



# Funding for Sustainable Change

Exploring the extent to which grant-making trusts fund campaigning, advocacy and influence

By Amy Rosser and Sarah Shimmin



# *Sustainable change is about “achieving longer term systemic change with impact beyond immediate grantees”*

(Diana Leat, Just Change)

Grant-making trusts have a crucial role to play in supporting voluntary organisations to campaign and achieve sustainable change. Sustainable change, however, is a broad concept; encompassing a wide range of social, economic and environmental activities, making it difficult to define. For this reason, voluntary organisations may not realise their potential to engage in campaigning activity and find it difficult to identify potential sources of support.

Through mapping the potential for funding sustainable change amongst grant-making trusts, we have gained some insight into the extent to which funding is available. Furthermore, the research enables us to begin to highlight the barriers to open declarations of funding and explore ways to clarify and advocate funding of sustainable change.



# Funding for sustainable change: purpose and challenges

Sustainable change is about making a real, lasting and positive impact. All voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) exist to improve the world around them in some way, but sustainable change requires a well informed, coordinated and considered approach to influencing those who inform opinions, and those who make decisions. The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, for example, operates on Joseph Rowntree's belief that "for your efforts to have any lasting benefit, you must tackle the roots of a problem" and seeks to "engage in philanthropy which changes the existing power imbalances in society to effect real change"<sup>1</sup> – this is a primary example of a funder seeking to enable sustainable change.

Funders explicitly funding projects aiming to enable sustainable change, therefore, can make a significant and powerful contribution to achieving change, with long-term impacts beyond their immediate grantees<sup>2</sup>. Advocating such funding, *Just Change* by Diana Leat, was written for funders 'who want to increase the scope and duration of their impact' and examines case studies which challenge the assumptions that some grant-making trusts appear to make about how, where and when change happens. This study and the Directory of Social Change's (DSC) research on the funding of sustainable change amongst grant-making trusts seek to highlight the barriers to funding, but also opportunities for any grant-making trust thinking about enhancing their role in supporting sustainable change.

## Funding Challenges

In recent years, the Government has identified the important role of the voluntary and community sector in achieving change - with the term 'campaigning' regularly cropping up across policy documents<sup>3</sup>. And, to some extent, the Government has invested in enhancing the skills of organisations to maximise their potential to achieve this<sup>4</sup>. However, the expectation of funders to fund campaigning activities, in conjunction with a decline in small grant funding from government<sup>5</sup> has put greater pressure on grant-making trusts.

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust <http://www.jrct.org.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> Leat, D., (2008) *Just Change*, Carnegie.

<sup>3</sup> The Cabinet Office published a report on "*The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration*" (July 2007) outlining a new focus on enabling the third sector's role in campaigning.

<sup>4</sup> The Cabinet Office published a report on "*The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration*" (July 2007) outlining a new focus on enabling the third sector's role in campaigning and NCVO's Campaigning Effectiveness team develops resources, shares good practice, and provides training and learning in campaigning – advocacy and influencing, drawing on expertise from across the voluntary and community sector [www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/ce](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/ce).

<sup>5</sup> 'Sustaining Grants' pamphlet (Sept 2007), officially launched at the Directory of Social Change and led by Kevin Curley, Chief Executive of NAVCA, includes eleven case studies highlighting the essential role of grants in sustaining the work of the smaller voluntary and community organisations.

Government's approach to engaging with the voluntary sector has led to increased opportunities to influence decision making. Government departments and NDPBs regularly issue policy documents for consultation, inviting the views of the organisations they aim to support. Local Strategic Partnerships offer the potential for more joined up local decision making that involves key voluntary sector organisations alongside other local infrastructure providers. However, access to decision makers through these channels is not uniform, and the extent to which voluntary organisations can make use of them is largely dependent on the resources available to them, disadvantaging those smaller organisations that simply cannot afford to add further activity to their core costs without reducing the support they are able to deliver to their beneficiaries. Without access to funding many organisations find themselves unable to meet increasing demands of formal consultation and evidence based campaigning and some voluntary organisations have raised the challenge they faces in doing this<sup>6</sup>.

There are a handful of relatively large funders- such as the Tudor Trust<sup>7</sup> which are renowned for funding campaigning activities, but they only represent a fraction of all grant-making trusts. **In our view, recognition of the role played by voluntary organisations in bringing about sustainable change has not been matched by clear declarations of funding opportunities from funders, including grant-making trusts.**

It is this assumption that prompted our research: that funding of sustainable change (or campaigning, advocacy and influencing as we will later discuss) is not clearly represented in funding information sources available to the voluntary sector. Lack of clarity hinders the funding of sustainable change in many ways – for example, through wasted time on inappropriate funding applications and missed funding opportunities because funding is not described explicitly. This makes it difficult for voluntary organisations to identify potential sources of support.

