

Trust and Foundation Archives for knowledge and practice sharing

Raji Hunjan, September 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A focus on trust and foundation archiving serves as a reminder of the importance of preserving knowledge and learning for the future in the interest social change. At a time of a global economic crisis, and severe cuts in public spending, it is inevitable that trusts and foundations will prioritise current and future social and economic demands. However lessons from the past can also help in our understanding of how today's strategies and policies sit in the wider context and history of social change.

This review was commissioned by The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund (the Fund) to support its archiving work as part of its commitment to learning after the Fund has closed. It explores existing trust and foundation strategies and approaches to the development of archives. On the whole the review has found that there is a strong interest in archiving within the sector, and that many trusts and foundations are either in the process of developing existing archives or are looking to begin work in this area.

But trusts and foundations are not a homogenous group, and this is reflected in the range of different approaches and attitudes to archiving that have been uncovered. Each foundation has its own strategies for influencing social change, which range from grant giving, project work and research to campaigning and advocacy. Individual foundations will also focus on a wide range of social, political, economic and cultural issues, which in turn impact on a diverse number of groups in society. Despite this, the review uncovered key challenges to archiving that were common amongst many of the trusts and foundations contacted. These were:

Commitment. Many of the trusts and foundations involved in this review shared a concern about how to prioritise the development of an archive. This is particularly the case when staff felt over committed and budgets are tight. If the potential benefits and long-term impact of an archive are not understood, then an archive remains less of a priority.

Where to begin. For those trusts and foundations that were interested in either starting or developing an archive, there was the issue of where to go for support and further information. There is currently no infrastructure and networks which support foundations to develop archives.

Cost. There is little clarity about how much the development of an archive would cost a foundation. The investment made varies between individual foundations. During the course of the review, no comprehensive examples of the cost of developing and maintaining an archive were found.

Data protection. At present there is confusion about data protection, and consequently what information foundations could archive and make publicly available. There is currently no information which relates directly to trusts and foundations.

This review makes the following recommendations to The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund (the Fund) and to others who are interested in finding ways to support trusts and foundations to maintain comprehensive archives:

1. Foundations should be encouraged to consider archives as part of a broader commitment to knowledge and practice sharing, rather than a stand-alone project.
2. Further discussions are needed amongst those working in the sector to understand the potential benefits of an archive; who archives may appeal to in the long-term, as well as the medium-term.
3. Existing archives should be widely disseminated and more consideration given to the potential audiences and users of archives. These audiences need to be broadened to include activists and practitioners, as well as researchers, academics and historians.
4. Further guidance should be developed to support those foundations that wish to start an archive or develop existing ones. This guidance could include information about:
 - Repositories of archives
 - How archivists can help
 - How to develop a policy on what to archive and why
 - What the costs are
 - Who should be involved in the development and maintenance of an archive
 - Data protection and other legal issues

A final recommendation is the consideration of a trust and foundation infrastructure on archiving. This could be as simple as developing a network of foundations and individuals who have a common interest in the issue. Or it could be as ambitious as looking to house all trust and foundation archives within one physical or online centre.

As Diana Leat¹ comments in her paper:

*“Let’s start talking **now** about creating an archive centre for foundations in Europe”*

We are grateful to all the trusts and foundations, and others, who contributed to the findings of this review.

¹ Leat, Diana: **Why Foundations Need to Think About Archives?** May 2010. This paper was written for the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund.

FULL REVIEW

Introduction

This review was commissioned by The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund (the Fund) to support its archiving work as part of its commitment to learning after the Fund has closed. The Fund is in the process of implementing plans for the development of an archive relating to its work since its existence. In addition to this, the Fund wants to raise awareness of the benefits and purpose of archiving amongst other trusts and foundations, and is exploring ways in which it can share learning and offer guidance to others, based on its own experiences.

The purpose of this review is to gather a better understanding of existing trust and foundation approaches to archiving – mainly to help the Fund to understand what further guidance on archives could be useful to the sector. The review is written to be of practical use to the Fund’s staff and Board of Directors, as well as others who have an interest in trust and foundation archives. It is therefore centred primarily on questionnaires and interviews with trusts and foundations and other related organisations and individuals, with some reference to current literature. It addresses three key questions:

- What are existing attitudes and views on archiving amongst trusts and foundation?
- What approaches have currently been adopted?
- What have been the barriers and benefits to archiving?

A total of forty five trusts, foundations, and membership organisations with a particular link to philanthropy were contacted, and in addition to this, interviews with a small number of individuals who have an interest in archives were also conducted. Of the forty five organisations, twenty seven completed a questionnaire, and a total of eight were contacted for follow up discussions.

How this review is organised

The review is broken down into the following headings:

- Definition of an archive
- Why Archive?
- Why do trusts and foundations archive?
- Who are the audiences for archives?
- Where are trust and foundation archives kept?
- What are existing attitudes and views on archiving amongst trusts and foundation?
- What approaches have currently been adopted?
- What have been the barriers and benefits to archiving?
- Developing a policy on archiving
- Staffing and Ownership
- Paper or electronic
- Obstacles to developing archives
- Final remarks

Under each of these headings, it explains its findings, and makes comments about the implications for those interested in archives, as well as making recommendations to the Fund.

Definition of an archive

The Fund's interest in archiving is primarily about the contribution of philanthropy to social change, and the preservation of social, political, economic and cultural history. For the purpose of this review, an archive was therefore defined as a publically available record of a trust or foundation's (or another related third sector organisation's) contribution to shaping social history. This record could include details about grant recipients and funded projects, partnership work with others, research, publications, press, blogs and other social media, photography and other multimedia, and primary sources relating to a founders' contribution to civic life. By *publically available*, this could mean that the archive is stored in a publically accessible location such as a library, or that it is stored privately, but can be made available on request to others with an interest in the field (eg. academics, students or journalists).

