The Beacon Collaborative

GIVING VOICE TO PHILANTHROPY

A REPORT EXPLORING RENEWAL OF THE BEACON CELEBRATION

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CITY BRIDGE TRUST

Pears Foundation

The Beacon Collaborative

> Where government must be prudent with public funds, the philanthropist can take risks and freely invest in social innovation or pilot initiatives to address intractable problems.
>
> Where government must meet the needs of the many, philanthropists can support small or specialist organisations, including those that help the most marginalised, partnering alongside or complementing public spending priorities.
>
> And, where the private sector must maximise financial value, philanthropy can champion social or environmental causes, funding work that might never be commercialised or taken to scale.

From the Beacon Manifesto

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RENEWAL OF THE BEACON CELEBRATION

Introduction

The Beacon Awards were established as a platform to celebrate successful acts of philanthropy in the UK. The hope was that the platform they provide would enable a better understanding of the value of philanthropy in today's society and as a result, see far greater levels of engagement between philanthropists and communities around the country.

It was felt that, by highlighting outstanding examples of success, others would be inspired to engage as philanthropists themselves. That was sixteen years ago, in 2004. Since then, the environment has changed. Although a new wave of philanthropists has not surged forward, Beacon has developed as a broad-based collaborative with a new and exciting mandate. As part of the process of challenging the existing vision and building a new vision for Beacon, we have undertaken an outreach project, designed to achieve a better understanding of how Beacon is perceived and whether an awards programme could, or should, form part of its future vision.

This project is one element of the work Beacon has undertaken to examine the underlying infrastructure and culture of philanthropy in the UK today and what might be done to enhance it. In this report, we examine the role that recognition and celebration play in incentivising donors to make charitable investments and in informing the public of the value of those investments. The starting point has been the platform provided by the existing Beacon Awards.

The purpose of this project has been to test the hypothesis that an awards programme is the best platform to achieve recognition, celebrate philanthropy and to engage and inform the public.

The objectives of the Beacon Collaborative are complex and broad. Additional projects look at high net worth philanthropy, Millennial engagement, communications and advocacy. But the underlying objective, while ambitious, is simple: that wealth holders seek

'to encourage our peers to increase our annual charitable giving collectively by £2 billion.'

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Communication

Interviewees suggested that awards no longer achieve the need for educating and communicating the value, impact and potential of philanthropy on communities across the UK. Awards consume high levels of resource which could be applied to communicating the impact of philanthropy more compellingly, something that Beacon is ideally placed to do.

Collaboration

Some interviewees expressed an interest in partnering with Beacon. There was a sense that the Beacon Collaborative is currently under the radar and that more could be done to build its profile (and effectiveness) within the charity sector and with the wider public. Other interviewees (not those engaged with awards programmes) suggested that Beacon could engage in these activities, highlight best practice and showcase or partner with programmes offered by other organisations rather than continuing to run the Beacon Awards.

Public Education

Philanthropists talked about their belief that the projects they funded should be recognised, rather than themselves. They stressed that the public needed to see the outcomes of successful projects and the transformation they bring about, helping to understand how those results were achieved - in the words of one interviewee, 'What it takes to keep the show on the road'.

Beacon could partner with other organisations rather than continuing to run the Beacon Awards.

Education and training of all involved was seen as essential.

Recognition

Recognition of the philanthropist was not seen as a key driver; recognition of transformational programmes was. It was felt that much could be done within the existing national honours system to ensure a consistent focus on the impact of philanthropy as a qualifying criterion for awards - either explicitly recognising the voluntary role played by individuals to galvanise transformational change across communities, or, more radically, awarding honours to communities, recognising the work of strategic partnerships and collaboratives rather than individuals.

Peer-to-peer support

This form of transformational investment is not something learned from the textbooks but from examples. Case studies are strong, but the ability to learn directly from the experience of others is more powerful.

Building skills

Education and training of all involved in philanthropy; philanthropists, wealth-advisers, not-for-profit volunteers and staff, was seen as essential. Beacon is well placed to partner with organisations specialising in the field to deliver consistent opportunities to engage.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF

1. Recognition

Beacon should ensure that the value of philanthropy is understood in its true context; not as the contribution of one individual but as an outcome of strategic partnerships and collaboration.