**This new research from DSC maps out the potential for funders to support activities to achieve sustainable change. It provides an insight into the extent to which funding is currently available, enabling us to begin to highlight the barriers to open declarations of funding, and explore ways to clarify and advocate funding of sustainable change activities**

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<sup>6</sup> 'Challenges to effective and impact' (2007), page 15 <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk>

<sup>7</sup> The Tudor Trust <http://www.tudortrust.org.uk/>

# 1. Defining Sustainable Change

## 1.1 What does sustainable change mean in this context?

As we have discussed, sustainable change is about contributing to achieving longer term systemic change with impact beyond immediate grantees<sup>8</sup> – whether seeking to enable an identified, desired change, or to preserve the status quo. Broadly speaking, voluntary organisations can achieve sustainable change through **campaigning; advocating and influencing**.

The Campaigning Effectiveness programme at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) adopted the following interpretations of these terms in government's first clear recognition role of the voluntary sector in campaigning: '*Enabling Voice and Campaigning*' - Third Sector Review 2007<sup>9</sup>:

1. **Campaigning** includes 'a range of activities by organisations to *influence* others in order to effect an identified and desired social, economic, environmental or political change'.
2. **Advocacy** is a general term used to 'describe lobbying and campaigning activities that attempt to *influence* public policy'.
3. **Influence** covers organisations that do not necessarily identify themselves as 'campaigners' despite carrying out a vital influencing role, such as, creating new channels of influence for the public, in the public interest.

It is worth noting that there will always be difficulties in defining sustainable change, but doing so and acknowledging these activities is the first hurdle in identifying whether funders will support them, and if so, to make clear and accessible declarations of funding for voluntary organisations.

## 2. Data collection and methodology

### 2.1 Hypothesis and Method

**Of the grant-making trusts that appear to fund sustainable change, a significant proportion do not state this openly in their criteria, and fund activity under other criteria making it difficult for prospective applicants to identify potential sources of support.**

<sup>8</sup> Leat, D., (2008) *Just Change*, Carnegie

<sup>9</sup> The Cabinet Office published a report on "*The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration*" (July 2007) outlining a new focus on enabling the third sector's role in campaigning

In short, this hypothesis was proved by quantifying the number of grant-making trusts that potentially fund sustainable change, despite there being no practical way of identifying them. We approached this in two phases:

### Phase 1: Getting a relevant sample

- The first research strand involved a broad analysis of grant-making trusts featured in DSC's *The Directory of Grant Making Trusts (DGMT) (2007-08)*<sup>10</sup>. Our data was based on the findings from the questionnaire sent out to each of the 2,500 grant-making trusts featured in the DGMT. The data used focuses on which 'subject areas' grant-making trusts are interested in funding and requires each trust to specify subject areas they either *prioritise* or *will consider* funding (see section 3.1).
- Subject areas determined to be unrelated to sustainable change, such as 'Science and Technology', were left out of the sample, leaving 8 broad subject areas (and over 40 sub-categories) which amounted to over 500 of the 2,500 grant-making trusts featured in DGMT. Fig 1 below outlines the subject areas and their categories and sub-categories within them used in the DGMT questionnaire:

**Fig 1: Subject areas used for the sample**

Subject	Categories	Sub-categories
<b>Arts, culture, sport and recreation</b>	Arts and Culture	• access to the arts
	Media and Communications	
	Humanities	• international understanding • philosophy and Ethics
<b>Education and training</b>	Education Policy	
<b>Environment and animals</b>	Animal Conservation	• endangered Species
	Non-animal research	
	Environmental education and research	• environmental education • environmental research
	Pollution abatement and control	
<b>Faith activities</b>	Inter-faith activities	
	Religious Understanding	
	Religious Understanding	
<b>Health</b>	Health education/ prevention/ development	• health promotion
<b>Rights, law and conflict</b>	Citizen Participation	
	Conflict Resolution	• cross-border initiatives • cross-community work • mediator • peace and disarmament
	Rights, equity and justice	• civil liberties • cultural equity • disability rights • economic justice • human rights • rights of people with mental