This definition helped with the research for this review, in that it made the clear distinction between autobiographical records of the founder of philanthropy based organisations, and the achievements of philanthropy in relation to its contribution to social history and change. At least one foundation that was contacted said that it would not have defined the information that it kept and sought to share as being an archive, but by the definition above, probably was the beginning of a record keeping process that could become a substantial archive in the future.

Possible action: To further explore and clarify a definition of what is meant by an archive.

Why Archive?

In discussion with the British Library² two clear purposes for foundation archives were initially identified:

- To preserve relevant documents for foundation staff and trustees to learn from previous work and therefore make decisions and develop strategies for the present and the future.
- To preserve documents in the longer term, to be of historical value to external researchers in the future.

The first of these purposes is clearly understood by trusts and foundations, and easier to implement in terms of what information internal staff may find useful in their day to day work. Indeed at least one large foundation based in Germany that was contacted for this review, said its very comprehensive archives were only available to internal staff and trustees. Other UK based trusts and foundations were also able to comment on the value of their archives for existing and previous trustees and staff members. The second of these purposes proved to be more of a challenge. As one public body organisation noted, it was more difficult for it to imagine who might be interested in its archives in the much longer-term. This was reflected in conversations with other trusts and foundations. The longer term value of archives was better understood by those foundations with a staff member who had a particular interest in the preservation of history.

² Telephone interview with William Frame, Curator, British Library

Diana Leat³ has produced an initial paper which makes the case for the important of philanthropy based archives. She argues for foundations as “stewards for social history” on the basis of the contributions foundations make collectively in investing private money for social good. Indeed a foundation archive could be a unique resource for those who want to understand the complexities of social history and how change can be achieved, in that it gives another perspective on civil society and civic life.

Not many of the trusts and foundations contacted for this review understood the need for archives in this way. One foundation in particular questioned the value of an archive – both in terms of the time and resources it would take to develop and maintain one, but also whether an archive would over emphasise the contributions a foundation has made:

“I must say I am a bit questioning about the significance of our records to history and if it isn't making us feel more important than we really are - discuss!”

Director of a foundation

This view was not shared by many of the other foundations that were contacted - but at least two other foundations also questioned the benefits of an archive. The quote uncovers a potential barrier in terms of the foundation’s commitment to developing an archive in that it suggests that such records may not be seen to have a valid purpose.

Leat⁴ argues in her short article that whilst the work of foundations is often invisible from mainstream history, it would be difficult to make the case that foundations have not contributed to social history and change. The majority of foundations with a long history are able to point to a significant change that they may have contributed. And yet:

“Without archives foundations are likely to remain the forgotten and the silent players history had no choice but to forget”

Leat, July 2010

In discussion with Dr Georgina Brewis⁵, further potential purposes of a foundation archive were identified:

- That an archive can hold vital information about social history at a particular moment in time, for example in relation to social change during previous economic downturns and recessions.

³ Leat, Diana: **Why Foundations Need to Think About Archives?** May 2010. This paper was written for the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund.

⁴ Leat, Diana: **Why Foundations Need to Think About Archives?** May 2010. This paper was written for the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund.

⁵ Georgina Brewis has a long standing interest and experience of charity archives. She is currently a research officer at the Institute of Education and the publicity secretary for the Voluntary Action History Society – an organisation that has a focus on charity archives.

- That a foundation based archive could be of benefit to previous grant recipients, in terms of helping organisations to piece together vital information about its own social history.

In relation to this second benefit, one foundation that was interviewed referred to its archive as being an essential resource for preserving information about the history of its grant recipients and their relationship with the foundation.

“The most amazing amount of information about the development and change within a grant funded organisation can be uncovered when searching through historical files”

Office Manager of a Charitable Trust

Despite these potential benefits, the review found little written support for trusts and foundations in understanding the purpose of an archive. The New Philanthropy Capital⁶ (NPC) makes an important case for foundations to share the knowledge and practice for social change. Its report for funders makes the point that:

“Funders are uniquely placed to be repositories for knowledge and to share that knowledge with others. Their independence, resources and long-term approach enables them to build expertise and share messages in a way that others cannot.”

Executive Summary, van Poortvliet et al

The report goes on to describe four ways of sharing knowledge – gathering knowledge from external sources, creating knowledge externally, sharing knowledge with external sources, and developing knowledge within. The development of trust and foundation archives could form an important part of a foundation’s strategic plan to share of knowledge in the way NPC describes, and yet archiving is not mentioned in the report. Methods which are discussed include websites and blogs, commissioning research and evaluations, attending and hosting meetings and staff exchanges. The main distinction between these methods and an archive is that an archive encapsulates most of the methods above and enables knowledge to be preserved and raw data to be available for further analysis and scrutiny in the future. But a preference for the types of methods identified by NPC was reflected in the responses of those foundations that were not interested in developing an archive. They argued that their resources and energy were better placed producing outputs such as evaluation reports, and research – which were deemed to have greater impact in terms of sharing practice and knowledge with others. This reinforces the need to think about the long-term benefits of an archive for future audiences. There is also evidence to suggest that archives could be a relatively low cost way of sharing knowledge (see page 12).

“Our approach in the past has probably been more to encourage and support those we fund to provide the vehicles for sharing learning and disseminating their work - although we are thinking more going forward about what our role in this might be. “

Senior Manager, Foundation

⁶ Matthew van Poortvliet, Lucy de Las Casas, Padraic Brick: **Foundations for Knowledge**, March 2011

Possible Action: to explore the purpose of an archive and how archives may fit into a broader strategy about practice and knowledge sharing.