2. Communications and public affirmation

Beacon should establish a network of influencers able to communicate the impact of philanthropy on communities today and its potential for the future.

3. Education

Beacon should ensure that coordinated educational programmes for philanthropists, wealth advisers, fundraisers and leaders of civil society organisations are accessible and have impact.

4. Peer-to-peer networks

Beacon should prioritise the development of networks for philanthropists, to enable them to learn directly from the experience of others.

METHODOLOGY

A series of qualitative interviews have been undertaken over a period of three months (September 2019 - December 2019). The subjects of those interviews have been:

- philanthropists from across the UK
- leaders of sectoral bodies
- Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Office of Civil Society
- financial intermediaries
- the media
- academics
- representatives of existing awards programmes.

Feedback from 31 interviewees contributed to the project. Interviewees were asked how Beacon might encourage philanthropy.

We have structured the report to reflect this.

We begin by setting out the core themes that arose from the interviews:

- The role played by recognition
- Communications and public affirmation
- Education
- Peer-to-peer support.

We then share our conclusions and recommendations.

We felt it was critical to let the voices of our interviewees speak for themselves throughout the report. Wherever possible, we have used direct quotations to make or reinforce the recommendations we propose.

In addition, we provide an assessment of the characteristics of existing awards programmes as an appendix to the report.

HOW TO ENCOURAGE PHILANTHROPY

Interviewees were asked how Beacon could encourage philanthropy. Their suggestions fell into four key areas:

A. Recognition

'We don't want winners - there are no losers so how can you win?'

Philanthropists told us they do not seek personal recognition; they give for the difference they can make to society. Some interviewees questioned whether major philanthropists are motivated by an awards programme. Others expressed the opinion that awards were not a motivating factor at all. They also noted it can be difficult to tie philanthropy to clear outcomes, making it challenging to identify worthy award winners.

A consensus emerged amongst interviewees from all sectors that the spotlight needs to shine, not on individuals, but on projects and very specifically, what it takes to achieve success; partners, culture, community. 'Recognition by my peers is what I value' was one comment made by many.

If there is to be a form of recognition, many interviewees suggested that the public honours system could be a more effective tool than it currently is, although they felt constrained by a perception that it is tainted by political influence and bias. External partners, including the charitable sector, could advocate for changes to the system to enhance the value placed on philanthropy and recognise the contribution of communities over that of any one individual.

'Why reinvent the wheel? If recognition is important, for whatever reason, make sure the honours system is fit for purpose.'

The Beacon Awards are known within a small sphere for the recognition they bring to major philanthropy. Many interviewees, including former Beacon honourees, expressed the opinion that, while affirmation feels good, there has been little impact on public perception of high net worth philanthropy or the programmes that have been recognised as a consequence of the awards.

A further comment has been that the process of adjudication is an onerous one and consumes high levels of resource that could be applied to communicating the impact of philanthropy more compellingly, something that Beacon is ideally placed to do.

'Beacon should recognise success and innovation, regionally and nationally.'

There was debate about what should be recognised. Traditionally, it has been the individual (the philanthropist) and in some cases, a charity or charity team. Interviewees felt that this did not reflect the full reality of what it takes to achieve success; community projects and partnerships that should be brought into the light, not simply the philanthropists behind them.

Philanthropists talked about how they would prefer the projects they funded to be rewarded, rather than themselves. They stressed that the outcomes and the transformation achieved were what the public should see. The public would then more readily understand how those results came about - 'What it takes to keep the show on the road'.

'It's taken 10 years but we're now a valued part of the community in East London. But we've been active in the area for more than 40 years...'

'It's not about how wealth was made, it's about the way that person thinks about community that matters.'

'We should recognise impact on all level and scales. My philanthropy is a significant commitment for me and my family - so is all philanthropy and it can all be transformational. Maybe that's the answer - it has to be transformational to qualify.'

B. Peer-to-peer support

'Let's look at global families and how they build their networks.'

