



Facilitating and enhancing impact – the role of the grants programme manager

The importance of the programme manager and the skill set necessary to generate impact from the research/project approach emerged early on in the analysis and this ‘by-product’ of the KTP project has generated much interest from others currently working on the wider impact agenda.

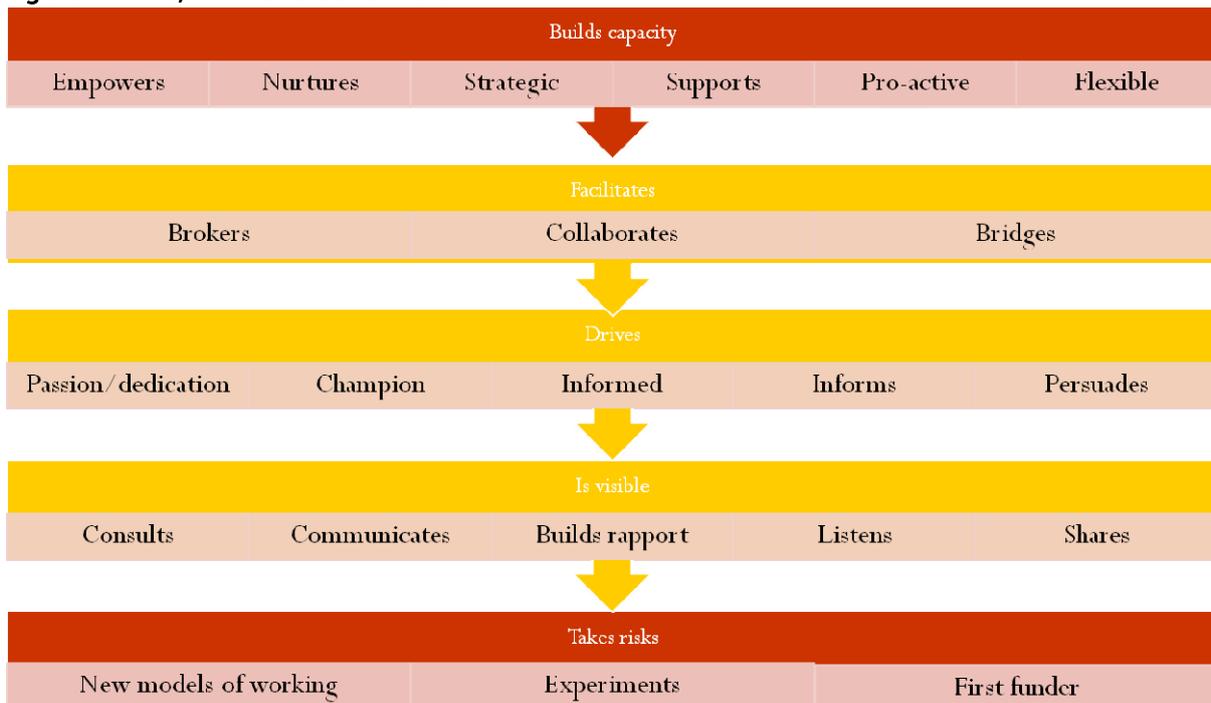
Influence and impact on both policy and practice are created when research knowledge is used to full effect. The KTP project found that the programme manager has a ‘knowledge broker role’ which is very important in the knowledge translation process in terms of accelerating the transformation of knowledge into action (and therefore of the utilisation and outcomes of the research). They are in an ideal position to facilitate networking and knowledge-sharing between both the voluntary and statutory sector, between academics and practitioners and between local and national practitioners and policy-makers.

The programme manager, in effect, becomes an additional player within the ‘impact interface’, suggesting that responsibility for driving or facilitating that impact does not necessarily only lie with either those who *produce* the research or those who *use* it.