<sup>10</sup> Directory of Social Change's *Directory of Grant Making Trusts* 20<sup>th</sup> edition (2007). This book covers the largest 2,500 grant-making trusts in the UK which give grants to organisations.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>health problems</li> <li>older people's rights</li> <li>racial justice</li> <li>social justice</li> <li>the right to employment</li> <li>women's rights</li> <li>young people's rights</li> </ul>
<b>Social sciences, policy and research</b>	Economics	
	Political science	
	Psychology	
	Social policy	
<b>Social Welfare</b>	Social preventative schemes prison and penal reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>crime prevention</li> <li>family planning and sex education</li> </ul>

- A substantial number of grant-making trusts had selected that they prioritised or would consider more than one of the subject areas outlined above. 333 trusts met between 2 and 21 of the subject categories and sub-categories - this was the sample used for phase 2.

## Phase 2: Content Analysis of grant-making trusts

The lack of clarity around the funding of sustainable change activities makes it very difficult to identify. So, to categorise each grant-making trust accurately, they were researched independently using the relevant funding information sources available to voluntary organisations<sup>11</sup>.

## 2.3 Categorising trusts

To further quantify the grant-making trusts which fund sustainable change, three criteria were used to categorise the trusts in the sample; those that: **do fund, may fund and will not fund sustainable change**. The 'may fund' category was important to reflect different levels of clarity in presenting funding opportunities.

- i. **Grant making trusts that do fund sustainable change.** *Criteria:* there is a clear example of funding sustainable change or supporting a VCO whose primary objectives involve funding sustainable change. **And/or** a clear statement of sustainable change is given in funding information sources.

*Examples of evidence used by researchers*

**The ITF Seafarers Trust** - a comprehensive list of current and previous ITF campaigns is listed on their website.

**The Rank Foundation**- states "the promotion of Christian principles through film and other media".

**The Tudor Trust**- made a grant of £105,000 to Respect charity for a Research, Policy and Campaigns Manager.

<sup>11</sup> The information sources used were the Charity Commission <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/> accounts and DSC's fundraising database from [www.trustfunding.org.uk](http://www.trustfunding.org.uk)

- ii. **Grant making trusts that *may fund sustainable change*.** *Criteria:* there is a clear example of funding a VCO that has sustainable change activities as a primary objective. **And/or** if there is some indication in information sources of intent to support sustainable change (this may be vague or ambiguous).

*Examples of evidence used by researchers*

**Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust** - supports 'unpopular' causes, such as asylum seekers.

**Maurice Fry Charitable Trust** – has supported campaigning charities such as Amnesty International, and Friends of the Earth.

**The Community Foundation in Northern Ireland** - has expressed an interest in supporting 'peace building' ([trustfunding.org.uk](http://trustfunding.org.uk))

- iii. **Grant making trusts that *do not fund sustainable change*.** *Criteria:* where there is no indication or examples of funding sustainable change directly or indirectly in information sources **and/or** where components to our definition of sustainable change (see 1.1) have been given as exclusions.

## 2.4 Consideration of Validity and Reliability

1. **Sample.** Our targeted sample is not as representative as a random sample, making it important to determine whether the sample had been successful in selecting grant-making trusts likely to fund sustainable change. As a general rule, however, we found the more frequently a grant-making trusts occurred across the selected subject areas – the more likely they were to provide funding for sustainable change.
2. The targeted sample we used is not representative of the 2,500 listed grant-making trusts and undoubtedly does not capture all of the grant-making trusts likely to fund sustainable change. The research process intentionally focussed on those trusts which seemed more likely to fund sustainable change, based on the subject categories they said they would fund. However, given the time and resources available, we felt the best option was to use a targeted sample for a fuller insight into those grant-making trusts more likely to fund sustainable change.
3. **Analysis.** Finally, we understood there may be different interpretations of sustainable change between researchers. To limit the impact of this on results, a 'Notes' section was used to provide evidence and reasoning on how decisions were reached, for example: the name of a funded campaign. A 'Research' field was also used where researchers felt that further research or a second opinion was required to reach a reliable conclusion.



### 3. Summary of findings

A substantial proportion of grant-making trusts (79% of the 333 trusts in the sample) were found to potentially fund sustainable change. Additionally, three key findings outlined below provide a valuable insight into; the way grant-making trusts define what they are funding, the sub-sectors where funding for sustainable change is likely to be found and the extent of support available.

