

FIVE CROSS- CUTTING THEMES:



**MISSION
KNOWLEDGE
POWER
ACCOUNTABILITY
CONNECTION**

**STRONGER
FOUNDATIONS**

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FOREWORD

Carol Mack, CEO of the Association of Charitable Foundations (ACF)

ACF's mission is to support foundations to be ambitious and effective in the way that they use their resources for social good. This goal has never seemed more apposite than in these most difficult of times. Covid-19 has not only been the dominant factor in all of our lives over the past nine months, it has laid bare the systemic inequalities in our society for all to see, as well as creating enormous additional demands that far outstrip the resources that foundations can bring to bear on these issues. In short, the virus has

raised the stakes of ACF's role to support foundations to be their best selves.

We first articulated our mission in 2016 as part of a strategic review, in response to our members who told us that they wanted ACF to be more challenging of foundations in support of their work. But if you had asked us back then what 'ambitious and effective' foundation practice looked like, each of our trustees and staff members would probably have given you a different take on it.

This, then, was the question that we set up our Stronger Foundations initiative to answer. Over the past two years, more than 100 ACF members spent a combined total of 2,000 hours in examining six different aspects of foundation practice – hearing from over 50 speakers from across the globe, both within and beyond the foundation community. And now, thanks to all of their insights, feedback and expertise, we have published six reports containing 40 pillars of practice that together set a high bar for ambitious and effective foundation practice, looking at: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Impact and Learning; Strategy and Governance; Transparency and Engagement; Investment; and Funding Practices.

We chose those six topics originally because we knew that they would touch on some of the most challenging aspects of running a foundation. But we also knew that they were interconnected areas of work, and that we had artificially divided them to make the process of inquiry manageable. So it came as no surprise that some themes cropped up across the piece.

This cross-cutting report pulls out five of the most prominent themes that ran as golden threads throughout the Stronger Foundations findings, indicating that they are areas of key concern for foundations:

Mission, Knowledge, Power, Accountability and Connection

All five of these concerns recognise the independence of foundations and that every foundation has its own unique charitable purposes to fulfil, expressed in its mission, or reason for being. And they all recognise that a foundation cannot achieve anything on its own – it is how it uses its knowledge, power and resources to connect with others that counts. But they also indicate that in a society increasingly distrustful of power, and where good intentions do not exempt you from scrutiny, embracing accountability is key to your licence to operate.

FOREWORD

In addition to these five issues, all of which are of increasing importance in how foundations think about the way that they work, I see a sixth area that a growing number of all types of foundations are concerned with, irrespective of their mission. That issue is Climate. The enormity of the climate threat, and the scale and urgency of the solutions needed demand that we all consider how we can make a positive contribution through our work. The [Funder Commitment on Climate Change](#), developed by our members, and hosted by ACF, demonstrates that all foundations, whatever their charitable mission and field of expertise, can play a part in addressing the causes of the climate crisis and supporting adaptation to its effects.

Taken together, the findings of the Stronger Foundations initiative, and the Funder Commitment on Climate Change, set out a member-led agenda for ACF to follow in the support that we provide to foundations in the years to come. Already we are integrating the Stronger Foundation pillars into our professional development programme for foundations and into our conference and other events.

We know that deciding which issues and pillars to prioritise can be a challenge for foundations. And never more so than in the middle of a global pandemic, when the calls on foundations' attention and resources can seem overwhelming. To

assist with this, we published an [overview report for Chairs](#), setting out ten key Stronger Foundations pillars for boards to consider. And we have launched a [self-assessment tool](#) for foundations to help provide some orientation and focus for action. We hope to use anonymised data from the tool to create a picture of foundation sector priorities and trends overall – which will enable ACF to target our support to the topics where it is most wanted.

Many foundations are already taking action in response to the Stronger Foundations reports – particularly on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, perhaps the area where foundations as a sector have furthest to go. New networks and partnerships are forming, peer learning and working together are becoming the default way of doing things. As foundations strive to be ambitious and effective in the way that they use their resources for social good, we will endeavour to support them every step of the way.

