expertise, relationships/contacts with the Council</li> </ul>
	No Limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth work support to Young Advocates</li> <li>Adult led policy advocacy alongside the advocates</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunity Fund</b>	Launch It Peer Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agent organisation – enterprise</li> <li>Agent organisation – campaigning/supporting those with lived experience</li> </ul>
	Inspire Chilli	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designed the programme</li> <li>Selected the participants/partners</li> </ul>
<b>Challenge and Change</b>	Young Advisers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people are resourced to lead change and develop their campaigning work and have greater agency and ability to influence decisions that affect them</li> </ul>
	Centre for Knowledge Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported Young Advisers with Blagrove</li> <li>Support to partners</li> <li>Expertise in Lived Experience leadership and knowledge equity</li> </ul>

## Connecting with wider group of organisations/initiatives on youth-led change

There are many organisations that are supporting young people to take a leadership role in social and political change. By moving into implementation and reducing the distance between itself and young people – Blagrove needs to find time to reach out to organisations as learning partners and/or consider a convening role.

Blagrove is already well networked with funders and with the organisations it funds but there is a wider pool of organisations that who may be able to share their learning with Blagrove and learn from Blagrove's experience.

Areas where many organisations face challenges include: recruitment and selection of young people, paying young people including how it interacts with the tax and benefit system, safeguarding, legal risk in relation to campaigning, legal entities and basic induction training/support to support young people to engage in groups respectfully.

***"In seeking change, we will fund initiatives led by, supporting and centring under-represented and marginalised groups. We will focus on who is included and who is excluded from change processes, and how this can be rebalanced."***

■ Blagrove Youth-Led Change Board Paper

***"Changemakers are young people who: have a passion for an identified issue, can connect this to their own experience and/or the experience of their community."***

■ Scoping paper for the Opportunity Fund  
Inspire Chilli

***"In relation to Challenge and Change quite a lot of the applicants were quite established in a way – they have all the ideas and the passion. I think for those who aren't ready – Blagrove could provide support for people to develop their ideas through training sessions over a couple of months, showcasing previously funded projects."***

■ Challenge and Change Young Advisor

## **Which young people?**

Looking across the three initiatives the project in Southampton has worked with the most marginalised young people who were at the earliest stage of their changemaking journey. The Opportunity Fund is supporting changemakers from disadvantaged backgrounds to progress towards having sustainable businesses and campaigners with lived experience to draw on that to campaign on issues close to their hearts. Many of the Challenge and Change recipients may look different in terms of background – they are predominantly university educated (so may not be considered by some as disadvantaged or marginalised) however the vast majority of those who received grants are drawing on their lived experience in their projects.

### **Blagrove is supporting young people at different points in their changemaking journey**

The different initiatives can legitimately support young people at different points in their changemaking journey. Having a mix of experience and changemaking readiness within a cohort can also be beneficial. Blagrove has the opportunity to learn and reflect across initiatives where and how the Trust can best add value and with which young people. The overarching theory of change or strategy around funding young people directly (e.g. what results are expected, where Blagrove sits within a wider ecosystem) can be strengthened through this learning process.

### **The intended target group should be aligned with recruitment and selection processes and reflected in support packages**

Over the last few years, Blagrove has had to grapple with the extent to which it considers disadvantage, marginalisation and lived experience as a criteria for investing in young people directly. But young people can have similar or common experience of disadvantage and be at very different points on a changemaking journey or in their readiness to lead. Open recruitment and selection processes are likely to attract people who are self-motivated, organised, have a clear plan and are in a relatively stable position. These factors may also be key to their success and young people who are not at this point will require more support.

The scoping paper for the Opportunity Fund highlighted how agent organisations could potentially reach further into communities (and engage a different group of young people) because they are established and trusted and better assess young people's strengths and support needs.

Through the pandemic Agent Organisations and No Limits have provided additional support and played a more proactive role in providing pastoral support & safeguarding check-ins.

## Providing the right level of support

Some young people have had to step away or pause their engagement in the Opportunity Fund/Southampton Project through the pandemic. There is a balance of risk here – choosing young people who are already well resourced and in a stable position may deny the opportunity to some young people who are in a more difficult position who could benefit. Being part of these initiatives is very exciting for young people but they can also feel the pressure.