#### 3.1 Funding Sustainable Change – priority or afterthought?

When completing the DGMT questionnaire, grant-making trusts are given the choice to specify their interest in funding a particular subject area as either a **'funding priority'** (a specific, conscious and targeted means of addressing objectives) or something they **'will consider'** funding (an add-on or complimentary activity to support other work or research)

Only **24%** of grant-making trusts in the sample specify subject areas as a 'funding priority' compared to **76%** tagged as 'will consider'. Although we cannot associate this theme directly with grant-making trusts funding sustainable change, it certainly gives us an idea of the way grant-making trusts define their activities generally i.e. where a grant-making trust 'will consider' funding an activity it is unlikely to be explicit and, therefore, less easy to identify as a 'funding priority'.

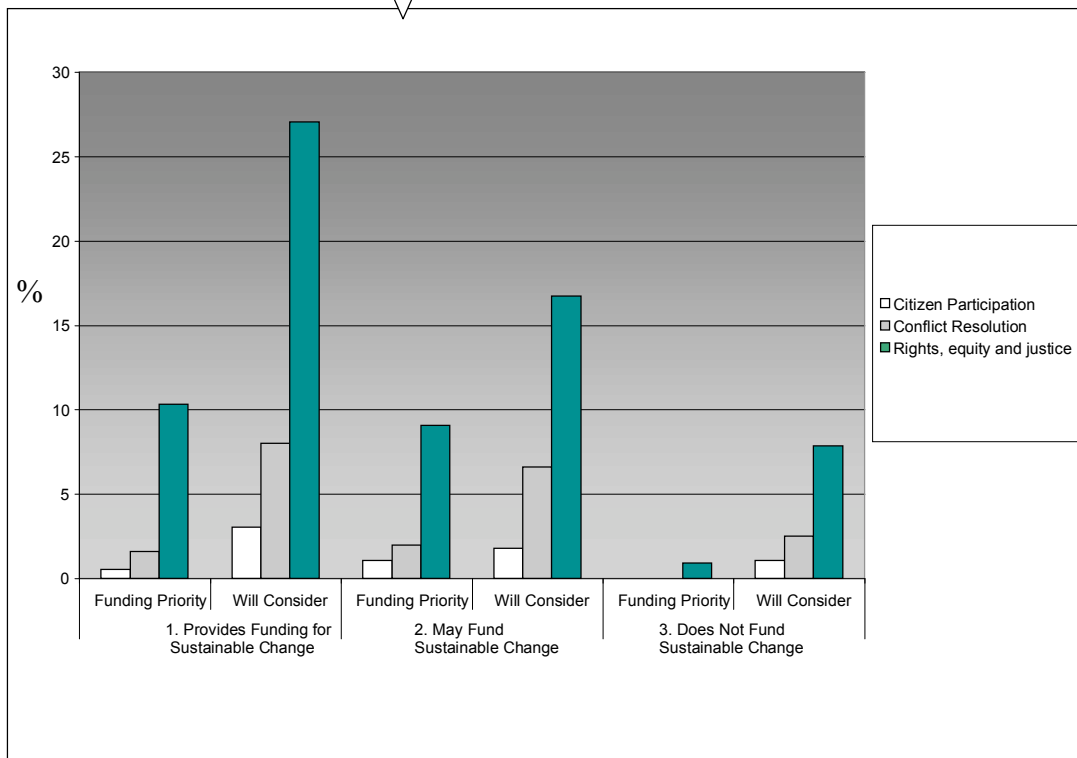
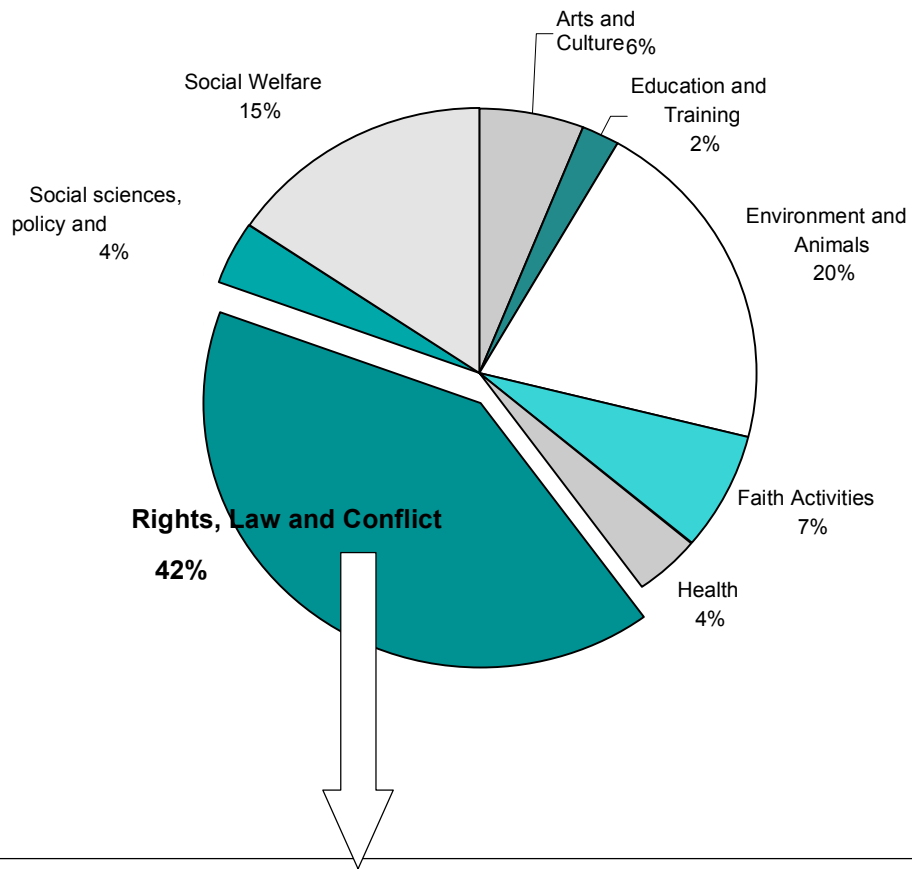
A more positive reflection on this trend is that this apparent willingness of grant-making trusts to tag the 'will consider' option, indicates that grant-making trusts are open and flexible in the activities they fund – although the reality may be quite different. However, an openness to explore new types of funding will be important in matching demand and expectations for funding campaigning, advocacy and influencing activities.