The role of the Foundation programme manager

The primary purpose of the Foundation’s grants programme managers is to *“provide Trustees of the Foundation with sufficient information and analysis of applications submitted to make their decisions about whether or not to offer grants. A secondary purpose is to assist the Chief Executive in preparing policy for Trustees’ consideration”* (ref: NRF job description). This brief description hides a whole host of roles, skills and behaviours of the programme manager that we were able to unpick during the in-depth assessment of the Safety and Justice Programme approach to grant-making.

Figure 1 Roles, skills and behaviours



The knowledge gained through funding research projects under the Safety and Justice Programme (from both the findings produced *and* the process of doing research) combined with the close relationships that the programme manager has developed with policy-makers and practitioners across the sector, plus their involvement on different advisory groups etc. has contributed to an in-depth, strategic and operational understanding of domestic abuse and sexual exploitation. This forms the basis of their 'informed intuition' approach to nurturing and developing the domestic violence sector in the region. Experience and a commitment to sharing and learning is absorbed within their tacit knowledge. This tacit knowledge has led to a) informed, evidence-based and therefore intelligent grant making b) greater understanding and possibilities within the sector and the region and c) improved quality of public and professional discourse and debate.

The 'added value' of the programme manager

Strategic Added Value (SAV) was a concept developed for the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) to provide leading qualitative indicators of how they have leveraged funding and influenced 'stakeholders' behaviour, decisions and outcomes in ways that might not have otherwise occurred' (SQW 2006). We took the analytical framework for assessing SAV and analysed our findings to see if the concepts could be applied to the research/project approach taken under the Foundations' Safety and Justice Programme. This would give an indication of the 'intrinsic value' that the culture of the Foundation also brings.

The analytical framework for assessing SAV, shown in table 1 below, shows the SAV functions and outputs which we applied to our findings.

Table 1 RDAs SAV framework

RDA SAV functions	SAV outputs
Strategic leadership & catalyst: Articulating and communicating regional development needs, opportunities and solutions to partners and stakeholders in the region and elsewhere;	Creating confidence in the prospects for economic growth and in the capacity of partners and stakeholders to realise the potential for growth and improved regional performance;
Strategic influence: Carrying out or stimulating activity that defines the distinctive roles of partners, gets them to commit to shared strategic objectives and to behave and allocate their funds accordingly;	Generating cross-regional partnerships of mutual benefit to the growth prospects of each participating region; Achieving alignment and inter-locking of the priorities and investment plans of partners with the RES and with other partners;
Leverage: Providing financial and other incentives to mobilise partner and stakeholder resources – equipment, people as well as funding	Levered funding and other resources from partners and stakeholders in support of RES objectives
Synergy: Using organisational capacity, knowledge and expertise to improve information exchange and knowledge transfer and coordination and/or integration of the design and delivery of interventions between partners;	Reduced duplication of service provision from regional partners – e.g. in business development support Scaling up of projects and programmes to beneficial levels that achieve scale economies and provide for critical mass in securing benefits;

Engagement: Setting up the mechanisms and incentives for more effective and deliberative engagement of stakeholders in the design and delivery of regional and sub-regional priorities and programmes.

Introducing quality and innovation in RDA and partner interventions through the transfer of good practice, the development and use of benchmarks and the adoption of new processes and methods.

Source: Adapted from the Guidance Note on SAV prepared by SEEDA for the RDAs' Performance Management Group and from the ECOTEC Scoping Study for emda (2004)

Strategic leadership and catalyst

- The programme manager has created confidence amongst regional stakeholders in the prospects for growth of capacity in the domestic abuse and sexual violence sector. They are seen as a 'regional champion' and take a long-term, strategic, evidence-based approach to investment with the aim of building capacity and keeping the region at the forefront of developments in the field. They have developed and maintain close links with national sector-specific organisations and use local/regional knowledge to persuade bigger, national organisations and funders to invest in the region.
- The research projects assessed in the KTP have articulated and communicated regional development needs and opportunities to key partners and stakeholders in the region and elsewhere. For example, regionally, the 'domestic abuse and criminal justice system' research projects contributed to a raised awareness about inconsistent criminal justice agency practice in responding to domestic abuse incidents (which was at the time being re-assessed within the Northumbria area), and facilitated unique access to police recorded domestic violence incident data for tracking domestic violence cases which provided the opportunity to conduct a series of linked research studies, enabling a 'unique' longitudinal study to be conducted within the region.

