

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

The Breakthrough Fund

A Special Initiative of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Summary of Interim Evaluation Findings

Confidential

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Executive summary

The Breakthrough Fund is a Special Initiative of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's (PHF) Arts programme. It aims to unlock significant developments and outcomes in the arts that would not otherwise be achieved by responding to the compelling visions of outstanding individuals working in the role of 'cultural entrepreneur' in a wide variety of art forms and contexts, and offering transformational and timely support to them and their organisations to pursue these visions. Through an evaluation of the outcomes and impacts for the arts and the strategic role of this kind of support, Paul Hamlyn Foundation aims to offer to the wider arts sector any learning that emerges about the rationale for, challenges, and fruits of this grant giving approach.

The Breakthrough Fund ran three annual selection processes (2008–10) through a process of confidential nomination, which resulted in a total of 15 grants. Details of the Breakthrough Fund in profile are given in Appendix 1. Totalling £3,879,765, these grants range from £83,000 to £360,000 with an average value of £255,000. Three of the first year's grants completed during 2011; the remaining 12 complete at various points through to 2015. More than half run for between four and six years, with a combined span across the cohort of seven years.

Conceived as part of the expansion of PHF's grant-making envisaged in its 2006–13 Strategic Plan and addressing what it sees as an area of unaddressed potential in arts funding, PHF is trying something new with this approach to grant-making. The evaluation responds to the timescales of the various grants and comprises a number of elements outlined in Appendix 2, including a longitudinal review two years after completion of each grant. The first phase is this Interim Evaluation, which offers an assessment of the Fund's strategic role and an interim assessment of the impact and outcomes of each grant to date. Its method and research inputs are detailed in Appendix 2.

In response to its findings, PHF has decided to institute another cycle of the Breakthrough Fund. It is currently considering a number of points raised by the evaluation in order to strengthen further the Breakthrough Fund's approach and expects to announce a new selection cycle for the Fund in spring 2013.

From the evaluation evidence gathered to date, the Breakthrough Fund seems to serve a truly distinct strategic role in the current UK arts funding landscape – through:

- Its focus on the artistic vision, talent and drive of exceptional individuals in a role described by the Fund as 'cultural entrepreneur' – not often the focus of grant-making in the UK
- Its non-directive approach that embraces a variety of types of support and areas of strategic impact defined by grantees
- Its willingness to offer significant, engaged, flexible support to back the open-ended, bold pursuit of visions, and to allow plans to emerge over time
- The contribution the Fund is making to the UK arts ecology through releasing the self-defining potential for innovation, excellence, relevance and risk-taking at a time when funding is increasingly scarce

The Interim Evaluation Report shows that:

- The initiative appears to be highly valued by those in the arts sector aware of its vision and approach. Those consulted see it as increasingly relevant as the external context continues to get tougher.
- The current cohort of grantees is broadly perceived to be of a calibre and breadth that addresses the Fund's ambitions. The quality of selection decision-making is seen as fundamental to the case for the Fund.
- The Fund's most ready relevance has been to individuals in their mid-career – those coming into, or recently established within, their mature capabilities and vision, though younger grantees have also attracted support. Two thirds of grantees have won Breakthrough support to take forward the work of organisations that they themselves have founded. Less than a third lead established organisations that pre-date them and will in turn pass to other chief executives in time.
- Only six out of 15 of the grantee organisations received regular funding at the time of nomination, and a further four have secured this since then. Four grantees are currently targeting new levels of public regular funding as an aspect of their plans for sustainability beyond their Breakthrough grant. Only three have no ambition to be regularly funded, of which one runs a for-profit company.
- Some elements of the Fund's approach – such as the size of the grants, the leverage they can offer, the flexibility on timescales and on use of the grant, the ability to consider additional grants later on in the process, and the engaged support offered through the relationship with grantees – are proving critical in varying ways to its success.
- The Fund takes a distinctive approach to risk, happy to commit significant financial support earlier than might otherwise be the case, and then allow grantees' thinking to form in more detail. The risks that result are less than might have been anticipated due to the size of the grants, the quality of the individuals and the visions supported, and the supportive and engaged way the grants are managed.
- The value for money offered by the Fund will be revealed through the outcomes, impacts, legacy and sustainability of what has been supported. This will become clear over a much longer timescale than this Interim Evaluation Report and will need to be understood in full beyond the active span of the grants themselves.
- With only three grants complete at the time of the Interim Evaluation the impacts and outcomes of support are still taking shape. Progress is very strong in many areas, much of which would not have been unlocked without Breakthrough support. But the picture is varied, nuanced and changing. The great majority are progressing towards the kind of 'breakthroughs' originally envisaged, but not everyone is moving forward as hoped. The evaluation aims to learn from these examples.
- The great majority of grants appear likely to achieve strong public outcomes and a strong positive legacy for the individuals and organisations involved. Sustainability of what is being achieved is a bigger challenge, which approximately only a third appear as yet to have resolved. This is a key question for future cycles of the Fund, and will be a focus of consultation with other funders over the coming months.