Philanthropists said they welcome the opportunity to meet with others who are engaged in giving, to share examples of what has worked and what has not. Scotland was cited as a country which is small enough for a network of philanthropists to have developed organically without a brokering organisation, but this has not always occurred in England, perhaps because it is larger both geographically and in population. This network (and certain awards) provide access to other like-minded individuals and families with the ability to build an informal network of support as a consequence.

'We know each other in Scotland. We talk to each other and we know what the issues are. Which is why we get things done.'

Peer support is valued because this form of transformational investment is not something learned from the textbooks but from examples. Case studies are strong, but the ability to learn directly from experience is more powerful. Formal or informal peer-to-peer networks offer that opportunity. They may occur organically, as cited in Scotland, or they may be supported as an exercise in client engagement by banks. But, again and again, learning from peers was identified by interviewees as the most powerful experience that has encouraged new donors to emerge and have the confidence to invest both time and money in social and charitable projects.

'We build case studies for every project. It's critical that people get the characteristics of success - and of community engagement.'

C. Education

'We give where we can see due diligence has been done - to a trusted organisation with a methodology and structure.'

'It can feel like pushing a stone up a hill - and that's not right, either.'

Philanthropists and fundraisers believe there is a gulf in understanding and sympathy between charities and community groups on one side and high net worth individuals and their advisers on the other.

To sit at a table in the US with a wealthy individual, their advisers and potential partners is an invigorating experience with a palpable buzz of interest in the room. Everyone knows why they are there and is excited at the prospect of transformational change. That is the expected norm.

Our interviewees in the UK talked about fundraisers not understanding that wealth is not a barrier to normality, nor that, in many cases, wealthy individuals came from far poorer backgrounds than the fundraisers who seemed to see their wealth as a barrier.

It seems fundraisers sometimes struggle to see past the money to the individual behind it - to understand what motivates them and also what the wealthy feel they're bringing to the table. This reduces opportunities for significant philanthropy because philanthropists' sense that the interest is in their chequebook alone, rather than in their experience and ability. Fundraisers sometimes seem intimidated by wealth rather than inspired by the entrepreneurialism and creativity that built it. That sense of 'oneness' doesn't seem quite so normal in the UK. How, within a British culture, can we achieve that?

'The fundraisers I met had all been to university. I was the first member of my family to go to college. I feel close to the issues and understand them from my own experience. I'm not sure whether that was so true for the other people in the room.'

'Our community is faith-based - less flamboyant – and maybe has a more philanthropic gene. Certainly, there's a strong expectation to get involved'

'One of the saddest things is that there is no recognised skills-base'

Addressing this through education or training of all groups (philanthropists, wealth-advisers and fundraisers) could lead to better partnerships and more giving. Organisations like The Philanthropy Network or the Wealth and Giving Forum have offered training, mentoring and networking to the wealthy for many years and with some success in the US.

Many interviewees stressed that their focus is on transformation and the change they see needs to be made. They expressed great loyalty to those organisations that helped to achieve this effectively.

In the UK, Philanthropy Impact is experiencing high demand for the training it provides for wealth-advisers and now, fundraisers. A greater level of empathy on both sides should lead to more productive understanding of the skills, abilities and experience of all parties involved and in turn, lead to more fruitful giving and better outcomes.

High net worth philanthropy has a different character from mass fundraising: philanthropists can be willing to take risks and invest for the long-term.

Their funding can be more secure, which is invaluable to community organisations and charities. They often understand an organisation and remain loyal to it when the going gets tough if a scandal hits or another funding stream is pulled.

Many interviewees stressed that their focus is on transformation and the change they see needs to be made. They expressed great loyalty to those organisations that helped to achieve this effectively. They also spoke of the need to understand that change is not achieved at a single moment in time. There may be moments of greater impact, but for change to be truly transformational, it needs to be sustained in the long-term.

Their commitment as individuals is for as long as it is necessary to achieve the objectives that drive them. This can contrast with the fixed-term funding sometimes provided by government and local authorities. The individual objectivity that they bring can also be critical to ultimate success.

'We're interested in making a social investment and that doesn't happen outside partnerships. Like all relationships, we're in it for the long term and accept that there will be highs and lows.'