Why do trusts and foundations archive?

Of the twenty seven organisations which responded to the questionnaire, at least fourteen said they had some sort of archive. This may seem like a promising number, however the majority clarified this either by saying that the archives were not publically available or that the archives themselves were very patchy in terms of consistency over a period of time. The main motivations that these organisations had for archiving was a lack of space in the office, an office move, expensive rent on storage space and damp basements where important information was becoming mouldy and less valuable over time. One organisation, like the Fund, wanted to archive as part of its legacy in preparation for its closure. It is important to note, that only two organisations – both of which are public bodies – were the only two organisations to understand the benefits of an archive in terms of public accountability and access to information. Two other foundations, did however say that they wanted to develop their archives in order to be more effective in responding to queries that they had received both from internal staff and external researchers.

Whilst the main motivations described above are perfectly valid reasons for wanting to begin an archive, unless the benefits are clearly understood, the ambition for what an archive could achieve is likely to be limited. For example, one foundation that was interviewed was motivated to start an archive because of an office move. In discussion with a staff member from this foundation the following was suggested:

“Rather than our documents being in our offices they could be in some dusty corner of the British Library in case they are of interest to a historian in the future”.

Administrative staff member of a foundation

The quote implies that this person felt that an archive is something that may be stumbled upon by chance, rather than something that may be actively sought out by a potential user. It is only fair to point out that such comments can be made flippantly in an interview situation, and in fact this particular staff member expressed a genuine commitment to further understanding archives. However, the quote does reinforce the need to support foundations in thinking more ambitiously about what an archive could achieve.

Generally the review demonstrated that more time was needed to investigate the wider benefits of archives – for the world of philanthropy, its grant recipients, and those with an interest in social history and social change more broadly. As the quote above suggests and the review goes on to discuss, by not fully understanding the benefits of an archive, it becomes more difficult for a foundation to prioritise its need, think through who the target audience might be, and what type of information should be included in the records.

Possible Actions: To work with others to further explore the potential benefits of an archive, and to disseminate this widely amongst trusts and foundations. One potential mechanism for doing this is through existing knowledge sharing websites. For example, NPC and ACF are launching a funder website – www.fundernetwork.org.uk; the Third Sector Research Centre is launching the knowledge portal, to archive charity websites and publications (see page 7).

Who are the audiences for archives?

In the majority of responses to questionnaires, target audiences were primarily seen as academics, students and historians of social, economic, political or cultural history, or internal staff including existing and previous trustees and council members. Of the two European foundations that responded, one was able to say with confidence that in the last twelve months, the archives were used by fifty historians (social, economic and art) who made up a total of one hundred and sixty visits. Of all the responses received to the questionnaire, this was by far the most number of visits recorded. With the exception of one grant giver – which is also a public body – in most other cases, the total number of visits varied from one a month, to two in a whole year. At least two foundations had no record of who had visited the archives and why. On the surface, it would be very easy to argue that with so few visits, it is little wonder that many of the foundations contacted felt that developing an archive was not a priority. However, the Fund's own visit to the Rockefeller Archive Centre in New York demonstrated that a well organised and publicised archive can attract researchers on a daily basis⁷. There is also an argument to say that it is important that the Fund works with other Trusts and Foundations to help the sector to understand who the potential audiences could be.

One type of target audience that is yet to be explored more widely by trusts and foundations include activists and civil society organisations. As mentioned previously, one foundation did say that it recognised that its archives formed an important record of the history of the organisations that it funded, but currently this was understood mainly by internal staff, rather by its grant recipients. However, there is some evidence to suggest that trust and foundation archives could be of value to grant funded organisations themselves in developing policy and practice. The Student Hubs Network – an Oxford based student volunteering charity founded in 2007 – has been exploring previous student union archives to ensure that its strategies and development connect to a longer history of student voluntary action, and that it and its members are able to learn from the past. Using these archives, it has produced a short video⁸ to explain the history of student volunteering in relation to its significance to policy and practice in present times. Another example is the Archives for Change project⁹ which used digital media story telling approaches, to help communities and individuals to tell the complex stories of Newcastle's West-end through the perspectives of the people who had experienced those changes. Stories included women who organised crèches, campaigns for housing and credit unions. The stories were then used to help communities to think about how change could be achieved in the present day. Such a project is only possible if archives exist that enable the people involved to uncover the lessons of the past.

Not all trusts and foundations will have thought through their target audiences at the beginning of their journey, but may find that this becomes more apparent as the archive develops. One librarian from a foundation said that the archive had been passed on to her as part of her job description

⁷ For more about this visit to the Rockefeller Archives, see www.theworkcontinues.org/case.asp?id=1636

⁸ <http://studenthubs.org/history>

⁹ This project, based in Newcastle's West-end, was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. See <http://archiveforchange.org/about/>

when she started her current post three years ago. She began by simply maintaining the archive as it always had been maintained. However, in recent years, she has developed her understanding of how it is used by trustees and council members, and consequently she has become more committed to its potential benefits. She has started to explore how the archive could be of relevance to donors, and perhaps to researchers. With this in mind, she is in the process of writing a policy to help her to further consider the purpose of the archive and consequently what information to keep.

Regardless of who the target audiences for trust and foundation archives currently are, or could be with more exploration, there is also a need to think through how archives could be promoted to potential audiences. The Rockefeller Archive Centre in New York for example, has a dedicated website for its archives¹⁰. Not only does this website give details about the archive, it also guides visitors to other US based philanthropy organisations and their archives. A brief web search of foundations in the UK found very little evidence of the promotion of archives.