Key findings

Distinctive strategic role

The Interim Evaluation has drawn from nominator interviews, comparator research (Appendix 3), and interviews with grantees to identify a remarkably consistent picture of the Breakthrough Fund's strategic role. This suggests that the Breakthrough Fund is making a unique contribution to the UK arts funding landscape, shaped by the following characteristics:

- Its defining focus on the vision, talent and drive of exceptional individuals in a role described by the Fund as 'cultural entrepreneur' – not often the focus of attention for grant-makers as the rationale for support
- Its decisive appetite to back open-ended, bold pursuit of visions with significant, engaged, flexible support – and the different relationship with risk this entails
- Its willingness for plans to take shape over time, together with its far-sightedness about the outcomes that can result

The Fund is proving to be a distinctive and potentially impactful idea, both in terms of whom it funds (exceptional individuals in the role of cultural entrepreneur) and the way it chooses to fund (a focus on responsive, significant, timely support for the bold, open-ended pursuit of compelling visions defined by grantees). In both these regards, it has found a rich seam of potential as a way to make a difference, helping to bring about a vibrant, forward-looking, self-defining arts sector and to realise developments in the arts that would not otherwise be achieved.

Non-directive approach – diversity of outcomes and areas of strategic impact

The Fund's non-directive approach has led to a consciously unplanned diversity of types of support, strategic impact and outcome. It is unusual to see a funder invest this much money in this way. It feeds what one grantee described as the 'cultural biodiversity' – and what some nominators saw as the self-realising authenticity – of what is happening in the arts in the UK.

The wide-ranging strategic impact of the grants can be clustered as follows:

Sector innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tony Butler/Happy Museum Project*
R&D for new product or idea, with potential for sector innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nii Sackey/Bigga Fish
Innovation in established institutions' visions and capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria Balshaw/Whitworth Art Gallery and Manchester Art Galleries • David Jubb/BAC • Natalie Abrahami, Carrie Cracknell/Gate Theatre • Tony Butler/Museum of East Anglian Life (MEAL)*
Innovation within an emergent organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matt Peacock/Streetwise Opera
Building up emergent organisations' programmes and capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stuart Bailie/Oh Yeah Music Centre • Gavin Wade/Eastside Projects
Significant step change/start up for independent producing companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simon Pearce/The Invisible Dot • Tom Chivers, Sam Hawkins, Marie McPartlin/London Word Festival • Helen Cole/In Between Time Productions • Claire Doherty/Situations
Significant step change for emergent artists' companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felix Barrett, Colin Marsh/Punchdrunk • Stewart Laing/Untitled Projects
Project producing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gareth Evans/Artevents

**The grant to Tony Butler included support both for the Museum of East Anglian Life and to initiate the Happy Museum Project*

Strong support from the arts sector – with the initiative seen as increasingly valuable as external challenges grow

The consultation suggests that the Breakthrough Fund has high levels of support from those aware of its decisions and approach. Comments were largely at the level of the vision and values of the Fund, which nearly all found inspiring and far-sighted. Unsurprisingly, those consulted had little awareness of how the Fund is playing out in terms of the outcomes and impacts of the grants themselves. Some helpful areas of comment and critique offered insights for further consideration by PHF as it plans a new cycle of Breakthrough Fund support.

“The world is not made by policy but by people. No other funding approach is doing this, responding to individuals’ vision and potential. They’re guided by institutions’ strategic priorities, and never see the task of responding as central. Funding is rushing towards accountability, systems, measurement. This is quite different.”

“I can’t think of another funder working like this. Its responsive openness is extremely refreshing. Very unusually, it’s not ruled by three-year business plans, and manages not to impose limitations. It’s focused on excellence, relevance to the future, excitement, entrepreneurialism.”

“It’s a fantastic, far-sighted initiative. What excites me is its response to promise, to individual talent, and the way it can act so much more flexibly than, say, public funding. It’s adventurous, and signals externally that PHF trusts creative entrepreneurial individuals to deliver. It’s been eye-opening for everyone, to show this trust and confidence. I admire it greatly.”

The Fund is felt by the great majority of those consulted to be increasingly relevant as the funding environment continues to get tougher. It is seen as helping to offset the growing pressures for retrenchment, and instead to release the potential for innovation, excellence and for continued cultural vibrancy and distinctiveness, even as the external context grows more challenging. However, many felt that the Fund’s approach to the potential sustainability of what it funds will become increasingly critical.

Emerging impacts and outcomes of the grants

The diversity of the grants ensures that the emerging impacts and outcomes are correspondingly varied. An evaluation matrix was developed to assess each grant against criteria as follows (see figure 1):

- Progress with realisation of vision
- Sustainable future achieved
- Transformational impact for individual grantees
- Transformational impact for grantee organisations
- Significant public outcomes not otherwise realised
- Significant areas of innovation; impact beyond the arts
- Legacy – positive or negative
- Breakthrough Fund as ‘game-changer’

The evaluation matrix will be updated at regular intervals as Breakthrough grants progress. With only three grants complete at the time of the Interim Evaluation, the impacts and outcomes of the grants are still taking shape. Progress is very strong in most areas, as is to be expected with such sizeable grants given to highly talented individuals with strong visions and drive, and it is already clear that much of this would not have been unlocked without Breakthrough support.

But the picture is varied, nuanced and changing. Some already very strong examples sit alongside areas of disappointment. Not everyone is making progress towards the kind of ‘breakthroughs’ originally envisaged.