There is a need to be conscious of whether young people are in a position/ready and willing to 'activate their lived experience' which may be/have been traumatic. It is important that the Trust is drawing on trauma-informed approaches if it intends to be funding more young people as activating lived experience is not without its personal costs. Ensuring young people are in stable position and have the support they need is key. This has been recognised by the young people in the first cohort of the Opportunity Fund who stressed the importance of recruiting young people for Phase 2 with confidence, a strong support network and resilience.

### **Blagrove needs to be able to understand its relative contribution with different young people**

It will be important when assessing the relative impact of initiatives to understand where the young people are in their journey and the distance they have travelled. However imperfect any assessment might be it would provide some kind of basis for comparison and learning.

Recognising that young people may be at different points in their journey depending on the support they have received and how long they have been working on their issue is important for dynamics within a cohort.

*"If you are trying to find young people at the right point for support from marginalised backgrounds than you will have to employ a community outreach worker. They aren't going to hear about the opportunities otherwise."*

■ Youth led change partner

## Support for young people needs to be tailored

■ X young person, was living in a hostel when Blagrove initially offered support they had previously attended University but had dropped out as a result of mental health issues due to significant childhood trauma.

The support that Blagrove offered enabled this young person to use their experience to advocate towards the local council about levels of safety in supported housing and what an improved situation could look like. They also participated actively in the Council's housing review. As a care leaver with limited social support and capital, this young person struggled during lockdown to engage in the project and follow up on commitments that were made. They appreciated the support offered by the project and feel like they have grown as a result of what has been provided.

■ X young person has experience of the criminal justice system. They proposed a project as part of Challenge and Change that involves peer research and developing peer resources. The project is around five years old and has been incubated within an organisation and funded directly by another funder.

They are excited about what they can do with the investment from Blagrove and have a clear plan. They still have support from the mentor from the organisation that incubated the project, particularly in relation to budget and oversight, and are confident to ask for support. The young person is confident and has a good network of contacts built up over the last five years. They sit on a number of boards of sector organisations.

## How are young people supported?

### Supporting young people in a group setting

The Trust has some experience across its initiatives (both in terms of funding and youth advisors) about how group dynamics and group size impact on effectiveness. For example, the group of young people involved in the Social Justice project in Southampton was too small to create sustainable momentum and bring in the range of skills needed to effectively sustain the project. In comparison, the Challenge and Change cohort is large (29) and it will be challenging to keep track of their progress and sustain engagement across the group.

When working with a cohort or working jointly on an initiative together (Southampton), the dynamics within the group are important. It is clear that supporting young people to actively and constructively engage as part of a group should be a considered a core element of support. For example, Peer Power has ensured that all of its cohort go through its own induction process which provides training on empathy and injustice.

*"I want young people to run the world but they are still growing and learning. They want support and safe spaces and to be understood so that they can be the best versions of themselves."*

■ Agent Organisation

### Wrap around support – the importance of structure, rhythm and relationships

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the roll-out of initiatives. The Agent organisations of the Opportunity Fund and No Limits in Southampton were expecting to have regular face-to-face contact with the young people they were supporting – having them in their physical office on a weekly basis.

Some support has been moved online or provided one-to-one on the phone but the programmes have not run as originally envisaged. The Agents have provided additional support and options to their cohorts in order to keep them engaged. In addition, Peer Power has brokered therapeutic support for those within the cohort who have struggled with the impact of the pandemic.

*"We've felt it was really important that we supported them in a robust manner. We've added therapeutic support – we know campaigning has an emotional toll – it can wipe you out."*

■ Agent Organisation

It can be challenging to know how to best structure support when young people within a cohort will want to access it at different times and at different levels. Launch It! stressed that they are conscious that every meeting they have or training they provide cuts into the time that the young people have to actually work on their business. Whereas young people who are drawing on their lived experience in campaigning might need more regular support and space to share their experience. If young people need support then Agent organisations need to be there.

## Paying young people and the power of investment

Young people are clear that the investment that Blagrave has made in them has given them a sense of pride and the time and space to pursue their passions. They are very positive about the opportunity and wish that other funders would show similar trust and commitment to young people.