AS FOUNDATIONS STRIVE TO BE AMBITIOUS AND EFFECTIVE IN THE WAY THAT THEY USE THEIR RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL GOOD, WE WILL ENDEAVOUR TO SUPPORT THEM EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

INTRODUCTION

Over a two-year period, more than 100 foundations took part in ACF's Stronger Foundation initiative, which aims to help grant-making charitable foundations identify and pursue excellent practice. The culmination of this member-led effort, the largest foundation engagement programme of its kind in the world to date, was the production of six thematic reports, below:

In each report, we set out 40 'pillars of stronger foundation practice' (summarised in the appendix to this report).

This paper sets out five cross-cutting themes emerging from ACF's Stronger Foundations initiative: **mission, knowledge, power, accountability** and **connection**.

We hope it will give all foundation trustees and staff a route into the programme as a whole, inspire you to take a closer look at [the longer thematic reports](#) and [self-assessment tool](#), and engage with ACF's programme of support as you pursue and achieve ambitious and effective foundation practice.



BACKGROUND

At their best, charitable foundations are the most transparent, intentional and efficient way of transforming private wealth into public benefit

Foundations are an immense source of public good, awarding more than £6bn every year in the UK to individuals, causes and communities. They are motivated by an incredible range of passions, from enabling scientific discovery to giving voice to the most marginalised, from restoring historic buildings to increasing access to education. Most are unconstrained by political or market cycles, independent of the state, able to think in the long-term and agile to respond to emerging need.

Given their freedoms, resources, powers and privileges, it is right that they are subject to scrutiny and critique

At a time when funding for civil society is increasingly scarce and in demand, it is right that questions are asked of foundations such as: Are they making the most of their potential? Are they using all their assets to maximum effect in pursuit of their mission? Do they use the whole toolbox available to them? Are their strategies informed by people with relevant expertise? Are their decisions based on evidence?

Between 2018 and 2020, ACF led the largest foundation engagement initiative globally to date, examining what it means to be a stronger foundation in 2020 and beyond

‘Stronger Foundations’ involved more than 100 foundation representatives drawn from across the UK, and 50 external experts and critics, offering perspectives that are both grassroots and global. Through six member-led working groups, ACF facilitated 42 sessions of inquiry on issues including diversity, transparency, governance, funding, impact, and investment.

The main products of this initiative are a series of six reports showcasing the ‘pillars of stronger foundation practice’

These pillars set a high bar for aspirational foundation practice. While examples of every pillar can be found somewhere in the UK foundation sector, every foundation will have room for improvement, and in some areas a foundation will be at an early stage of its journey.

BACKGROUND

By pursuing the pillars of practice, all foundations can become more effective and achieve greater impact – no matter their size, remit, history, source of income, geography or resources

Being a stronger foundation is not an event or a destination, but an ongoing journey, and the pillars themselves will continue to evolve. By embedding this approach in everything that a foundation does, it will ensure it is not only fit for purpose, but confident of its mission, and realising its potential.

Although each working group was tasked with exploring a distinct area of foundation practice, a range of cross-cutting themes emerged

These themes align closely with those of the independent [Civil Society Futures Inquiry](#), which proposed a “PACT” for civil society – a framework for Power, Accountability, Connection and Trust. The resonance between Stronger Foundations and the Inquiry not only reinforces the role of foundations as integral partners within civil society, but highlights how much all organisations comprising civil society have in common.

The challenges we all face are immediate and existential

The climate crisis and Covid-19 are having an unprecedented short and long-term impact on society – locally, nationally and globally; on institutions, communities and individuals. Civil society is looking to foundations to help ameliorate the damage and enable the recovery, as well as address the challenges that Covid-19 has laid bare.

Now is a time for foundations to be more ambitious and more effective than ever before in how they use their individual and collective resources for public good

We look forward to working with our members and supporting all of them in this individual and collective endeavour.

FIVE CROSS- CUTTING THEMES:

**MISSION
KNOWLEDGE
POWER
ACCOUNTABILITY
CONNECTION**

MISSION

Perhaps the foremost principle to emerge from Stronger Foundations is the alignment of values, resources and behaviours with the charity's own 'mission'.

Like all other charities, foundations in the UK have charitable purposes, set out in their governing document, which they are required to report on annually. These purposes set out the parameters within which it can pursue public benefit and maintain its right to hold charity status. A foundation's mission goes deeper than these operational and regulatory requirements to an articulation of what it does and why. It reflects its strategic choices, values, motivations, and history. The mission serves to give the foundation direction and purpose, as well as

offering a public articulation on what the foundation seeks to achieve.

