

2020 – Learning and Insights from Grant Making



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This snapshot presents the learning from Corra’s own grant making and the emergency response grants administered with partners on behalf of the Scottish Government. It offers insights into what has worked well and what can be improved to help ensure to grant making is supportive, accessible and works for the people Corra exists to support.

Corra is committed to **listening and learning** from the communities, charities, and the partners it works alongside. This report is informed by insights from:



Surveys to gather views from charities and groups funded by Corra, and applicants to emergency funds.



Community stories from groups working to create positive change.



Conversations with the funding community and third sector.



Henry Duncan Grants – offering trust and time

In 2020, as part of Corra's **new strategy**, **Henry Duncan Grants relaunched**. The newly launched Henry Duncan Grants includes a rolling programme of micro-grants and multi-year grants (up to 5 years). These are unrestricted where possible, offering grassroots charities trust and time to create positive change.

61 organisations were funded in 2020 to help families cope with the impacts of poverty.

62% of Henry Duncan Grants were for multi-year funding.

£332k of unrestricted HDG funding was provided.

13 grants aimed to improve health and wellbeing by providing family activities

14 projects provide financial information, advice and support to families affected by poverty

9 projects supported people in poverty to develop new skills

21 grants were made to projects providing practical support at a critical time for families experiencing poverty

Bikes for Refugees

HENRY DUNCAN GRANT FUNDED ORGANISATION

Bikes for Refugees (Scotland) SCIO is a grassroots community project that has been refurbishing and distributing donated bikes free to new Scots (asylum seekers and refugees) since April 2017. The provision of bikes has proven to be a vital service to reduce isolation and barriers to accessing services. They offer freedom of movement and a free means of travel to essential meetings, language classes, health appointments and work or volunteering. They also create opportunities to meet people and socialise.

'I use my bike all the time to get around the city from my home to my work and to my college and to volunteer for projects for lots of journeys, even shopping, I use my bike.' Yaman

Broke not Broken

HENRY DUNCAN GRANT FUNDED ORGANISATION

Broke not Broken is a local charity based in Kinross that tackles food poverty and supports local families and individuals in variety of ways. For example, in 2020, they distributed vouchers for winter coats and the winter warmer project provided families and individuals with a slow cooker, bags of fresh vegetables, supermarket vouchers and cookbooks. Project growth is client-led and has led to range of services such as a counselling, addiction recovery service, advice hub, garden project, cookery lessons and family away days.

'Having the support and stability of the Henry Duncan Grant will enable us to plan projects that best serve our clients and their families.'

People working together to respond to the big challenges facing Scotland

“The community and voluntary response to the coronavirus pandemic has been astounding. Rapid, agile, underpinned by kindness, care and love.”

Carolyn Sawers,
Acting CEO Corra Foundation

The impact of the pandemic has been felt across society. When the UK went into lockdown in March 2020 it quickly became clear that many charities were accelerating their efforts to reach those in need, groups were adapting their practice to deliver services in line with government guidance and many were working to ensure their organisation would stay afloat amidst the coronavirus storm.



Corra, in common with many other funders, quickly issued a **statement** to grant holders offering reassurance and flexibility with funding.

Corra also provided additional funding through some of its own grant programmes:

- Fifteen organisations received a PDI (Partnership Drugs Initiative) Covid Fund grant of £2,000. These supported families with essential items such as food vouchers, mobile phone top-ups and wellbeing advice.
- 30 **Scotland based organisations** working to support **international development** received a **one-off unrestricted grant of £500**. This helped with their work with communities overseas impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

Collaborative working

The pandemic saw organisations collaborating and working in new ways. This was also true for funders. Partnership enabled resources to be shared, reduced burdens on applicants and support grants to be made at pace.



Majority of applications processed within 10 working days.



Between March and August 2020 Corra reviewed over 4,000 grant applications.



Corra administered 2,700 grants totalling £21.6 million.

Next Step Initiative and Corra Foundation working together

Next Step Initiative work to empower, improve and transform the quality of life for African communities in Scotland. In July 2020, Comic Relief appointed Next Step Initiative to manage phase one of their **Global Majority Fund** in Scotland.

The funding aimed to reach Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities worst hit by coronavirus. This was the first grants programme Next Step Initiative had administered, and the team approached Corra for support to develop the application processes, guidance, and decision-making structures.

Next Step Initiative distributed circa £400K to over 50 Black, Asian and minority ethnic led community organisations in Scotland. Corra and Next Step Initiative continue to share learning about grants programmes that aim to better address racial and social justice in Scotland.