Interesting, in relation to the Rockefeller Archive Centre, it also has assumed that its main target audience are scholars and researchers, and the archive is not open to the general public. It does however encourage the archive to be used by educators and has developed lesson plans specifically as a teaching resource.¹¹ Archives as an educational resource could potentially be an option for the Fund in the UK. It is important to note that this review is not suggesting that the US foundations have a more comprehensive archiving infrastructure; Leat¹² refers to evidence that reveals that many US foundations also do not believe that their records are consequential.

The Third Sector Research Centre in partnership with the British Library and funded by the Big Lottery Fund, is in the process of launching the Knowledge Portal¹³. This online space is designed to archive publications and project work that are now complete or under threat of losing funding. It is designed to be online library and web catalogue which hosts existing research and completed work from third sector organisations. This could potentially be a space through which trusts and foundations choose to promote their own archives.

Case Study: Compagnia di San Paolo

Compagnia di San Paolo is a private foundation, founded in 1563 as a charitable brotherhood, in Torino, Italy. Its original remit was to support those burdened by economic deprivation – as well as to keep a check on the spreading of Protestant reformation. In more recent years, it has focused primarily on research and development in areas as broad ranging as the sciences, education, judicial and cultural heritage. The foundation started its archives in 1989, and documents go back to the very beginning. The historical archives provide an important insight into the social and cultural history of the country as well as the work of the foundation over four centuries. The archives are

¹⁰ <http://www.rockarch.org/>

¹¹ <http://www.rockarch.org/workshops/educators/>

¹² Leat, Diana: **Why Foundations Need to Think About Archives?** May 2010. This paper was written for the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund.

¹³ The launch is scheduled for October 15th 2011, <http://www.tsrc.ac.uk/NewsandEvents/BIGfundsKnowledgePortal/tabid/746/Default.aspx>

well promoted on the Foundation's website, with a pdf brochure that gives important detail about what can be found in the archives.¹⁴ The historical archives are housed with the foundation's own physical space, and are open daily for members of the public to use, by appointment only. The foundation links its own archives to other foundation archives in Italy and abroad and promotes training and development both in the maintenance and access of an archive. It also links closely with the local university to provide guided tours for students, internships and support with dissertations and PhDs.

Possible Actions: A further exploration of who the users of an archive may be in the medium to long term; the logistics of training and awareness raising amongst potential users of archives.

Where are Trust and Foundation Archives Kept?

At present, there is no infrastructure for Trust and Foundation archives, and existing archives are kept in various places, from rented storage space, basements in offices, to official archive repositories. This is an issue if potential users and potential repositories of archive do not understand where they can go for more practical support with archives. As Brewis¹⁵ notes:

"A key problem is that the diverse network of archive repositories makes it very tricky for charities easily to identify institutions that might be interested in receiving their archives. The [National Archives' Archives Sector Development](#) is currently preparing some new guidance for small and medium organisations, much of which will be particularly relevant for the third sector."

Georgina Brewis, Third Sector Magazine

The Fund is exploring options on where to deposit its own archive. One option could be the British Library. The main advantages of doing so, is that the British Library already has its own target audiences, it is likely to exist in the long term, and the British Library is able to offer the Fund relevant support in developing its archive. Another advantage of an external archive is the potential the institution may have for offering training and support to users. One funder that was contacted as part of this review keeps its archives at the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA). The majority of visitors to LMA are currently over 50 years of age, but the centre will also host education visits to draw attention to the benefits of accessing archives at LMA to wider age groups. It is hoped that these education visits will encourage new users to the archives.

The majority of other organisations that responded to the questionnaire to say they had an archive, either kept these onsite, in storage or on multiple sites. The majority of these organisations said that the archives are publically available, but most likely, when contacted by an external person, internal staff would then visit the archives and retrieve relevant information. For many trusts and foundations, the main reason for storing archives in this way, is that often they have access to storage space free of charge. This is clearly an advantage. However, it becomes more difficult to publicise this archives, and access is reliant on the ability of staff to retrieve the correct information.

¹⁴ http://www.compagniadisanpaolo.it/eng/file/pdf/vigna_reale_ING_low_345.pdf

¹⁵ Brewis, G: <http://community.thirdsector.co.uk/blogs/guest/archive/2011/07/12/charity-archives-a-hidden-causality-of-the-cuts.aspx>, July 2011

Generally there is a decision each foundation will need to make about whether an archive should be housed in a physical archive collection, or whether it could be housed within the foundation's offices and storage space. This decision is likely to be influenced by the number of different social issues the foundation addresses, and whether it is possible to find an external location that specialises in all of those different issues. For example, for the General Teaching Council, a natural fit when exploring a home for its archives was the Institute of Education.

The Nuffield Foundation however, which focuses on broad areas such as the sciences, children and families and Africa, has found it more of a challenge to find one location to hold different archives in a meaningful way. The advantage of a specialist archive centre is that it is likely to be accessible to the public for longer hours. An in-house archive collection may be less readily accessible to the public, however staff are more likely to be able to help a potential user to retrieve the most relevant information.

Possible Actions. Whilst foundations will decide for themselves where to house an archive, there is a role the Fund could have in drawing together information about where these archives can be found and what information is kept in each.

Case Study: Volunteering England

In 2010, Volunteering England found itself in the position of facing large cuts to its strategic partnership funding and therefore needed to reduce the costs of housing its archive and papers off site. A project was started to preserve the collection and make it available to researchers. With the help of a PhD student as a volunteer, the collection was successfully transferred to the London School of Economics Archives. Volunteering England has retained the copyright to the majority of information, which enables it to have the option of charging for use of the archives when appropriate and also to control the information that is available in the public domain.