Figure 1: Breakthrough Fund Evaluation Matrix

Grading	Realisation of vision		Impacts and outcomes							Impact of BF support	
	Significant progress with vision	Sustainable future - see note 1 below	Transformational impact			Public outcomes			Legacy - see note 2 below	Breakthrough grant critical to outcomes	Breakthrough grant as 'game changer'
			Individual	Organisation		Significant public outcomes & devts in arts not otherwise realised	Impact beyond arts	Significant innovation			
				New capacity/ programmes established	New support/ opps levered						
A	Significant overall progress achieved	Sustainable future in place or very likely	Strong impact clear	New cap/progs achieved	Strong leverage achieved	Strong public outcomes achieved	Impact beyond arts achieved	Sectoral innovation achieved	Strong positive legacy secured	Critical to outcomes	Clearly a game changer
B	Significant overall progress underway	Making good progress towards sustainable future	Strong impact for other key individuals clear	New cap/progs in development	Strong leverage sought but not yet achieved	Strong public outcomes likely	Impact beyond arts likely	Sectoral innovation sought but not yet clear	Strong positive legacy likely	Critical in some ways	Potentially a game changer
C	Significant progress achieved in some areas	Working to secure sustainable future but not yet clear	Strong impact likely	Weak development in caps/progs	Some leverage achieved	Strong public outcomes sought but not yet clear	Impact beyond arts sought but not yet clear	Organisational/ prog/bus model innovation achieved	Strong positive legacy secured in some areas	Not yet clear	Not a game changer
D	Significant progress underway in some areas	Not achieved	Some areas of impact	New cap/progs not sought	Some leverage likely	Some significant public outcomes achieved	Impact beyond arts sought but not achieved	Organisational/ prog/bus model innovation sought but not yet clear	Strong positive legacy likely in some areas	Not critical to outcomes	
E	Weak progress with vision	Not yet clear if this is applicable	Not yet clear		Leverage picture not yet clear	Some significant public outcomes likely	Some limited impact beyond arts	BF grant intended to grow innovative proposition already established pre-grant	Nature or scope of legacy not yet clear		
F		Not applicable	Weak impact likely		No leverage	Weak public outcomes	No impact sought	Innovation sought but not achieved	Negative legacy in some areas		
G			Negative impact					No significant innovation sought	Weak legacy		

Note 1: Sustainable future is defined as the successful identification of resources and capacity to allow new ways of working to continue

Note 2: Legacy is defined as the lasting impact of outcomes achieved through Breakthrough support

Impact of the Breakthrough Fund’s particular approach

A number of characteristics of Breakthrough Fund support – in addition to the size of many of the grants – are proving critical to what is being achieved.

Factors include:

- The willingness to offer significant backing and cash flow before plans have been identified. This unlocks the thinking time and early work to engage others that in turn produce the way forward. It has also allowed individuals to leave existing employment to pursue the route proposed to the Fund. Where Breakthrough finance is the major flow for a new start-up company, the willingness to respond very flexibly to cash needs has been vital.
- The Fund’s ‘early adopter’ commitment has secured significant leverage that would not otherwise have been achieved.
- The Fund’s willingness to accommodate at times significantly changing timescales – reflecting personal factors, changes in external context, or new ideas about how to support the vision proposed – has been critical for many.
- The supportive and engaged relationship with grantees that seeks to support grantees’ strategic thinking, and to respond flexibly to challenges, issues and potential changes of approach, is adding value and positive momentum. In a few instances it is having an explicit impact on how grants can progress, supporting an engagement with issues that would otherwise fundamentally undermine progress, or providing strategic dialogue where grantees lack ready peers or collaborators.
- The willingness, in specific circumstances, to initiate supplementary support has been critical to securing full impact.

A good number of the grants can already be seen as ‘game-changing’ for grantees and their organisations. Many others (though not all) hold the clear potential for this also to be the case. One or two may prove game-changers within their sectors as well.

The risks of the Breakthrough Fund’s approach

The evidence to date is that the Breakthrough Fund’s more open-ended approach and its willingness to offer support before plans are clear are not creating additional risks for PHF in the ways that might originally have been anticipated. In part, this apparent potential for greater risk is offset by the strength of the individuals and the visions supported, as well as by the sizeable and early sums committed, which help in turn to create stability and build opportunity. The engaged, supportive and flexible way the grants are managed is also helping to mitigate risks.

The Fund’s focus on individuals has generated particular risks for PHF as a funder. Personal factors such as bereavement, parenthood, breakdown in collaborations, or loss of confidence, have affected progress in some cases, though critical impact has so far been limited.

A significant factor affecting the Breakthrough Fund’s ability to secure the extent of outcomes that it hopes can result is the question of how grantees can achieve the sustainable future that many seek. The Breakthrough grants support progress with the grantee’s vision in the immediate period of the

grant, but most are also proving critical in setting up all that can be achieved once Breakthrough support has concluded. Where future impact and legacy are reliant on the securing of resources to ensure a sustainable future, significant risks exist.

Value for money

The value for money offered by the Breakthrough grants is achieved through the outcomes, impacts, legacy and sustainability of what has been supported – and the subsequent pathways that unfold. It will take time to be able to assess the nature of this varied equation across the 15 grants. The evaluation recognises this with its commitment to longitudinal reviews two years after completion and its willingness to understand the fruits of each grant in their varied terms.