'Support networks may look different to the next generation – so will delivery, so we have to build that in now.'

Continued education of fundraisers would also help to develop fruitful partnerships with the high net worth philanthropists of the future, as societal attitudes evolve and new philanthropists emerge. It will help to build a culture of high net worth giving into the future.

Over the last two decades we have seen a significant increase in entrepreneurial wealth. The demographic of those who have made it has shifted. Often younger, frequently from more diverse backgrounds and with a diversity of business experience, they have not necessarily grown up with a knowledge or experience of the traditional models of community support and change.

They have different expectations, are looking for effective partners to work with and are not prone to making blind investments. Many still make routine donations to charity - but don't see that as 'philanthropy'.

Philanthropy is where their engagement proves to be transformational; knowledge, skills and networks coming together with effective partners in the community to make change. They see change as natural.

They don't disrespect previous generations, but they do need to build things differently and they expect that their children will do things differently in their turn.

'Our children may want to do this differently. That's natural: we are happy they want to do it.'

D. Communications and public affirmation

'We have to encourage constructive coverage. This country's media is good at tearing down - not so good at building up.'

There is an underlying distrust of high net worth philanthropy among the public and the perception is this arises from a lack of understanding about the motives of high net worth givers and what they want to achieve. Changing these perceptions would encourage a wider awareness of philanthropic giving and the creation of a culture that values philanthropy, the community and social cohesion it builds as it establishes meaningful partnerships.

It would help amplify the activities of current philanthropists. A comment made several times was 'We're damned if we do; damned if we don't'. There was a sense that working behind the scenes was seen as subversive; that publicising philanthropy was seen as self-serving and that this was a zero-sum game.

There was a sense that publicising philanthropy was seen as self-serving.

'Why would anyone engage and run the risk of extreme negativity? It's far easier not to engage at all.'

A current example cited was that of the gift of £150 million, by American philanthropist Stephen A. Schwarzman, to Oxford University in 2019 for the study of the ethics of Artificial Intelligence. The interviewee felt that the press coverage focused far more on the potentially distorting impact of the gift on the institution than on the timeliness of the gift, its focus and the generosity behind it.

While the coverage may not have been as one-sided as was perceived, nevertheless, it's indicative of the embattled sense of the interviewee.

'We have to detoxify the way people understand wealth.'

Though culture change is complex and requires long term commitment to achieve sustainable change, interviewees agreed that this would be a valuable undertaking.

It could be achieved through building an evidence base of case studies and data-driven research as a platform for communications and advocacy and using that base as the springboard for an effective multi-media communications strategy promoting community engagement by high net worth individuals as positive and beneficial.

'Show people the impact and they'll be more inclined to embrace the process.'

Though culture change is complex and requires long term commitment to achieve sustainable change, interviewees agreed that this would be a valuable undertaking.

CONCLUSIONS

'This is 'the time'.'

Broad agreement emerged among interviewees that the Beacon brand is valuable, though its presence could be far stronger. There was little certainty about the value of the Beacon Awards programme.

The opinions expressed by interviewees strongly endorse the need for promotion and support of high net worth philanthropy. The most effective way to achieve this, based on the consensus of opinions we heard, would be to establish Beacon as a hub, or thought leader, for issues relating to high net worth philanthropy. Beacon should act as a convening partner and facilitator of resources as well as an aggregator to provide access to an evidence base for the value of high net worth philanthropy and to resource public information programmes, advocacy and influencing.

While awards programmes meet certain objectives, they require a significant degree of resource, both human and financial. In addition, they experience limited penetration to the public at large, typically having an 'industry' focus. We believe that Beacon, rather than offering a separate award, should work with other organisations currently hosting awards programmes to support them as they highlight high net worth philanthropy as part of the mainstream of social engagement in the UK. Association with the Beacon brand could represent the common thread of high net worth philanthropy wherever it is applied.

Beacon should build a balanced communications strategy with a strong digital base, deploying the strengths of the internet and social media. It would be powerful to see Beacon as the convener, drawing on and showcasing the strengths and experience of other organisations, (Charities Aid Foundation, UK Community Foundations, Institute of Fundraising, Arts Council England) while presenting a consistent picture of the

Beacon should build a balanced communications strategy, deploying the strengths of the internet and social media.

breadth, depth and potential for philanthropy in the field.