Mission alignment is a strong current running through all six thematic reports, and rightly so. Pursuit of mission should be at the heart of every charity, and stronger foundations should strive to enhance their effectiveness and ambition in that pursuit. Clarity of mission across the whole organisation boosts the foundation's ability to tell its own story, signals its aims and values, and acts as a mechanism by which to be held accountable. With a mission in place, a stronger foundation can articulate the rationale for the impact it is seeking to achieve, enable a better understanding of its work and set a bar against which to assess its overall impact.

The Stronger Foundations report on 'impact and learning' sets out the importance of understanding the mission and using it to guide the foundation in everything it does. Impact includes both the positive and negative effects of a foundation's resources, activities and behaviours. A stronger foundation has a clear and comprehensive understanding of its own mission and, in doing so, creates a solid base on which it can consider the impact it seeks to achieve.

A foundation's mission does not exist in a vacuum. It should be developed, reviewed and communicated in the context of its history, source of income, time-horizon, and the ecosystem in which it exists. It is especially important to apply a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion and adapt the mission to global challenges like the climate crisis in order to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

A stronger foundation will define its mission based on a sound understanding of the context in which it operates and the causes it seeks to further. This includes making efforts to understand the realities of the people, issues and communities that the foundation seeks to support. It also includes an understanding of the foundation's time horizons, the tools it has available and its accountability to others.

A stronger foundation will have considered all the resources it has available to achieve its mission – 'the whole toolbox' – and whether and how it intends to deploy these in pursuit of impact. Given foundations' independence and relative lack of direct accountability, the choices available to them in how they deliver their strategies are arguably more comprehensive than for any other kind of organisation. In each case, these choices are guided by its mission, from when to use its own voice and influence, to where and how it makes investments.

A STRONGER FOUNDATION WILL DEFINE ITS MISSION BASED ON A SOUND UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTEXT IN WHICH IT OPERATES AND THE CAUSES IT SEEKS TO FURTHER

MISSION

RELATED PILLARS

HAS A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF ITS VISION, MISSION AND VALUES AND ARTICULATES THEM PUBLICLY

▶ STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE

UNDERSTANDS ITS MISSION AND THE IMPACT IT IS SEEKING TO ACHIEVE

▶ IMPACT AND LEARNING

IDENTIFIES AND SELECTS FUNDING PRACTICES THAT ARE MOST LIKELY TO FULFIL ITS MISSION, AND DESIGNS ITS PROCESSES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS VALUES

▶ FUNDING PRACTICES

PRODUCES AND REVIEWS STRATEGIES THAT WILL IMPLEMENT DEI PRACTICES

▶ DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

MAKES THE MOST OF OPPORTUNITIES AND INITIATIVES THAT ENABLE TRANSPARENCY AND ENGAGEMENT

▶ TRANSPARENCY AND ENGAGEMENT

PRIORITISES ITS MISSION WHEN SETTING INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES

▶ INVESTMENT

KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is another golden thread through all six reports. Many aspects of stronger practice are characterised by the use or acquisition of knowledge, from collecting data on who is receiving funding, to engaging with evidence in different forms and being open to new ideas, to ensuring a variety of research and views are taken into account when it comes to investments. Knowledge enhances the foundation's ability to pursue its mission effectively.

To gain knowledge, and apply it in practice, a stronger foundation must enable a learning culture. A culture that gives boards and staff the time, confidence and skills to gain and apply insights, across funding practices, investments, impact, strategy and

governance, is essential to the foundation's continuing development. This ensures it remains well equipped and well placed to respond to changing and emerging contexts.

An important feature of a learning culture is having the support, opportunities and mechanisms to act upon lessons learnt. There needs to be space for the foundation – whether at board, staff or individual level – to make changes, adapt and respond to what it has learned. This is essential in ensuring that learning goes beyond discussion and awareness-raising, so that it has a tangible bearing on the foundation's future approach and practice.