The value for money offered by the Breakthrough Fund relates in part to the question of whether investments of the size offered were needed to achieve what resulted. In some examples, this judgement is more feasible than in others. Where grants are being used to build a core infrastructure (an aspect of at least 11 of the 15 stories), it is relatively straightforward to assess the need for the figure offered. In other areas, the commitment has been to support the realisation of a vision in more loosely defined ways at the point of decision, and the grant's detailed form and shape then emerges as the story unfolds. In these examples, it is harder to decide clearly on the terms of the judgement about value for money: the offer of Breakthrough support itself plays a part in defining the scope – and cost – of what follows.

The Interim Evaluation identified a more or less universal consensus that the value and potential impact of the Breakthrough Fund rests in part on the scale of support that PHF is willing to offer. The size of grants help to underwrite the Fund's ambitions for transformational impact and the intention to bring about developments that would not otherwise be achieved. They also help to set a fair wind behind grantees as they push towards the visions they seek.

Once the Breakthrough grants are complete, it is likely to be possible to judge more about the levels of support. But it appears to be a defining element of the Breakthrough Fund's own vision and approach that as grant-maker PHF is motivated to take the risk of whether it got this right or not – just one aspect of the risks involved in forming judgements about whom to back in this way. As a number consulted argued, this willingness to judge whom to back and to do so decisively is where a large part of the Breakthrough Fund's value lies.

Appendix 1

The Breakthrough Fund in profile

a) Aims and success criteria

Aims

- To identify outstanding cultural entrepreneurs working in a wide variety of contexts, who have a compelling vision and are at a breakthrough point in their career
- To offer an early commitment of significant, responsive, flexible and timely support to help them realise the visions proposed and to achieve transformational impacts for them and their organisations
- Through the grants, to unlock significant outcomes and developments in the arts that would not otherwise have been enabled
- Through an evaluation of the impacts and outcomes of the grants and the Fund's distinctive ways of working, to offer learning about the fruits and challenges of this grant-giving approach

Success criteria

Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fund will identify a grouping of outstanding individuals, with compelling visions that each offer a clear rationale for the particular characteristics of Breakthrough Fund support. • The long list of nominees and the final list of selected grants will include a range of art forms, locations, ways of working, and individuals at varying stages in their careers.
Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The grants will lead to high-quality outcomes, and will significantly enable grantees to progress their visions. • The grants will enable the transformational development of both the individuals and the organisations concerned, helping to lever new support and opportunities. • Across the cohort, Breakthrough Fund support will generate significant public outcomes, in ways specific and relevant to each grant, that would not otherwise have been achieved.
Legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact and outcomes of grants will have a positive legacy and/or sustainable future beyond the period of PHF support. • Grants will avoid any inappropriately destabilising impacts on recipient individuals and organisations. • The Fund's ways of working will offer learning to the wider funding context.

b) Grants

2008 grants

Stuart Bailie/Oh Yeah Music Centre, Belfast – Total £284,795 over five years

Initial support of £191,858 over three years offered for Stuart to become Chief Executive and first paid employee of this newly founded Belfast music organisation. Further amounts of £44,450 offered in October 2008 to help build Oh Yeah's fundraising capacity, and £48,487 in summer 2011 as a final transitional phase of support for Stuart's salary and first year of new post of General Manager. Initial grant span of three years extended to five years due to supplementary support.

Felix Barrett and Colin Marsh/Punchdrunk, London – Total £320,000 over three years

Initial grant of £300,000 prioritised by Felix and Colin to allow first ever salaries for posts of Artistic and Executive Directors and newly created role of Enrichment Director over three years, plus R&D funding for this increasingly renowned immersive theatre company. Further element of £20,000 for organisational development offered in autumn 2010.

Gareth Evans/Artevents, London – Total £300,000 over three years

Initial support of £250,000 for Gareth and his collaborator Di Robson towards core costs of producing *The Re-Enchantment*, a series of major commissions and events exploring our relationship to place that took place in 2011. Further £50,000 towards specific *Re-Enchantment* commission to filmmaker Grant Gee offered in July 2009.

David Jubb/BAC, London – £300,000 over three years

Support offered to David for key areas of innovation at BAC, identified and prioritised by David as the three years progressed, and for dual artistic leadership model. Support came at a moment when BAC had secured a new leasehold of its 19th century town hall premises.

Nii Sackey/Bigga Fish, London – Total £298,000 over five years (tbc)

Initial grant of £250,000 towards the development of Gwop, a new web-based trading game allowing young people to promote the urban music artists that they value. Supplementary grant of £48,000 offered in February 2010 to support additional elements. Initial grant timescale of three years now extended to five years to facilitate project development.

2009 grants

Natalie Abrahami and Carrie Cracknell/Gate Theatre, London – £254,000 over three years

Support to develop Natalie's and Carrie's vision of the Gate Elsewhere – co-production, touring, off-site presentations – through new producing posts, R&D and production costs.

Tony Butler/Museum of East Anglian Life (MEAL), Suffolk – Total £196,000 over four years (tbc)

Initial support of up to £150,000 offered pending confirmation of Tony's proposals, with scope for increased support beyond this. Grant confirmed as: £64,000 towards new post at MEAL to build museum's capacity to work with volunteers and to run local programmes of involvement for three years, plus £132,000 for the Happy Museum Project, an initiative to stimulate sectoral innovation following the principles of the Happy Museum manifesto proposed by Tony and co-authors, running from 2011 through to 2013.