Highlighting relatable examples, those that are successful as well as some that did not achieve what they set out to do, should be an important component of Beacon's work. These stories would be used as a means to engage media attention - recognising that philanthropic engagement could be as compelling to viewers as, say, Countryfile - and ensure that high net worth philanthropy becomes part of our cultural and community wallpaper.

Highlighting that partnerships are key to successful social networks, taking into account what works in a British context is another important element to include. This needs a distinctly British flavour.

Looking across the UK today at schools, hospitals, universities, museums and public works the impact of philanthropy is all around. Yet, for the most part, this predates the experience of the current generation. These developments were a product of the great social movements designed to provide access to healthcare, education and a better quality of life in the nineteenth century. The public parks and spaces, schools and hospitals from which we benefit today did not randomly appear but were a conscious product of a desire to create a better and more equitable society, fueled and enabled by philanthropy.

The British make assumptions about what philanthropists have achieved in the US and how they have achieved it. But, while our underlying motivation is broadly similar, the cultures, how we see and express ourselves, are very different and do not directly translate, one to the other. In order to achieve greater engagement by high net worth individuals we need to approach the issues from our own perspective and culture - create a British dynamic. In the UK, there is less awareness of the work of philanthropists and less opportunity to talk, peer-to-peer, about what it takes to make a successful philanthropic investment.

The underlying context for philanthropy in the US is an expectation that people with wealth and influence will engage those assets on behalf of the community: in the UK, we seem divided between a concern that individuals might exercise too much power as a result of their donation and a continuing imperative to recognise wealthy individuals as donors rather than as partners. We seem unwilling to acknowledge that donors are interested in impact and outcomes, in resolving an issue, over supporting the work of a charitable organisation.

Ultimately, many donors view charities as potential partners to deliver change rather than as organisations with a mission automatically deserving their support.

So what engages the British? A sense that we're all part of something and pulling towards the same goal.

The core to success in the US lies in community engagement. So, what engages the British? A sense that we are all part of something and pulling together to a shared goal; a sympathy for the underdog; a distrust of the flashy. To have impact, Beacon will have to emphasise the collaborative, team-based nature of the successes it highlights.

Supporting strong peer-to-peer networks in an array of different formats, building on what already exists should also be a key objective. Supporting and directing to existing organisations such as the Marshall Institute could be as valuable as establishing new ones.

Client networks of banks and financial advisers, entities generating new philanthropic concepts and leadership such as the Kilfinan Group, all provide existing platforms to which Beacon could provide additional support, signposting to those opportunities or working in partnership with them to ensure that the networks they offer are maximizing opportunities for philanthropists to engage with one another.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Beacon Collaborative should consider recognition and celebration in a broader context than that of an awards programme through:

1. Recognition

Beacon should ensure that the value of philanthropy is understood in its true context, not as the contribution of one individual but as an outcome of strategic partnerships and collaboration.

Our research has demonstrated that there is agreement that the impact of high net worth philanthropy should be recognised. There was a universal sense that awards for philanthropists had not been successful in achieving this and that other routes should be explored. The focus for this should be on projects themselves; what are the critical partnerships; what resources are needed; what success (and failure) look like and how to build on them. We recommend that Beacon:

- Ceases to host a dedicated awards programme
- Identifies partners who have the capacity to recognise the contribution made by individual philanthropists and others to successful projects (social and community organisations, fundraisers, wealth advisers) and works with them to achieve a coherent platform for sector and 'industry' recognition
- Examines the existing honours system to determine how it might recognise communities, strategic partnerships and collaborative endeavours as well as the voluntary commitment made by individuals. This is not without precedent (for example, Malta, George Cross) and would support public recognition of the impact of philanthropy and voluntary action on the social and economic communities in which we live.

'Beacon can make a lasting difference - if it focuses on joining the dots.'

2. Communications and public affirmation

Beacon should establish a network of influencers able to communicate the impact of philanthropy on communities today and its potential for the future.