The relationship with the London School of Economics Archive enabled Volunteering England to access invaluable advice on how to categorise and how to manage duplicates of information. It also helped that at least one member of staff at Volunteering England had some knowledge of how to manage a charity archive.

Developing a policy on archiving

The majority of foundations that responded to the review did not have a comprehensive policy on archiving and those that had one – even if patchy – had started to understand the importance of a policy in maintaining an archive over a longer period of time. For example, at least one foundation expressed a concern that if the current officer who was most committed to developing and maintaining an archive was to leave, then interest with the organisation could be affected in the future.

The main reason that was given for the need of an archiving policy, was to manage the amount of information accumulated over time. At least two foundations, which had archives maintained over a longer period of time, said that previously all information had been kept. This now needed to be addressed for storage and manageability purposes.

In exploration with trusts and foundations, it was agreed that the following would need to be addressed in a policy:

- Target audiences
- Where archives could be housed
- What information to keep, and what to discard
- Over a period of time, what information could be discarded
- What information should remain confidential – in the short, medium or long term.

Case Study: Big Lottery Fund

The Big Lottery has a published policy on how it archives, which is currently under review¹⁶. As a publically funded and accountable body, the Big Lottery is clearly more duty bound to comply with legislation such as the Freedom of Information Act. BIG is a relatively young funder, in comparison with other philanthropic organisations, and therefore much of the information that it wishes to archive is still “live”. However the 2006 version gives clear guidance to the organisation about:

The role of staff in developing and maintaining the archive

Data protection: BIG will not hold any information that is not of business or historical value

That BIG will retain the copyright on all information

Essentially BIG’s policy is being updated because it recognises that it has a huge amount of data and material both in electronic format and in hard copy, so a strict policy of destroying material that has reached a certain age must be adhered to.

Staffing and Ownership

A key issue for those foundations without archives was staff time and commitment to developing and maintaining one. For those who had an archive, it seemed that in reality, staff time needed was relatively manageable. There were three major issues that were raised during this review:

- When to hire external expertise
- The role of trustees and senior management
- Who has day to day responsibility for the archive

Case Study: Trust for London

The Trust for London – which incorporates City Parochial – has kept an archive since the Trust first came into existence 130 years ago. The archive includes a bound minute book with all decisions about grant applications that go to decision making committees. The day to day responsibility for the archive lies with the Office Manager, with some support from the IT manager. However, all staff members and trustees are aware of the archive and therefore will record information accordingly.

¹⁶ http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/archive_retention_policy.pdf

The Office Manager acknowledges that the need to record for the purpose of an archive, does lead to extra work for the decision making committees. However, because the archive has the commitment of all staff, this is managed effectively.

In more recent years, the Trust has found that due to the sheer volume of information that could be archived, that clearer policy guidelines are needed about what information to cull and when. The minute books are kept at the Guildhall, as well as in the Trust for London offices. Researchers can request more detailed files, and this will need to be approved by the Chief Executive or senior managers. However, there is currently little detail about who accesses the archives externally and for what purpose. The files are accessed internally by Trustees and staff.

It is important to note that the maintenance of the archives is in the job description of the Office Manager and the IT Manager. In reality this work is a small aspect of their overall responsibilities and duties. When interviewed, the Office Manager noted that to begin an archive is possibly more work in that decisions need to be made about cataloguing and what information to keep and for how long. However, once an archive is up and running, it is the case of understanding the processes that are needed to maintain an archive, and this is less time consuming.

The Trust for London case study illustrates the limited time commitment needed in maintaining an archive, however during the course of this review, some foundations that were either new to the process or wanted to develop an archive that needed more attention, expressed a concern about where to begin. The key issues were how to categorise an archive, and how to develop policies about what to keep and what to discard. In these cases, the foundations expressed an interest in using the expertise of an archivist.

However, in at least one instance, a foundation responded to say that it did not know where to begin to find an archivist. Another foundation that has employed the services of an archivist, has initially allowed for two months for this specialist to understand what information currently exists in the archives and how these could be catalogued and refined in the future. After this initial scoping a further decision will be made as to whether the support of an external archivist is still necessary.

Two organisations that were not philanthropic organisations expressed their views on the benefits of finding an archivist who could help. Volunteering England, which has already been referred to in this review (see page 8), had particular experience and advice on this. It found that once it began the process of archiving, there was knowledge about archives within its own staff and networks than it expected. It also found that by depositing its archive with the LSE, the LSE archivist was able to offer further support and advice about how to categorise.

It is interesting to note, that in the majority of cases, archives were developed or maintained by office or library based staff. In at least three cases, the archives were inherited by staff members from previous staff. In each of these cases, the new staff member had found themselves taking a greater interest in the archives than they expected, either because they wanted to be more efficient in responding to queries, or because they had a particular interest in history. In foundations where archives were more meaningful, what seemed to be an important factor was that the work also had the commitment of senior staff, including staff associated with grant making and projects. This was certainly the case for the Trust for London as well as others. For example the Big Lottery has incorporated the role of senior managers into its policy document. This level of commitment has

ensured that the archive is given attention and that its purpose is understood by the whole organisation.

It is important that once an archive has been developed, that it remains in a staff member's job description to maintain and review on a regular basis to ensure continuity. In the Volunteering England example, the original archiving process was led by a committed staff member, with the support of the Chief Executive, and a PhD volunteer. However, since this staff member has left, there are questions about who will now have ownership over the maintenance of the project.

Possible Actions. To provide generic written guidance and expert advice about how to archive; and to provide a list of archivists that have been reviewed by trusts and foundations.