Tom Chivers, Sam Hawkins, Marie McPartlin/London Word Festival, London – £147,000 over three years

Core support to allow the three founding directors of this emergent and distinctive London festival to pay themselves part-time for the first time, and for artists' commissions.

Helen Cole/In Between Time Productions (IBTP), Bristol – £278,000 over five years

Core support for Helen to leave Arnolfini in Bristol to set up her own independent company to produce biennial In Between Time Festivals, plus other projects and artist collaborations. Grant period extended from the original four years to five to reflect longer start up phases.

Claire Doherty/Situations, Bristol – £300,000 over five years

Offered to allow Claire to initiate her own programme of commissions within Situations as a visual arts programme operating through the University of the West of England (UWE). Claire's maternity leave changed timescales, and the changing situation within higher education then led to the decision to take Situations fully independent. Claire will leave her post at UWE and the grant will now support core costs for the formation of a new company from autumn 2012, and will run through to 2015.

2010 grants

Maria Balshaw/Whitworth Art Gallery and Manchester Art Galleries, Manchester – £260,000 over four years (tbc)

Initially anticipated to run for three years when Maria was director of just the Whitworth Art Gallery. Now planned to run for four years to reflect change in Maria's role to take on directorship of Manchester Art Galleries jointly with her role at the Whitworth. Initially offered towards sabbatical costs, new curatorial approaches and programming within the Whitworth. Now reconceived to support emergence of a new collaborative curatorial approach, and international programming and relationships with West Africa and Asia, across the combined institutions of the Whitworth and the Manchester Art Galleries.

Stewart Laing/Untitled Projects, Glasgow – £273,000 over three years

Support for core costs to allow director/designer Stewart to push forward his Glasgow-based company Untitled Projects with producing colleagues Lorna Duguid and Steve Slater, producing and developing new work conceived by Stewart and initiating a talent development strand within Scotland in partnership with the Glasgow Citizens Theatre where Untitled Projects is now based.

Matt Peacock/Streetwise Opera, national – £83,157 over four years (tbc)

Towards development of a new artistic strategy for Streetwise Opera, combining film and live music performance. The grant covered the costs of film production research, R&D, pilots of new performance formats on tour, and new artistic and producing roles. Initially anticipated to last for three years, the grant will now cover four years to reflect changed timescale for major production in 2013.

Simon Pearce/The Invisible Dot, London – £220,000 over four years (tbc)

Support to appoint a General Manager, the first ever employee for this independent comedy producing outfit set up by Simon in 2009, and for R&D of new commissions and producing ideas. Initial grant timescale of three years subsequently extended to reflect the unanticipated opportunity to open a new venue and rehearsal facility of their own.

Gavin Wade/Eastside Projects, Birmingham – £360,000 over five years

Support for core costs and enhanced exhibition programme for this artist-led space founded by Gavin and his collaborators in 2008. Originally requested for three years, then adjusted by Gavin to cover five years in order better to enable a transition to life beyond Breakthrough support.

c) Nominators

2008

Ekow Eshun – writer, broadcaster

Sue Hoyle – Director, Clore Cultural Leadership Programme*

Ariane Koek – International Arts Development/CERN Laboratory, Switzerland

Helen Marriage – Director, Artichoke*

Kathryn McDowell – Managing Director, London Symphony Orchestra

Wayne McGregor – Director, Random Dance*

Martin Melarky – Nerve Centre, Derry

Tom Morris – Artistic Director, Bristol Old Vic*

Sandy Nairne – Director, National Portrait Gallery*

Alex Poots – Director, Manchester International Festival

Matthew Slotover – Co-Director, Frieze

Geraint Talfan Davies – Chairman, WNO

Claire Whitaker – Director, Serious

2009

Iwona Blazwick – Director, Whitechapel Gallery

Mark Boothe – Director, B3 Media

Ruth Borthwick – Director, Arvon Foundation

Simon Clugston – Sage Gateshead

Marcus Davey – Artistic Director and CEO, Roundhouse*

Siobhan Davies – Artistic Director, Siobhan Davies Company*

Richard Hogger – Director, Creu Cymru*

Tessa Jackson – Chief Executive, Iniva

David Lan – Artistic Director, Young Vic Theatre*

Declan McGonagle – Professor of Art, University of Ulster

Alice Rawsthorn – journalist

Alastair Spalding – Artistic Director and Chief Executive, Sadler's Wells Theatre*

Virginia Tandy – previously Director of Culture for Manchester and Director of the Manchester City Galleries*

Tom Trevor – Director, Arnolfini

2010

Lewis Biggs – curator, writer, cultural consultant*

Morag Deyes – Artistic Director, Dance Base

Roanne Dods – Director, Roanne Dods Ltd*

David Francis – Director of Arts, Dartington Hall Trust*

Tania Harrison – Arts Curator, Latitude

Rhian Hutchings – WNO Max Director*

Darius James – Artistic Director, Ballet Cymru

James Kerr – Director, Verbal Arts Centre*

Donna Lynas – Director, Wysing Arts*

Shona McCarthy – Chief Executive, Derry Culture Company

Caroline Miller – Director, Dance UK

Gillian Moore – Head of Contemporary Culture, Southbank Centre*

Purni Morrell – Artistic Director, Unicorn Theatre*

Judith Palmer – Director, Poetry Society*

Erica Whyman – CEO, Northern Stage Company*

* interviewed as part of the Interim Evaluation

d) Selection process

Building on a well-established model provided by PHF's Awards for Artists, the Breakthrough Fund adopted a confidential nomination process. A changing list of nominators from across the English regions, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were invited to propose exceptional individuals in the role of what was described as 'cultural entrepreneur'.