In order to learn, evidence and information are essential. Engaging with a broad range of evidence enables more

informed decision-making and enhances the foundation's impact in pursuit of its mission. A stronger foundation has an intentional approach to collecting, analysing and using evidence (including feedback from applicants and grantees, as well as people with direct and lived experience) and uses this to shape its work, whilst ensuring that these demands are proportionate and not unduly burdensome.

Enabling an internal culture of learning is likely to require discussions about success and failure. A stronger foundation supports its staff and trustees to have challenging and open dialogue together. This can help develop a narrative that demonstrates the vision, mission and values of the foundation to a point where it can articulate these publicly.

Thinking and working collaboratively can create opportunities for mutual learning. Foundations in the UK have the benefit of a strong and vibrant foundation sector, with opportunities to exchange learning through networks such as those offered by ACF. For example, asking other foundations what research and views they take into account when considering investments can provide new avenues to explore. Foundations can also seek out the latest thinking, such as on investment, from pension funds or university investors which have their own drivers for strong environmental, social and governance performance.

THERE NEEDS TO BE SPACE FOR THE FOUNDATION – WHETHER AT BOARD, STAFF OR INDIVIDUAL LEVEL – TO MAKE CHANGES, ADAPT AND RESPOND TO WHAT IT HAS LEARNED

KNOWLEDGE

RELATED PILLARS

**BELIEVES THAT EVERYONE
IN THE ORGANISATION
HAS A ROLE IN THE
PURSUIT OF IMPACT AND
ENABLES A CULTURE OF
LEARNING**

▶ IMPACT AND LEARNING

**REGULARLY REVIEWS ITS
FUNDING PRACTICES AS
PART OF A CULTURE OF
LEARNING, AND THINKS
COLLABORATIVELY TO
ENHANCE ITS IMPACT**

▶ FUNDING PRACTICES

**COLLECTS, TRACKS AND
PUBLISHES DATA ON ITS
OWN PRACTICES AND
PERFORMANCES**

▶ DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

**INFORMS ITS STRATEGY
WITH DIVERSE
PERSPECTIVES AND A
RANGE OF EVIDENCE**

▶ STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE

**ENABLES AN
INTERNAL CULTURE
OF TRANSPARENCY
AND ENGAGEMENT**

▶ TRANSPARENCY AND ENGAGEMENT

**ACTIVELY SEEKS A
VARIETY OF RESEARCH
AND VIEWS TO INFORM
ITS APPROACH TO
INVESTMENT**

▶ INVESTMENT

POWER

Foundations have significant and unique power, derived principally from their financial strength, which enables independence and influence. For example, they can send a clear signal to other funders and other parts of civil society about issues that require attention, instil a sense of urgency and instigate calls for action. They also choose which organisations to fund, strengthening them, and which not to fund, all of which contributes to the shape of civil society in the short and long-term.

With power comes responsibility, and those in power should be held to account, receptive to feedback, and responsive to challenge and scrutiny. The way power dynamics play out will vary depending on who a foundation chooses to fund (for example, organisations or individuals), and the causes and communities of interest that it seeks to further. But wherever a

relationship exists between one party that has something and another that needs something, this power imbalance will affect the nature of that relationship. A stronger foundation understands these power dynamics and how they might influence the funding relationship, and takes steps to redress the potential for harm.

Stronger foundations are intentional in how they use their power to achieve impact in a wide variety of ways. For example, to identify the most appropriate type of grant or other funding, to use their own voice to speak up on issues they care about, or to amplify the voices of others. They might highlight individual and aggregated experiences of grantees or communities, undertake research into particular issues, or underwrite legal costs of strategic litigation. Foundations can also use their influence to convene, gain access

to the corridors of power, and create platforms for groups that are not usually heard or listened to.

For many foundations, their endowment is their 'super-power'. This gives them independence, flexibility, freedom and influence (including on companies and markets), and the potential to operate in perpetuity. This all means that foundations can explore opportunities for impact beyond the confines that other non-endowed charities face.

Foundations may also use their collective power to influence others and align their policy, support of funding efforts, or catalyse other initiatives. They might want to influence the activity of government, markets, business or public opinion.

Collectively, foundations can exert far greater influence than the sum of their individual efforts and, when wielded carefully, deliberately, and in service of their causes and communities, this can make an effective and impactful contribution.