#### 3.2 Sub-sectors most likely to fund sustainable change

Looking at the funding of sustainable change across subject areas (outlined in Fig 1) shows where funding is most prominent and, where it is lacking (Fig 2).

Many of the grant-making trusts supporting sustainable change were concentrated in the 'rights, law and conflict' category - with 42% of the trusts in this sample having tagged it. Furthermore, the 'rights, equity and justice' sub-category in particular captured a substantial number of grant-making trusts that provide funding for sustainable change (Fig 3). Less popular were subject areas that can be seen as more specialist such as health, social sciences, policy and research and education and training.

**Fig 2: The Percentage of Grant-making Trusts in the Sample by Subject**



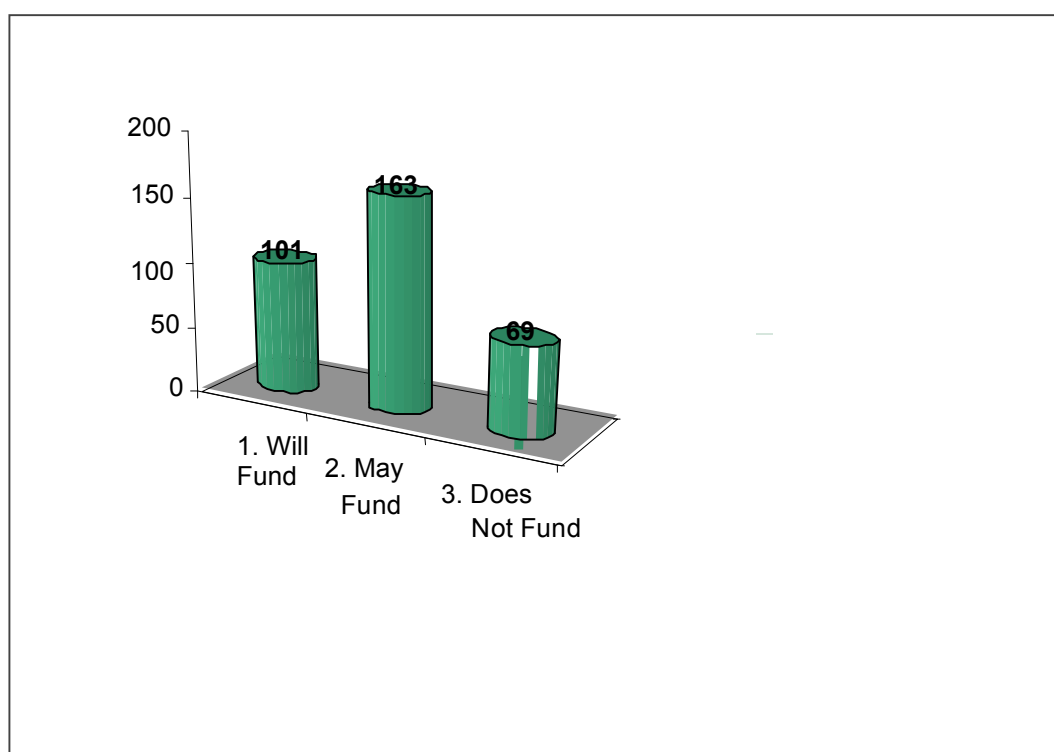
**Fig 3: The number of grant-making trusts funding sustainable change and 'rights, equity and justice activities'**