These individuals were defined by PHF as people with creative and managerial flair and a pressing and persuasive vision that they are driven to realise. They could be of any age and might work independently in their own company or within established organisations or institutions. They needed to have compelling and sound artistic vision and judgement and to demonstrate a sense of responsibility towards their art form and audiences, with a strong track record and readiness for what they were trying to achieve.

Nominators were encouraged not to feel that they were being asked to represent particular areas of practice or regions of the country, but were invited to propose individuals from any region or artistic background. A total of 42 nominators across the three years (see Appendix 1c for details) contributed to what proved to be a combined long list of 125 nominations.

Of these nominees, 120 chose to put themselves forward. A written application outlined their vision and their approach to realising it, assessing the challenges to be met on the way and the likely impact for them and their organisation of Breakthrough support, and proposing an amount and timescale for financial support at a level they were entirely free to identify. Nominees were shortlisted for interview directly from these applications by the members of PHF's Arts Programme Committee (APC), whose expertise has been vital to the Breakthrough Fund's selection process. Over three years, a total of 27 nominees were interviewed by APC, leading to 15 grants.

At interview, nominees were assessed not on the strength or detail of their plans, but on the compelling nature of their vision within its wider context; their personal track record and qualities; the apparent timeliness and need for support of this kind; its potential transformational impact for both the individual and organisation concerned; and their awareness of and readiness for the challenges ahead. In contrast to PHF's Open Grants scheme, there was no requirement to propose predefined outcomes and related methods of measuring these, and the potential outcomes of support and the means of achieving them were allowed to remain open in their definition.

At no stage were selection decisions weighed in relation to regional or art form spread or other representational criteria – though it was hoped that a good spread of type, scale and location of activity and age of grantee would prove to win support. The focus was on the individual and on the search for 'compelling visions' as the guiding criteria – though judgements about both the nature of potential public outcomes and the likely value for money were implicit in the decisions made.

The number and size of the grants each year were not predefined. The majority were offered at the sums originally requested, with a few at lower – though still substantial – levels of support. The progress of some has led to further supplementary support: five have received additional amounts. In none of the three years was the full allocation of £1.5m required: Breakthrough grants total £3,879,765, some £620,000 short of the £4.5m originally allocated.

e) Analysis of nomination, application and grantee data

The Interim Evaluation undertook an analysis of nomination, application and grantee data. The following provides a snapshot of the picture that emerged:

- The profile of the grantee group is broadly representative of the wider nominee group of which it is part, with few variances of any importance.
- The profile of nominees and grantees addressed PHF's ambition for the Fund to engage with a range of art forms, locations, ways and scales of working, and types of organisation. But there is limited cultural diversity – a reflection, to some extent, of the scope of the nominators, but more fundamentally of the limitations of the wider processes that shape how talent and new visions are emerging and establishing themselves in the arts.
- Nominees and grantees have been more uniformly at a mid-point in their career than originally anticipated. It appears that the Fund's most ready relevance is to individuals in their mid-career – those coming into, or recently established within, their mature capabilities and vision.
- All grantees (and 88% of nominees) are vision setters for their organisations (in roles of Director or CEO), and ten out of 15 grantees have won Breakthrough support to take forward the work of organisations that they themselves have founded as a vehicle for this vision in the world. By contrast, only four run established arts institutions that pre-date them and will be handed to other chief executives in time.
- The vast majority of requests were for £150k–£350k spread over three years. There were a small number of requests either side of this range. In practice, only six grants will maintain the initial proposal for a three-year grant period; nine will in fact spread over periods of between four to six years.
- The principal request was unsurprisingly for core support: 80% prioritised this and 11 of the 15 grants have made significant contributions to developing core organisational infrastructures. Programming, commissioning, and R&D have been the next biggest priorities for support.
- Only six of the 15 grantee organisations were regularly funded at the time of nomination, and only five (33%) had any previous application history with PHF, corresponding with 34% of nominees. A further four have secured regular funding during the period of Breakthrough support. Only three have no ambitions to be regularly funded, of which one runs a for-profit company.

Appendix 2

Interim Evaluation – context, brief and method

The 15 Breakthrough Fund grants complete at various points from April 2011 through to 2015. The evaluation responds to the timescales of the various grants, and comprises the following elements:

- Evaluation of individual grants: ongoing monitoring and review, with an in-depth evaluation with grantees on completion of each grant
- Interim Evaluation of the Fund in overview, including assessment of its strategic role and interim assessment of the emerging impact and outcomes of the grants (this document)
- Updating of Interim Evaluation findings at milestones when further grants complete
- Longitudinal review: follow-up interviews with grantees and where relevant their organisations, two years after completion of each grant

The evaluation is undertaken by Kate Tyndall, Breakthrough Fund Advisor, who also holds the detailed monitoring relationship with grantees, under the direction of PHF's Head of Arts. Her brief as an independent consultant has been to follow progress with a supportive, attentive eye, offering engaged support to grantees if appropriate or desired. This has provided a unique vantage point for the ultimate evaluation of the grants and their impact. It was also intended to help establish the desired culture at the heart of the Breakthrough Fund where the 'sheen' often given to the fundraising dialogue might to some extent be put aside: honesty, insight and rigorous if open-ended thinking from grantees in exchange for responsive, flexible, and constructively critical attention and backing from PHF.