***"We've learned from our role in the Opportunity Fund. We think it's a great model and a great opportunity for young people. We are now thinking about how to include upfront investment in our programmes (normally we have business pitch down the line)."***

■ Agent Organisation

## Tax and benefits

It is clear that the logistics of paying young people can be time-consuming and complicated for young people and for any Agent organisations. There is scope for trying to consolidate learning in this area to share with young people and organisations who want to invest in young people. Areas that can be challenging include: interaction with the benefits system, registering for self-assessment and/or setting up a legal entity, saving towards a future tax bill and if employing young people – how to consider their role alongside the organisation's staff.

## Length of Initiative

The timeframes for the Opportunity Fund and the Southampton Social Justice Project are seen as being appropriate although both projects have been affected by the pandemic. For the Agent Organisations they see their commitment to the young people as going beyond the 18 months and envisage supporting them for at least two years. The Challenge and Change timeframe is shorter and this provides a useful differential for comparative learning.

***"What I've learned from being an activist is – perseverance is key. We are still saying the things we were saying five years ago and only now things are starting to change. Nothing happens quickly."***

***"With business it takes you six months to even get started so you need 18 months to two years to get to a fully functioning business."***

## What happens at the end of the funded period?

Whether at the end of nine months or two years, young people will stop being financially and non-financially supported – it is important to consider how this transition can be effectively managed and what relationship will be sustained with their cohort/group and with Blagrave and/or Agent Organisations.

Other initiatives e.g. Campaign Bootcamp, Advocacy Academy – do maintain a post-support community, mostly online, where young people can support each other and share information and resources including job opportunities. Alumni are often involved in recruitment and selection and/or in training and events.

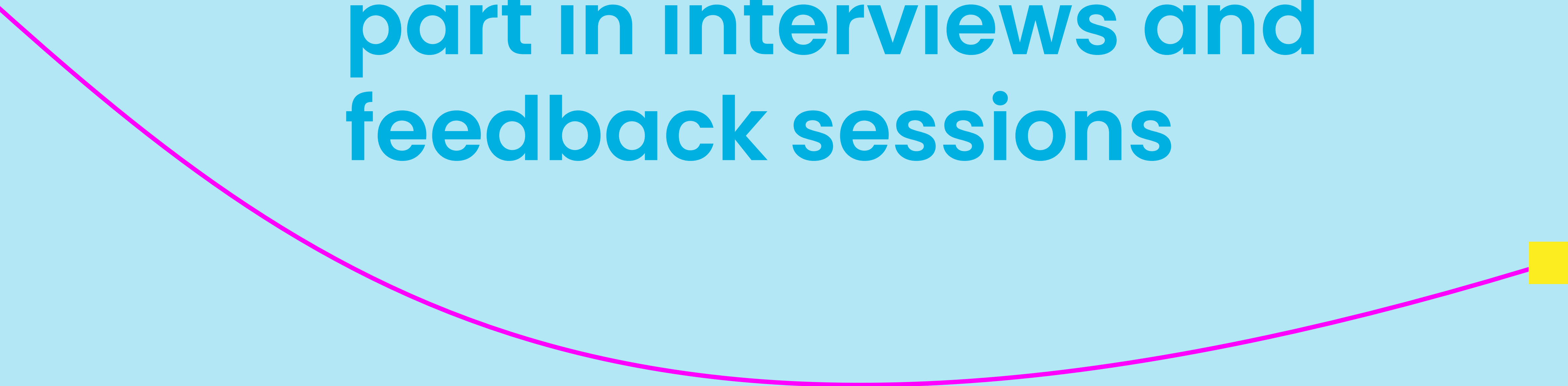
Blagrave may want to consider whether it wants to support a community and whether it should do this itself or provide a grant to another organisation to do this as it has with the Young Trustees Movement.



*"Maybe Blagrave are like the professional pace setters. They might not be able to keep up the pace – but with what they have done Blagrave has set the pace – pulling other institutions along with them. They are setting the pace. Being the change. Others wouldn't be changing without the catalyst."*

■ Association of Charitable Foundations

**A big thank you  
to all those who took  
part in interviews and  
feedback sessions**



# Blaggrave.

## Watch this space.

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