### 3.1 The proportion of grant-making trusts funding sustainable change - and the extent of that support.

101 (**30%**) of the grant-making trusts in our sample showed definite evidence of funding sustainable change activities. The majority of trusts in the sample, 163 (**49%**), fell into the 'may fund' category where it was more difficult to determine a willingness to fund sustainable change. Only 69 (**21%**) of grant making trusts in the sample gave no indication that they would fund sustainable change.

The fact that 79% of grant-making trusts in the sample have or will potentially fund 'sustainable change' is a clear indication that there is a substantial number of funding opportunities open to voluntary sector organisations. However, as a proportion of the total sample size for DGMT (over 2500) this is quite small.

**Fig 4: The number of Grant-making trusts in the sample that will, may or do not fund Sustainable Change.**



## 4. Research to practice: what this research may mean for grant-making trusts

Building on existing work on supporting sustainable change, and research that is being undertaken by others<sup>12</sup>, we hope that this picture of current funding will contribute towards increasing and enhancing the role of grant-making trusts in supporting sustainable change.

Based on our analysis, about 79% of grant-making trusts in the sample will potentially fund sustainable change. However, we estimate that this equates to only around 13% of the 2,500 grant-making trusts featured in DGMT.

This study provides a snapshot of current practice from which it is clear that grant-making trusts are well placed to support and inspire these activities. However, funding opportunities are difficult to decipher for the applicant - the fact that it took this level of research to establish clearly exemplifies this. Further, it appears that only a relatively small number of grant-making trusts are amenable to funding sustainable change. We will be undertaking three key actions in order to address this, and surrounding issues.

**1. Identify grant-making trusts that do, and equally importantly, do not fund sustainable change activities.** DSC has already made some important moves towards addressing this. Research for the forthcoming DSC trust funding directories- including the Directory of Grant Making Trusts, Major Trusts Volume 1 and 2 and the [trustfunding.org.uk](http://trustfunding.org.uk) online database, will include specific questions to determine the extent to which trusts may support campaigning, advocacy and influence. The data gathered will serve two purposes. Firstly, it will provide a wider perspective than this initial research project, providing clear data on the all major grant-making trusts in England and Wales. A follow up to this report will be produced sharing any changes in the level or type of support that is available, and seek to map in more detail the specific areas where support is present or lacking. Secondly, it will add to the pool of information available to fundraisers, enabling them to clearly identify potential funders with an interest in campaigning, advocacy and influence who may support their work.

**2. Encourage funders to consider, sustainable change activities as a specific, conscious and targeted means of achieving objectives.** Aside from clear declarations of funding, how grant-making trusts approach sustainable change should also be

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<sup>12</sup> New Philanthropy Capital [www.philanthropycapital.org/](http://www.philanthropycapital.org/)

considered. The way in which they define themselves and their objectives is important; whilst there is also a need to be reasonably flexible to enable organisations to think creatively about how to best influence people, there is a crucial role for funders in holding organisations to account - ensuring they operate to the highest standards of good practice, building guiding principles of effectiveness into their strategies for achieving change.<sup>13</sup>

We will be sharing this report with all of the funders (over 8,000 trusts, companies and statutory bodies) that we engage with throughout the course of our ongoing research.

**3. Enable further and wider debate on the issues raised by this paper.** DSC and NCVO will be looking to take these findings forward in discussion with leading experts - on issues and challenges around the funding of sustainable change and considering strategies for the future. Through opening up a dialogue with grant-making trusts we hope to improve understanding of the potential for grant-making trusts to fund projects for achieving sustainable, systemic change.

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<sup>13</sup> Kingham, T., and Coe, J. (2007) *Tips on Good Practice*, provides an overview of the ten principles organisations should consider in developing their strategy for change. Kingham, T., and Coe, J. (2005) *The Good Campaigns Guide: campaigning for impact* provides more in-depth guidelines to maximise potential to achieve lasting change.