Brief

The Interim Evaluation was asked to address the following areas:

Strategic assessment

- To position the Breakthrough Fund within PHF's strategic aims and values
- To position the Breakthrough Fund within the UK arts funding ecology, identifying the ways in which the Fund is distinctive in its approach in relation to notable UK or international comparators
- To test arts sector views of the Fund, and whether its approach is felt to be of particular value or impact
- To assess the strategic role of the Fund in its current context

Assessment of grants

- To make an interim assessment of the extent to which the 15 grants are realising the Breakthrough Fund's aims

Assessment of the Breakthrough Fund's ways of working

- To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Breakthrough Fund's selection processes
- To assess the impact of its approach to the funding relationships with grantees, including leverage and advocacy
- To review the challenges and fruits of the Fund's approach to risk
- To review the efficiency of the Fund's processes
- To make an initial assessment of the value for money offered by the Breakthrough Fund

Key areas of learning and questions to inform future decision-making

- To identify key areas of learning
- To identify questions to inform future decision-making

Method

The Interim Evaluation draws on the following inputs:

- Analysis of nomination, application and grantee data across three years
- Comparator research: meetings with Heads of PHF's Social Justice and Education programmes, plus desk research, phone interviews and meetings to identify notable UK and international comparators
- Phone interviews with a sample of nominators to establish perspectives on the Fund and its place within the current UK context
- Phone interviews with Arts Programme Committee members to gain perspectives on the Fund's selection processes
- Ongoing monitoring of all grants
- Interim evaluation of non-completed grants
- End of grant evaluation of three completed grants

The Breakthrough Fund has so far taken a deliberately reticent approach to communicating itself to the wider arts sector, choosing instead to wait for the findings of the Interim Evaluation. This has made it difficult to know what levels of awareness might exist, or what the views of the wider arts sector might be. It was decided therefore that the most appropriate approach to testing arts sector views was to interview a sample of nominators, because, though this might risk only speaking with individuals who by definition have engaged positively with the Fund, it provides a respected, independent, relevant and knowledgeable sample whose own interests are not unduly tied up in its future. Details of the 21 nominators interviewed are given in Appendix 1c.

The assessment of the individual grants was done through an evaluation matrix detailed as Figure 1 in the main body of this report. In-depth interim evaluation reports were undertaken for each grant, providing the background to the markings within the evaluation matrix.

Appendix 3

UK and international comparators

Research within the UK and more limited research internationally has identified some interesting and revealing comparators to the Breakthrough Fund, detailed below. Each has a strong area of correspondence to the Breakthrough Fund, but also helps to highlight the distinctive approach the Breakthrough Fund is taking in contrast. It is interesting that many are time-limited initiatives, or conceived as a one-off celebration of the grant-makers' vision and values. Several originate in spheres other than arts and culture, though some do support individuals from within these worlds. These examples are each trying to do different things – and therefore offer support in their own particular way. Some require grantees to deliver new, specific activity that addresses the funder's particular objectives. Some seek to enable progress with the grantee's core vision. Some seek to support the personal and professional development or financial needs of the individual in targeted ways, while some see this as an entirely 'free' investment in the grantee's long-term potential, imposing no requirements for how the support is spent.

- **Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust's Visionaries for a Just and Peaceful World**

Six individuals identified through open application (c. 1600 received) and offered five years' support (2000–05) at £37,500 pa (totalling £187,500) to allow them to pursue their visions for just and peaceful change. This was a one-off initiative totalling £1.6m to celebrate the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) centenary. JRCT is modest in its communications about the Visionaries initiative, but does hope that the initiative can influence others to support a process of social change in this way.

- **Ford Foundation Visionaries**

The Ford Foundation's mission is to support visionary leaders and organisations on the frontlines of social change worldwide. To celebrate their 75th Anniversary, in May 2011, the Ford Foundation announced the creation of the Ford Foundation Visionaries Awards to raise the profile of 12 extraordinary social innovators across four continents. The Awards aim to help these leaders, each awarded US\$100,000, to share their work with a broad range of new audiences, allowing them to promote their ideas to ensure their insights inform and advance the work of other social innovators. The intention is clearly to use the Ford Foundation's worldwide profile to amplify the awareness – and therefore impact – of the individuals awarded.

- **NESTA Fellowship Programme**

Around 300 Fellowships between 1997 and 2005 aimed to help talented people in science, technology and the arts to achieve their potential through a period of intensive exploration lasting between one and three years. Fellows were encouraged to develop new work, contacts and projects and to take themselves outside of existing full-time commitments to explore new ground. The Fellowships prioritised personal and professional development, with funding of up to £75,000 provided to cover living costs, and other areas of mentoring, research and development.

- **Northern Ireland Development Fund**

Set up jointly by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Henry Smith Charity, the Fund aims to develop Northern Ireland's voluntary sector through support for its leaders and their potential to offer new solutions and to contribute to the emergence of a strong civil society in Northern Ireland. The Fund will spend around £3m in total, with 15 individuals selected over three years (2009–11) by confidential nomination, written application, officer visits and assessment, and decision by a joint committee of trustees of the two Foundations. Grants have varied from £90,000 to £260,000. Individuals are selected not on the basis of detailed plans or proposals, but on track record, perceptions of need and how to address this, plus an outline work plan and timeline. Grants seek to allow individuals to step outside existing organisational constraints to pursue work that could lead to shifts in policy or sector activity. NIDF offers support from an advisor, and seeks to develop a self-sustaining, newly formed cohort of peers amongst grantees, facilitating the potential for future collaboration.