While many organisations in the UK today speak of elements that are part of the process of philanthropic engagement, none of them is positioned to speak for the whole. Philanthropy is not the first priority for any of them, though it might be important to many. This inevitably results in a fragmented approach which is a key reason for the lack of public understanding of the role that philanthropy plays in building our communities, today and in the future. We recommend that Beacon:

- Identifies and builds strong relationships with media champions (press, broadcast media and social media influencers) based on a consistent and long-term communications strategy to create a public voice for philanthropy
- Brings together the individual voices of philanthropy by building and promoting case studies illustrating success, complexity, failure and impact of philanthropic endeavours
- Works with the legislative system (elected and appointed legislators, civil servants and officials) to ensure that philanthropic engagement is recognised as a key component of investment in our communities and enabled (where necessary) through legislation or the lifting of legislative barriers. To help all recognise that the role of the legislative arm is to support and encourage greater levels of philanthropy, not to put obstacles in its way
- Build an online platform that allows Beacon to act as the first port of call for anyone seeking information about or support in philanthropy

- Develop partnerships with centres of excellence and infrastructure organisations. Act as an aggregator of existing knowledge, data and most importantly, stories illustrating the impact of philanthropy on communities today.

3. Education

Beacon should ensure that coordinated educational programmes for philanthropists, wealth advisers, fundraisers and leaders of civil society organisations are accessible and delivered effectively.

We established that there are very few opportunities to learn about successful philanthropy in the UK today. We also identified that, while educational opportunities for professionals do exist, they are not coordinated. This fragmented approach reinforces an already fragmented approach to philanthropy by isolating its different human elements from one another. It is critical that Beacon reinforces a sense of shared responsibility for shared outcomes and helps to build the 'team ethos' that is so critical to successful philanthropy. We recommend that Beacon:

- Brings together those organisations currently providing training in the field of philanthropy and identifies, with them, the markers of a coordinated approach to philanthropic education and learning
- Maintains a watching and coordinating brief, identifies common standards and highlights shared objectives for the delivery of education and learning
- Considers the potential for an annual forum for 'philanthropy' that brings together the partners responsible for successful philanthropic intervention, allowing them to learn from shared experience and celebrate success.

4. Peer-to-peer networks

Beacon should prioritise the development of networks for philanthropists, to enable them to learn directly from the experience of others.

We were told by philanthropists that there are very limited opportunities for them to learn from others or share experience. There are exceptions to this in the example of the informal networks described to us in Scotland (part of the routine social structure) or the client-based networks offered by some banks and wealth advisers.

There are significant challenges to building successful networks depending on and built around volunteers. On the one hand, informality and relevance are keys to success; on the other, a degree of operational support has to be available to maintain momentum and continuity.

It is possible that Beacon could either assume direct responsibility for building such a platform, or work with partners in the field to develop a shared one. We recommend that Beacon:

- Studies existing examples of current successful networks (of philanthropists and of volunteers) across the UK and identifies their defining characteristics
- Reaches out to potential partners to discuss models for shared delivery
- Explores possible models of 'fellowship' both in the UK and the US to determine whether they offer examples for Beacon to adapt.

APPENDICES

I. Voices

The voices of our interviewees were compelling. The freedom with which they spoke made us understand that the potential for philanthropy in the UK is huge if we can but unleash it.

We wanted to make sure that we did not lose the flavor of what we heard and thought that these comments speak for themselves.

'Anybody can be a philanthropist.'

'Recognition and understanding are more important than awards.'

'Liberate the money where it's tied up. Don't legislate against giving.'

'There is no lack of supply; just little effective demand.'

'We can help the Local Authority look good, that's what partners do.'

'Beacon can make a lasting difference - if it focuses on joining the dots.'

'Our community may be different - we know we have a duty to step up to the plate.'

'I still don't know where to go to for advice on how to do this.'

'Do philanthropists look like me?'

'This is my space and I'm comfortable in it.'

'Philanthropy is a broad church - people just don't know it.'

'It's one of the saddest things. I need skills and I don't know who to go to to learn from.'

'Social cohesion relies on happiness - I think we have forgotten how to be happy.'