Paper or Electronic Archives

During the course of this review, the issue of whether archives should be maintained in a paper or electronic version in the future arose on a number of occasions. There is a clear value to paper archives, and the importance of original documents being preserved, and perhaps reproduced in the future. The video project referred to, in the case of Students Hubs (see page 6) demonstrates the importance of original photography, which was used in the video to explain and celebrate the history of student volunteering. However, there are a number of reasons that are motivating some foundations to think about electronic archives:

1. Physical Space. For many foundations, particularly those with a long history, and no immediate plans of spending out in the future, the issue of storage space for the archives is an important one. This has often led to culling of information that is no longer deemed to be of historical and social value.

“The basement is a damp, unheated space that is unsuitable for the storage of papers. The space is insufficient for the volume of papers we presently hold and there is no space for any addition. Trustees have been considering what to do with these papers for some time.”

Foundation response to questionnaire

2. Growing use of databases. As more and more foundations are moving towards paperless approaches to grant making, more information is being stored in databases such as GIFTs, or bespoke databases built specifically to meet the foundation's individual needs. These databases are growing in popularity because they store a great deal of information, which can also be manipulated and accessed for different purposes. At present, these databases are designed for internal use only; however the richness of the information has the potential to be considered as part of an archive in the future.

3. Cataloguing and indexing. There was initial concern within the Fund that there could be a danger that foundations could see electronic archives as a simpler way of managing archives, without understanding the complexities in terms of storing and access. However, this concern was not reflected in correspondence with trusts and foundations. Of the ones that were considering how to develop an archive, there was awareness that electronic archives would need as much care and attention in terms of how to catalogue as a paper archive would. However the potential benefits of

an electronic archive in terms of access and different ways to present the information were considered to be important.

As discussed with the British Library¹⁷ during the course of this review, the key issue with electronic archiving, is the preservation of the information in the long-term, the concern being that as software changes, electronic archives could quickly become dated. Advice on how to develop electronic archives is currently available from the National Archives.¹⁸

Obstacles to developing an archive

Many of the points below have been discussed earlier in this review however, it is important that these are highlighted, if the Fund is to have an understanding of how it can support foundations to develop archives.

1. Commitment. The trusts and foundations involved in this review, shared a concern about how to prioritise the development of an archive, when staff were already over committed and budgets are tight. There is no easy answer to this issue and it is a question of understanding the benefits of an archive. One way of addressing this would be to consider an archive as part of a broader focus and strategy on practice and knowledge sharing.

2. Where to begin. For those trusts and foundations that were interested in either starting or developing an archive, there was the issue of where to go for support and further information. Simple support such as which archive repositories could be suitable for philanthropy organisations, or a list of recommended archivists was identified as being the type of information that could be useful. A few organisations mentioned the importance of initial support from an archivist – particularly in terms of advice regarding cataloguing and developing policies.

We have been looking for an archivist to work with us to develop an archiving policy and establish appropriate systems to implement this and also to advise us on what should be done with the Trust's extensive collection of historic papers. So far we have been unable to secure the services of a suitable person.

Foundation response to questionnaire

3. Cost. There is currently little clarity about how much the development of an archive would cost a foundation. The key considerations are external support and how much, where to store the archive, and on-going staff involvement. There was a general sense during the review, that once a policy and approach to developing an archive had been agreed, that the on-going maintenance of an archive could be managed by at least one member of staff. However, further investigation is needed in this area.

¹⁷ Interview with William Frame, Curator, British Library

¹⁸ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/our-services/digital-transfer-system.htm>

4. Data protection. At present there is confusion about data protection, and consequently what information foundations could archive and make publicly available.

“We need to research into what we ought to be keeping from an archive point of view, i.e. for future historical interest, and what we need to keep for our own records. Also need to clarify what external people can see e.g. minutes of meetings – should all names be redacted?”

Response to questionnaire from a foundation

The answer to this issue needs more consideration than can be offered in this particular review. However, a starting point would be to consider all information that could be of historical and social value to a user in the future. With this in mind, it is possible that the personal and confidential details about an organisation may not actually be necessary in the archive. It is also important to remember that an archive is a long term strategy for knowledge and practice sharing. Therefore some detail could remain confidential in the short to medium term, but then made more publically available in the longer term. For example, one foundation said that it kept a confidential minute note book which was for internal use only, but that this confidential document could be made public in the longer term.

Possible Action. To provide guidance notes for trusts and foundations, which acknowledge the barriers and offer support about how to overcome these barriers.

Final Remarks

The review is a reminder that developing and maintaining an archive is a complex process that needs careful thought and some level of commitment and ownership from staff and senior managers. The review also demonstrates that it is possible to start the process of developing a comprehensive archive, if the following factors are given consideration:

- An understanding of the benefits and purpose
- Who the archive may be accessed by in the short, medium and long-term
- Where the archive could be situated
- Policy documents which give guidance to those maintaining an archive
- Careful thought about indexing and cataloguing.
- Staff involvement and ownership

The factors summarised above are all areas in which the Fund could offer further support to trusts and foundations, either through “how to” documents, or through round table meetings.

The review began with three specific questions, which are summarised below:

What are existing attitudes and views on archiving amongst trusts and foundation?

There is no doubting that many trusts and foundations, and other associated organisations, show an interest in archiving. Of all the organisations contacted for this review, only three expressed little interest in staying involved in a broader project about archiving. However, as the review has uncovered there is still some confusion about the purpose, benefits and target audiences for an

archive. This then has meant that approaches to archiving have been patchy and varied in different cases.

Certainly the examples of the Rockefeller Archive Centre and Compagnia di San Paolo, show just how extensive archives could be with time, resources and commitment. In both cases, the archives have also played a very important role in promoting and educating on the value of archives more broadly. However, other examples – such as the Fund’s own approach - or that of Trust for London’s - demonstrate that archives can also be developed and maintained relatively cost effectively.