Strategic influence

- The programme manager funds a combination of research projects and community projects in order to improve the overall response to domestic abuse and sexual violence by improving understanding and influencing practice and policy. Enabled by the Foundation's independent status the programme manager attempts to influence national policy making by acting as the 'voice of the region' in the sector, informing policy makers of ground level ways of working, and acts to bridge between the local and national agenda through interpreting local needs and offering a 'reality check' to national policy makers.
- For example, since the implementation of the Foundation's Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP 2004-2011) there has been a significant shift in thinking and structures in Cumbria County with domestic violence now a multi-agency responsibility. Stakeholder interviews suggested that better integrated practice became embedded relatively quickly and that although the transition from an innovative and experimental pilot project to a county-wide mainstream service was not without difficulties this change would not have happened without the initial pilot project and high level of funding from the Foundation. The project directly informed local statutory agency decisions and planning, highlighting for the first time the volume of domestic violence cases, demonstrating the need for improved response and specialist domestic violence courts (which are now showing excellent results in terms of the increase in conviction rates for perpetrators). The success of the specialist DV courts was also linked to the fact that it was one of the first groups of projects to provide CAADA accredited support workers/IDVAs aiding the courts relatively rapid development and embedment. The pilot was needed to start those important changes. The experimental nature of the project meant different ways of working could be tested leading to the tailoring of an improved response across the county as a result.

Leverage

- The programme manager collaborates on and levers funding for research projects with other funders in the region and nationally e.g. jointly funded research on the needs of domestic abuse perpetrators with the Home Office (2004-2006). They have also effectively levered regional (and, on occasion national) stakeholder time and knowledge by convening 'advisory groups' to govern some of the larger research projects. Both the University of Bristol and the DAIP evaluation benefited from expert advocacy groups whilst local stakeholder input into the sex markets (see below) research has been integral to the knowledge exchange process.

Synergy

- The programme manager uses their regional knowledge to improve information exchange between projects and organisations within the sector reducing the possibility of duplication of service provision. They effectively act as a bridge, a relationship broker between the voluntary and statutory sector within the region. In terms of 'scaling up projects to beneficial levels that achieve scale economies and provide critical mass' the programme manager has used their position as regional grant-maker to encourage/commission cross-boundary pieces of work.
- For example, in 2007 the Foundation received an application for funding to study the sex markets within a local authority area. Recognising the wider gaps in regional knowledge the programme manager took the opportunity to negotiate a wider sub-regional level investigation in order to gain a broader picture of how sex markets operated across district boundaries. The research findings were intended to inform specific needs of service delivery agencies across Northumberland and Tyne and Wear to be shared with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP), Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and other service providers for local planning purposes (in order to allow effective service delivery to an extremely vulnerable group and which also provided additional intelligence to disrupt sex markets). Recognising the value of both the evidence produced and the research *process* for practitioners in the region the programme manager has continued to invest in building a unique regional picture of sex markets and sexual exploitation.

Engagement

- The programme manager is open and honest, builds rapport and encourages informal relationships/channels of communication. They have taken a somewhat snowballing approach to networking and knowledge exchange, offering information and support in return for information and assistance.
- Many of their relationships go beyond the traditional grantee-funder relationship, building mostly supportive and trusting relationships over time. Rather than evaluate with pre-defined values and measures they aim to empower organisations in the field to evaluate their own situation.
- The programme manager has taken an experimental approach to learning through the research/project approach (for the longer-term benefit) and use a variety of outputs and dissemination methods to share the lessons and good (and bad) practice learned as widely as possible with key stakeholders. They have not been afraid to test new models of working and have been a first-funder of projects in the region, especially around domestic abuse perpetrator and sexual exploitation research and community projects.