'Beacon could be THE champion; we don't have one right now.'

'My generation sees the charity sector as the problem. We need to get stuff done and they don't help.'

'Don't make things complicated. We have a fatal tendency to make everything more difficult than it needs to be.'

'This isn't an obligation. I'm here because I want to be here.'

'We have to appeal to the people of this country - what's the audience demographic for Countryfile?'

II. Charitable Awards: the current profile

All award programmes, no matter how they are constituted, require significant human and financial resources to support them.

A. The nuts and bolts

Most awards are free to enter. Some awards programmes provide help to applicants with their applications via workshops and advice. Applicants are generally asked to answer questions about their work and demonstrate the positive impact they have made.

Some awards also make their own outreach to potential applicants and use social media and partners to promote them. Many awards programmes provide entrants with feedback on their applications.

Typically, programmes have a panel of judges, drawn from experts in their field. Staff may remove low-quality applications or those that do not meet criteria. They may also support applicants in drafting applications. Online scoring is sometimes used before judges meet either in person or virtually to make final decisions. In many cases applicants are scored by sectoral peers.

Some (and in a sometimes-entrepreneurial space the boundaries between individual and business may be blurred) see awards as important for their profile and to demonstrate to their clients, potential clients and stakeholders their commitment to social responsibilities and/or quality of their work.

'It's really special for a professional to be recognised by their peers.'

B. Strategic objectives

For some organisations, awards fulfil important strategic objectives; they enable them to recognise their members or clients and thus demonstrate that they value them and/or help the organisation raise the profile of a particular group of stakeholders.

'Our winners build a story around their win and it helps them to attract clients.'

It can be hard to judge the success of programmes against their stated objectives. Most note the number of applicants, number of attendees but do not attempt to evaluate or measure impact against the overall objectives. It is unusual to find any analysis of the public or social impact of an awards programme or of the projects honoured by it.

'Awards are a way of driving up practice and setting the bar for excellence.'

In some cases, awards provide valuable promotional content that can be used after the programmes are over. Awards are perceived as prestigious by both the awarding organisation and the recipients, an endorsement supported by the range, number and quality of applicants and coverage within the sector. Some programmes receive regular positive feedback whereas others feel they struggle to attract key stakeholders.

'Our awards are an important mechanism to encourage engagement and collective impact for good work.'

Many awards schemes have a one-off event, often a dinner, at which the awards are presented. For some of these, a fee is charged, for others the event is free to attend and funded through sponsorship. For some, this revenue contributes to the financial running of the awards whereas for others attendance is free and the award is funded by the organisation itself or through sponsorship.

A minority of awards appear to be skewed towards money making exercises, primarily serving to promote business.

'We include an element of fun at the ceremony, for example, using appropriate music for each award.'

There is a clear quid pro quo in running awards programmes for host organisations. Programmes enable them to promote their organisational profile, services or products. Some of the awards programmes researched (but not interviewed) appear to have objectives or business models more focused towards themselves than on any broader objective. Some programmes declined to be interviewed, possibly for reasons of commercial sensitivity. In most cases it is challenging to quantify success.

'Our awards are a commercial project; they help us to achieve our objectives.'

C. Future of award programmes

'Have awards had their day? Are there other drivers?'

Interviewees tended to agree that awards programmes speak to warm and interested, even niche, audiences but are generally of less interest to broader, external audiences such as charity CEOs or the general public, media or legislators. One interviewee commented that the main, high profile charity awards programmes are 'male, pale and stale' and do not represent diverse communities in their applicants, judges, attendees or ceremonies. They appear not to have a reach beyond their sector interests. In contrast, the national media does focus on the public honours system, with announcements twice a year and ongoing investiture ceremonies.

'Focus on awards may be at the expense of long-term fellowship and learning.'

There was a sense from interviewees that awards are 'old hat'. A significant number of awards programmes were engaged in reviewing their effectiveness, although none said they expected to close them. The reviews were intended to ensure that the programmes continued to meet their strategic objectives, in an ever-evolving environment and explored the potential for establishing partners to add richness to their programme. This was despite a realisation that the public perception of awards programmes had shifted and their relevance was being questioned.