From the Fund’s perspective, in its final 12 months of its existence, there is a great deal it could do to offer practical support to those who want to develop an archive, as well as to generally promoting the benefits. There is in the first instance, a clear need and audience for a handbook which provides guidance on how to begin an archive.

What approaches have currently been adopted?

The review has found that there is not one standard approach to developing an archive adopted by trusts and foundations. There could be two reasons for this. The first is that trusts and foundations are not a homogenous group and that their work and the social issues addressed are so varied, it may be that there is not one approach that could capture the richness of learning and knowledge. The second is that up until now, there has not been any one organisation that has taken the lead in developing a framework for archiving amongst trusts and foundations. Leat in her article referred to previously in this review has called for a Europe-wide infrastructure. In not Europe-wide, then indeed a UK-wide approach could also be of benefit. The Association of Charitable Foundations (ACF), in response to the questionnaire, noted that more of its members have taken an interest in archiving and that it is an area that ACF could have more input into. It is certainly an area in which the Fund could have influence in its final spend out period.

What have been the barriers and benefits to archiving?

To some extent, this is an ongoing conversation between those with experience and an interest in archiving, and the trusts and foundations that have started work in this field. However, there have been some clear barriers and benefits that have been identified in this review.

The barriers include a general concern about the time it would take to develop an archive, and whether this can be justified in terms of its benefits. In addition to this, at least two foundations questioned the value of an archive in terms of trusts and foundations over emphasising their own importance. Other barriers included data protection, and where to go for additional support.

The benefits included a way of fulfilling a commitment to accountability and transparency, and ensuring that all important documents were available in the long-term to academics, researchers, students, as well as those involved in policy and practice development. Many foundations also noted that an archive was an important tool for ensuring that important information was preserved for existing staff and trustees.

As a parting comment, the review has been a reminder about the importance and value of institutional memory and organisation learning. The current economic and political environment in which we are working seems to be in a period of rapid change; with world events such as the global

economic crisis having a huge impact on social and political issues in the UK. During such a period, it is important to look to the present and the future in terms of how social change can be achieved. However, it is also important not to forget the lessons from the past and what could be achieved by also understanding previous approaches to social change.

Foundations and related organisations with an interest in archives:

The organisations listed below have all expressed an interest in staying involved in a project on archiving.

Active Philanthropy (www.activephilanthropy.org)

This is a German based organisation that offers donors – both families and individuals – a platform to share their ideas and experiences. Active Philanthropy does not have an archive at present, but understands the importance of one and is committed to learning more from others.

Main contact: Michael Alberg-Seberich

Association of Charitable Foundations (www.acf.org.uk)

This is the leading membership association of trusts and foundations in the UK; it offers an infrastructure for trusts and foundations to learn from each other. The Association of Charitable Foundations does not have an archive, but is interested in helping those trusts and foundations that are considering one.

Main contact: Carol Mack

Barrow Cadbury Trust (www.bctrust.org.uk)

This is an independent, charitable foundation that provides grants to grassroots voluntary and community groups working in deprived communities in the UK, with a focus on Birmingham and the Black Country. It also works with researchers, think tanks and government, often in partnership with other grant-makers, seeking to overcome the structural barriers to a more just and equal society. The Trust's archives are currently stored between Birmingham City Archives, its offices in London, and a storage space.

Main contact: Mark O'Kelly

Big Lottery Fund (www.biglotteryfund.org.uk)

This is a public body, with responsibility for grant giving, using funds raised by The National Lottery. It delivers funds throughout the UK, mostly through programme tailored to meet the needs of communities in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. As a publicly funded, accountable body, BIG must maintain records of potential interest to staff, stakeholders and members of the public. BIG is currently in the process of redrafting its archive policy.

Main contact: Sarah Mistry

City Bridge Trust (www.citybridgetrust.org.uk/cbt)

This is the grant-making arm of the Bridge House Estates, an ancient charity managed by the City of London Corporation. Its current archives are stored at the London Metropolitan Archives. The archives are made up mostly of the records of the overseeing committees. Files of grant-making policy have been maintained at the City Bridge Trust. However committee minutes recording

decisions about grants are not openly available and are only made accessible on a case by case basis, with researchers adhering to strict conditions.

Main contact: Jenny Field

Comic Relief (www.comicrelief.com)

This is a grant-giving organisation that raises its money through high profile fundraising and media events. It works to support projects in the UK and internationally – mainly in Africa. Comic Relief does not have an archive at present, however is interested in finding out more about this area of work.

Main contact: Peter Argall

Compagnia Di San Paolo (www.compagniadisanpaolo.it)

This is a private foundation, based in Italy. It focuses primarily on research and development in areas as broad ranging as the sciences, education, judicial and cultural heritage. The foundation started its archives in 1989, and documents go back to the very beginning. It is also interested in supporting others and sharing good practice on archiving.

Main contact: Anna Cantaluppi

Dulverton Trust

This is an independent, UK based grant making charity. The Trust is currently in the process of digitising its sixty years of records. Its records are currently accessed mainly by staff and trustees.

Main contact: Anna de Pulford

Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (www.jrct.org.uk)

This is an independent grant-giving organisation that makes grants to individuals, to projects and organisations seeking the creation of a peaceful world, political equality and social justice. Archives relating to the first fifty years of the Trust's existence are stored at the Borthwick Institute. Papers since then have been stored in the basement of its offices, and trustees are now keen to consider how these could be archived more effectively.