- **Arthur Guinness Fund**

Established by Diageo to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Guinness, the Arthur Guinness Fund aims to reflect his legacy of social change and entrepreneurialism. It is a worldwide fund, but implemented with most depth and money in Ireland. In each of 2010 and 2011, Diageo offered ten social entrepreneurs €100,000 in total over two years, plus a considerable support programme, to pursue an idea or project with strong potential for reach, scalability, sustainability and measurable social impact. Diageo know that without the individual with vision, drive and passion, the idea will not happen, but also recognise that organisational capacity is needed to realise the idea. They look at both the individual and their vision and at the organisation's capacity in the selection, but the relationship is with the individual. There is intensive monitoring, with detailed milestones agreed, and monthly reports and reviews with Diageo's manager of the Fund. The second year's finance is not released unless progress is satisfactory. A monthly review asks: how can Diageo help you now? A needs analysis identifies a programme of workshops and consultancy support. There is a strong focus on the sustainability of each idea or project, and a requirement that this is addressed right from the start.

- **Wellcome Public Engagement Fellows**

In July 2011, the Wellcome Trust announced their first two Public Engagement Fellows, a new initiative conceived in direct reference to the Breakthrough Fund's approach, and they are currently recruiting their second year of Fellows. The Wellcome Trust has shifted its mission recently to supporting the best and brightest minds, with a focus on the individual and what they can achieve. Through open application, two individuals are selected for grants in the region of £150,000 to £300,000 over two years, paid to their employing institution to backfill their normal work and allow them to develop specific public engagement proposals and plans, whilst also influencing a culture of public engagement in their institutional setting. The Fellows can apply to Wellcome's other funds for their plans too, and Wellcome expects to be closely involved, to work with them as ambassadors and exploit their full communication potential. Through the Engagement Fellows, the Trust hopes to accelerate and enhance the careers of talented people to create the public engagement leaders of tomorrow.

- **MacArthur Fellows Program**

The John D and Catherine T MacArthur Foundation based in Chicago has been running what are often known as the MacArthur 'Genius' Awards since 1981, with the 22 Fellows announced in 2011 bringing the total to 850, ranging in age from 18 to 82 at the time of selection. A confidential, rolling nomination process assesses potential recipients in depth, without them being aware, leading to a phone call 'out of the blue' offering them \$500,000 over five years. Individuals are identified across a broad spectrum of endeavours, selected for their creativity, originality, and potential to make important contributions to the future. The money is offered without stipulations or reporting requirements, and offers unprecedented freedom and opportunity to reflect, create, explore and contribute.

- **Doris Duke Performing Arts Initiative**

The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation in the US announced a new \$500m initiative in winter 2011 which aims to make grants directly to around 200 artists over ten years, offering flexible unrestricted multi-year support, enabling them to take creative risks, explore new ideas and pay for important needs such as healthcare and retirement funding. Designated elements of support alongside the unrestricted support also require audience development expenditure. Artists cannot apply, and will be selected by anonymous peer-review panels of professionals. Artists with a significant track record can receive up to \$275,000 over three to five years; those who have demonstrated the potential to influence their respective fields but have not yet received significant national support can secure up to \$80,000 support over two to three years. All Doris Duke Artists will have the opportunity to take part in professional development activities, financial and legal counselling, and grantee gatherings. A third element of the Initiative will fund the Doris Duke Artists Residencies, where exemplary artists and organisations will work together to develop demand for the Foundation's priority areas of artistic practice. The Doris Duke Performing Arts Initiative offers a clear comparison to PHF's Breakthrough Fund, but also to its Awards for Artists as well.

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Paul Hamlyn (1926–2001) was a publisher, businessman and philanthropist who was concerned about social injustice and disadvantage – particularly as it affected children and young people, and those ‘outsiders’ seeking to integrate into British society. In 1987 he set up the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for general charitable purposes, and on his death he bequeathed the majority of his estate to the Foundation, making it one of the UK’s largest independent grant-making organisations.

The mission of the Foundation is to maximise opportunities for individuals to realise their potential and to experience and enjoy a better quality of life, now and in the future. In particular, the Foundation is concerned with children and young people and with disadvantaged people.

Paul Hamlyn Foundation works across the UK through three programmes – Arts, Education and Learning, and Social Justice. Each comprises an Open Grants scheme, to which organisations can apply with proposals for funding innovative activities, and Special Initiatives, which are more focused interventions that aim to have deeper impact on a particular issue. The Foundation also has a programme of support for NGOs in India.

The Arts programme Open Grants scheme encourages innovative ways for people in the UK to enjoy, experience and be involved in the arts. Arts programme Special Initiatives include the PHF Awards for Artists, ArtWorks: Developing Practice in Participatory Settings, Our Museum: Communities and Museums as Active Partners, and the Breakthrough Fund.

Detailed information on the Foundation’s work, and case studies related to past grants, can be found on the Foundation’s website: www.phf.org.uk

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