One interviewee commented that the main, high profile charity awards programmes are 'male, pale and stale' and do not represent diverse communities in their applicants, judges, attendees or ceremonies.

D. Suggestions for development of the Beacon Awards, should they be retained?

'Philanthropists do a broad range of things. Can you attribute change to the impact of philanthropy?'

Some interviewees (engaged with awards programmes themselves), made suggestions for reframing the Beacon Awards. Some suggested that Beacon could focus more on highlighting the impact made by award winners after the event, partnering with an appropriate sponsor and working with them to share good practice via workshops, podcasts, meetings, throughout the subsequent year.

Beacon might also recognise high impact giving/philanthropy from businesses and or/ financial advisers. Some interviewees expressed an interest in partnering with Beacon. There was a sense that the Beacon Awards are currently under the radar and that more could be done to build their profile within the charity sector and with the wider public.

Other interviewees (not those engaged with awards programmes) suggested that Beacon could engage in these activities, highlight best practice and highlight or partner with awards offered by other organisations rather than continuing to run the Beacon Award.

'Could Beacon iterate to include high profile corporate philanthropy?'

'Awards are interesting to a limited community - and not the ones we want to engage with.'

There was a sense that the Beacon Awards are currently under the radar and that more could be done to build their profile within the charity sector and with the wider public.

THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We have spoken with numerous individuals and organisations whose comments underpin the recommendations of this report. Many did not want to be individually recognised, however, our thanks are due to them all for agreeing to talk with us and for the frankness with which they approached the subject.

All agreed that it was of the utmost importance to build strong relationships between communities and high net worth individuals who are part of them. All agreed that effective and transformational outcomes could only be achieved through partnerships - and partnerships built on long-term commitment. So, we thank them for that commitment to change - the characteristic that they all share with one another.

Our thanks are also due to the working group, not only for sharing their opinions and experience, but for the introductions and advice that have allowed us to write this report.

Organisations interviewed

- Anonymous awards organisation
- Arts Council for England
- British Asian Awards
- Charityflow
- C. Hoare & Co.
- City Bridge Trust
- Corra Foundation
- Dragon Awards
- FT awards for private banking
- Institute of Fundraising
- Institute for Sustainable Philanthropy
- National Council for Voluntary Organisations
- National Philanthropic Trust - UK
- Office for Civil Society
- Payroll Giving Awards
- Philanthropy Impact
- UBS Foundation
- UK Community Foundations

Working group

The Working Group for this project represents experts who have experience within this field, detailed knowledge of Beacon or significant experience of philanthropy. They include:

Andrew Watt, Project Lead. Formerly deputy CEO of the Institute of Fundraising, CEO of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, CEO of the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy, former chair American Friends of Winchester College, current Development Committee Adviser of Winchester College and vice chair of the Isle of Wight Cultural Investment Company.

Fabian French, CEO UK Community Foundations, former director of fundraising Marie Curie Cancer Care following a career with Kleinwort Benson and Merrill Lynch.

Cath Dovey, co-founder of the Beacon Collaborative, former managing partner of Scorpio Partnership, the global strategy consultancy for the wealth management industry, Chair of Philanthropy Impact and Chair of Rosa, the UK fund for women and girls.

John Canady, CEO of National Philanthropic Trust UK, the UK subsidiary of National Philanthropic Trust, the leading provider of donor advised funds in the US.

Elisa Trovato: Deputy Editor, Professional Wealth Management, Financial Times (including FT Wealth Awards programme).

Roberta d'Eustachio, founder of Giving Magazine and the Giving Collective.

The Beacon Collaborative is a collective impact movement bringing together philanthropists, organisations and foundations that share a common aspiration to increase philanthropy and social investment among the wealthy in the UK. The goal is to attract £2 billion more annually in donations and social investment by the wealthy in the UK by 2025.

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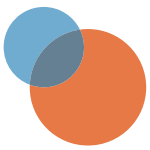
- Third Sector Strategy who gathered and analysed the data.

This report was written by Andrew Watt, founder of Third Sector Strategy, with support from Laura Thomas and Jennifer Mitchell from Brighter Together Consulting.



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