Main contact: Juliet Prager

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (www.ncvo-vol.org.uk)

This is a membership organisation for the third sector more broadly than trusts and foundations. The organisation was founded in 1919 as the National Council of Social Service and it has deposited its older records in the London Metropolitan Archive, where these are available to researchers. However NCVO has not made any deposits for many years and the most recent records are housed in its King's Cross offices where they are unfortunately not publically available. However, prompted by discussions with the Voluntary Action History Society, it is now interested in thinking about how these newer materials can be publically placed.

Main contact: Karl Wilding

Nuffield Foundation (www.nuffieldfoundation.org)

This charitable trust was established in 1943 by William Morris, Lord Nuffield, the founder of Morris Motors. The Foundation works to improve social well-being by funding research and innovation in broad areas such as education and social policy, and science and social sciences. The Foundation is in the process of developing its existing archive so that it can be more responsive to inquiries from internal staff and external researchers. It has appointed a consultant archivist to help with this process.

Main contact: Alison Rees

Paul Hamlyn Foundation (www.phf.org.uk)

This is one of the larger independent grant-making foundations in the UK. The Foundation prefers to support work which others may find hard to fund, perhaps because it breaks new ground, is too risky or unpopular. The Foundation currently has its own internal archives and is interested in exploring ways in which it could be made more accessible to the public.

Main contact: Dan Watson

RCVS Trust (<http://trust.rcvs.org.uk/home>)

This is the charitable partner of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and exists to drive innovation and improvements to veterinary care and services. It currently holds its archives in its main library and is accessed primarily by its Trustees. The librarian is looking to develop this archive to make it more accessible.

Main contact: Clare Boulton

Trust for London (www.trustforlondon.org.uk)

This is the new name following the amalgamation of City Parochial Foundation and the Trust for London. It is a grant-giving charity which exists to empower Londoners to tackle poverty and exclusion. It also funds research through special initiatives. It currently stores its archives in its offices and in the London Guildhall. It archives all its decision making minutes, as well as other information about its grant recipients.

Main contact: Mara Normile

The Tubney Charitable Trust

This Trust seeks to support activities that have a long term, sustainable impact on the biodiversity of the UK. It gives grants through different initiatives linked to this aim. The Trust does not have an archive but is very interested in developing one as part of its spend-out strategies.

Main contact: Sarah Ridley

Where to go for further support

This guidance is aimed at trusts and foundations, and others who are looking for further support in either setting up or further developing an archive.

The National Archives (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)

The National Archives is the UK government's official archive, containing over 1,000 years of history. It gives detailed guidance to government departments and the public sector on information management and advise others about the care of historical archives. Much of its online support is targeted at government departments. The National Archives offers guidance on its website on transferring documents to electronic records online. Whilst this guidance is aimed at government departments, it could be useful to others. See

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/our-services/digital-transfer-system.htm>

Charity Archivists and Record Managers' Group (Charm) www.charmonline.org.uk

The Charity Archivists and Records Managers Group (CHARM) is made up of people responsible for or involved with the management and care of the records and archives of charities and voluntary organisations. CHARM membership is open to anyone interested in charity records. At present, it does not offer online resources, but instead is a support network, and hosts regular meetings for those with an interest in third sector archiving. Its membership is very diverse, from the Children's Society to the Zoological Society of London.

Voluntary Action History Society (VAHS) www.vahs.org.uk

The Voluntary Action History Society (VAHS) aims to advance the historical understanding and analysis of voluntary action. It has a long standing interest in voluntary sector archiving. It is run by a small committee of volunteers and has a growing membership of individuals and organisations. Its online pages offer details about past papers and podcasts about voluntary action history. Whilst the site is not primarily about archiving, it does demonstrate how archives can be use to understand the significance of the history of the voluntary sector.

Database of Archives of Non Government Organisations (DANGO) www.dango.bham.ac.uk

The DANGO Project at the University of Birmingham started in May 2008 to help researchers to find out about the archives of NGOs, charities and voluntary organisations. It has a simple to use online, searchable database to access archives and the contribution these organisations have made to society and politics. By its own admission, the pace of updates of the searchable database are "somewhat slower than it used to be", and at the time of writing this review, was no longer being funded. It does nevertheless provide a useful first step in find out what other archives already exist.

The Knowledge Portal www.tsrc.ac.uk/Research/KnowledgePortal/tabid/840/Default.aspx

The Knowledge Portal is a recently launched online database, which brings together research and information on the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. It is particularly useful accessing reports and websites that are less current and are in the process of being archived by organisations. The portal aims to help voluntary organisations, government departments, academics and others to access evidence on a broad range of topics related to the sector. A unique 'third sector' thesaurus has been designed to help people identify the most appropriate material to inform their work.

The portal has been created by TSRC in partnership with the British Library. It is funded by the Big Lottery Fund.

Archives and Records Association (ARA) www.archives.org.uk

This Archives and Records Association is the lead professional body for archivists, archive conservators and records managers in the UK and Ireland. Members have access to training, continued professional development, access to job opportunities and an online community. The website and associated publications and training are targeted primarily at individuals for whom archiving is a fulltime job, with less support for individuals for whom maintaining an archive is a smaller part of their job description.

Society of American Archivists www2.archivists.org/

The US equivalent of the Archives and Records Association has produced a brochure specifically for organisations that are interested in donating archives to repositories in the US. This brochure can be found at www2.archivists.org/publications/brochures/donating-orgrecs.

Record Keeping Roundtable <http://recordkeepingroundtable.org/>

This is a record keeping and archive discussion group based in Sydney. The website appears to be managed by a small group of individuals with an interest in archiving. The group has a specific interest in the record keeping of highly politicised and sensitive documents. It offers workshops in Australia, but also provides twitter based summaries of these workshops.

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