Listening to organisations and communities

Corra carries out annual surveys to funded organisations and those that have applied for funding to understand the extent organisations feel supported and how processes can be improved.

In 2020 Corra carried out three surveys; one for existing grant holders; those who have applied to Corra's grant programmes; and applicants to emergency funding streams administered on behalf of the Scottish Government (i.e. Third Sector Resilience Fund).

98% of respondents felt the application materials were accessible.

8% of applicants to Corra's grant programmes needed additional help.

81% of respondents who did ask for pre-application support for Corra's grant programme found the help useful.

85% of respondents with an existing Corra grant said they would very comfortably contact Corra to discuss their grant.

80% respondents with an existing grant also said they felt Corra gave them enough time to prepare a grant report and 75% said it provides clear jargon free guidance.

74% of survey respondents that applied to Henry Duncan Grants said they found the application feedback to be helpful when applying to other funding programmes.

'We have found Corra to be very supportive, friendly and flexible. The simplicity of the forms is very welcome. The process feels more like a partnership than a traditional funder/applicant relationship where either party can pick up the phone.'

Applicant to Corra's grant programmes

'Responsive, caring and delivering much needed funds right where they are needed and exactly when they are needed.'

Applicant to Covid Emergency grants

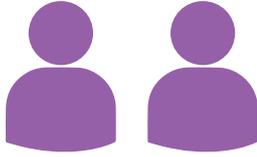
'We have consistently found Corra a very open and approachable funder who have a real understanding of the challenges facing charities.'

Existing grant holder



How Corra has responded to the feedback

When asked how Corra could improve its grant making processes feedback included:



Offering more one to one support for applicants.



Providing copies of completed application forms.



Making grant payments quickly.



Providing applicants with information on other funding opportunities.

Corra is working to:

- Ensure every applicant receives a PDF copy of their completed application form.
- Provide clear information to successful applicants on next steps including the payment and monitoring process.
- Continue to provide dedicated email and telephone support to all applicants.
- Continue to offer funding advice sessions through Henry Duncan Grants and where appropriate signpost to other funders.
- Promote other funding opportunities via Corra's social media pages and provide links to **Funding Scotland** on our website.

Community leading and participatory grant making has increased substantively during 2020. This includes working closely with community members grant-making design and lived experience decision-makers panels. Corra listens to people who have participated to help improve how involvement is accessible, supportive, and meaningful.

Striving to be a flexible funder

There is a lot to learn from the emergency funding response. This includes acknowledging what could have worked better and how to support the sustainability of organisations that have played a crucial role for communities throughout the crisis.

Whilst the funding response to the coronavirus crisis was largely collaborative and efficient, there were still issues that created barriers, including:

- Several different funding streams were open at the same time. This meant valuable time and resource was needed from organisations and it could be hard to navigate.
- 55% of applications to Corra for the Third Sector Resilience Fund were unsuccessful because they had over twelve weeks financial reserves. This means some organisations were relying on their reserves to keep afloat. Managing cashflow and depleting reserves will continue to be a challenge for many third sector organisations.



Corra will continue to discuss and learn alongside partners as well as listening to the sector. We:

- **were one of the first funders** to commit to the Institute of Voluntary Action Research's (IVAR's) **Flexible funders** pledge. This is a call on funders to adapt their practices to become more open and trusting so they are better placed to support the sector.
- will continue to **collaborate with other funders** to highlight and respond to the issues that matter to the sector such as charity reserves.
- will continue to increase opportunities for **community led grant making**, putting communities at the heart of designing and deciding how funds are spent.
- will support participation and meaningful **co-production**, including through lived experience in shaping criteria and grant decision making processes.
- have signed the **Funder Commitment to Climate Change** pledge which includes contributing to a post-carbon society within Corra's funding programmes and priorities.

A Note to our Partners

The past year has shown more than ever the importance of collaboration. Corra is deeply grateful to all of its partners, including communities, charities, national and local government and other trusts and foundations. There are too many to name here, but the team would like to extend a sincere thanks to every one of them.

This paper is part of a series of reports capturing learning from across Corra Foundation's work. You can find the **2020 Impact Report and People in Place overview** online.

Corra Foundation exists to make a difference to the lives of people and communities. It works with others to encourage positive change, opportunity, fairness and growth of aspirations which improve quality of life. Corra wants to see a society in which people create positive change and enjoy fulfilling lives.

In 2020 Corra launched a ten-year strategy. It is long term because making a difference on the big challenges will take time. At its heart is the strong belief that when people find their voice, they unlock the power to make change happen.

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