

Beyond 2015: Shaping the future of equality, human rights and social justice (12 and 13 February 2015)

Session 7: Maximising the impact. What are the next steps in bridging research and policy agendas?

Response by Bharat Mehta OBE, Trust for London

What are the next steps in bridging research and policy agendas?

I am acutely aware that I am amongst the last set of speakers in a two-day conference. I'm sure that a number of the issues that I am going to talk about have already been covered and even more sure that you'll want me to be short as you await lunch.

Trust for London is a grant making body established in 1891. We have funded a fair amount of work on human rights, equalities and social justice. There are **three strands** to our funding: **reactive grant making** to which we allocate the majority of our money; **Special Initiatives**, which tend to equality/human rights/ social justice address **intersectional issues** such as faith based abuse of children, female genital mutilation, human trafficking and double jeopardy, a programme on refugee community organisations and lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender and inter-sex organisations working together. The **third area of work is research and development** such as **London Poverty Profile** and **London Mapper** and LSE's **Social Policy in a Cold Climate** analysis that John Hills talked about yesterday; the **Low Commission** – with Baring Foundation taking the lead – that Lord Low talked of yesterday; and the Strategic Legal Fund, covering worked described by Dr Solanke earlier. A **London Fairness Commission** has also been funded. We hope that it will look at issues wider than just the socio economic ones.

We also use a part of our **endowment for social investment**. A recent example is the Social Justice and Human Rights Centre called the **Foundry** in Vauxhall, London. A longer standing one is the **Resource for London** which provides office and meeting

space for organisations working to tackle poverty and inequality in London.

The gaps and challenges in working effectively across different organisations, sectors and disciplines to address inequality.

Applications we receive often show a tendency **to look at particular sections of the community in isolation – ‘silos’**. They look at gender or ethnicity or disability or age, but of course if you look at it from a socio-economic or poverty prism, there are poor amongst all of those sections. In terms of gaps and challenges, I think there is a **weakness in the data, or certainly in the analysis of the data**, and that is why we looked to build on the work of John Hills in his anatomy of economic inequality in the UK for the National Equality Panel. The Trust, JRF and Nuffield funded this work and John covered it earlier in the conference - **Social Policy in a Cold Climate**. All of the information is available either through our website or through the CASE website at LSE.

Trustees and staff concentrate on silos and tend to be quite narrow in the **language** that is used. A lot can be excluding, or certainly unwelcoming to certain sectors of the population.

Support from second tier organisations to agencies addressing intersectional issues is not always great, as they themselves are not particularly strong in those fields.

Funders and commissioners are often unaware or insensitive and therefore they do not make such intersectional work a funding and commissioning priority.

Organisations also need to stop **fighting amongst themselves**, young versus old, and men versus women, when poverty resides in both. As a Trust, we have tried to address this by enabling co-location of organisations at the Foundry and RfL. **Joint campaigning and policy influencing** is critically important.

Trust for London's mission is to tackle poverty and inequality. Putting money into people's pockets is an effective way of addressing poverty. The minimum wage was a good start, but as we all know, it still keeps people in poverty. A disproportionately large number affected by in-work poverty are women, a large proportion of whom will be migrants, particularly from certain countries working in particular industries. Our funding of the **Living Wage Campaign in 2008** was a strategic move to ensure that poorly paid people were lifted out of poverty by employers paying the living wage. The fact that migrant women, from certain countries, working in specific industries are the main beneficiaries was not the primary driver, but it did and continues to galvanise support far wider than just those people.

So my parting suggestions would be that perhaps **concentrating on wider, overarching issues such as housing, health, pay and rising wealth** inequality may encourage and enable human rights, equality and social justice organisations and others to unite.

Equally, don't forget '**niche**' issues – keep an eye on the data, **listen** to what small organisations are saying and try to **work with** them rather than take over.

Thank you