A stronger foundation understands the power it holds and uses it with great care. It considers whether those holding its power are the people best placed to deliver its mission and values. One of the most impactful ways a foundation can use its power is to share it, including through the diversity and representativeness of its board and staff, an area explored in depth in the Stronger Foundations report on 'diversity, equity and inclusion'.

A STRONGER FOUNDATION UNDERSTANDS THE POWER IT HOLDS AND USES IT WITH GREAT CARE. IT CONSIDERS WHETHER THOSE HOLDING ITS POWER ARE THE PEOPLE BEST PLACED TO DELIVER ITS MISSION AND VALUES

POWER

RELATED PILLARS

PROACTIVELY SEEKS TO UNDERSTAND HOW ITS OPERATIONS AFFECT OTHERS, AND SEEKS TO AVOID AND REDRESS HARM

▶ IMPACT AND LEARNING

CONTINUALLY STRENGTHENS ITS GOVERNANCE, INCLUDING ITS DIVERSITY

▶ STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE

EMBEDS TRANSPARENCY AND ENGAGEMENT ACROSS ALL ITS ACTIVITIES

▶ TRANSPARENCY AND ENGAGEMENT

SEEKS TO POSITIVELY INFLUENCE THE BEHAVIOUR OF OTHERS IN RELATION TO ITS INVESTMENT

▶ INVESTMENT

RECOGNISES THE UNIQUE AND VITAL ROLE OF GRANT FUNDING AND IS AWARE OF THE VARIETY OF GRANTS THAT CAN BE MADE AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF EACH TYPE

▶ FUNDING PRACTICES

USES ITS OWN POWER TO ADVOCATE FOR AND ADVANCE DEI PRACTICES

▶ DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

ACCOUNTABILITY

Foundations hold a unique position in society where, beyond regulatory compliance, there may be few to hold them to account for their actions. Foundations take very seriously the legal and regulatory framework in which they are required to operate as charities. The accountability that comes with charitable status in the UK is rigorous and substantially transparent. While within that framework many foundations are relatively free of other kinds of accountability, these standards are themselves demanding, and rightly so.

Yet for many foundations asking the question “to whom are we accountable?”, the answer (aside from the charity regulator) may well be “nobody”. A relatively small number of foundations, primarily those who undertake public fundraising or who are connected to a

corporation, are subject to direct lines of accountability in a similar way to organisations that have customers, such as companies, or service users, such as public bodies. But most foundations are not required or pressurised to justify their choices, behaviours, governance, staffing, operations or investments to any external audiences.

While this can be a great strength – giving foundations independence from political and market cycles that allows them to set their own risk appetite, back both popular and unpopular causes, and take a short and longer-term view – a lack of direct accountability can draw criticism and threaten the impact of a foundation’s efforts in pursuit of a particular goal. It also risks leading to complacency or poor practice.

In all six aspects of practice considered by the Stronger Foundations initiative, the working groups found evidence of the importance of foundations enabling others to hold them to account, particularly those they exist to support and serve. The reports explore in more detail the ways in which foundations can recognise how they are accountable and boost their accountability where it is relatively lacking. Stronger foundations proactively enable feedback on their practice and performance, deliberately designed into the foundation’s structure. One of the main benefits to doing so, in addition to improving the foundation’s own processes and practices, is to demonstrate a willingness to be held to account.

Accountability is inextricably linked to ‘transparency and engagement’, the focus of one of the thematic reports. Only if a foundation is open, honest and communicative about its work can external audiences know enough about it to hold it to account effectively. Greater accountability can also help foundations stand up to scrutiny. Foundations’ unique role in society means they do not rely on public support or validation to further their missions. By ‘showing their working’, foundations are better equipped to respond to public scrutiny, challenge or critique, confident that their approach is intentional.

ONLY IF A FOUNDATION IS OPEN, HONEST AND COMMUNICATIVE ABOUT ITS WORK CAN EXTERNAL AUDIENCES KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT IT TO HOLD IT TO ACCOUNT EFFECTIVELY

ACCOUNTABILITY

RELATED PILLARS

**IS ACCOUNTABLE,
OPEN TO FEEDBACK
AND RESPONSIVE TO
CHALLENGE**

▶ STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE

**PROACTIVELY STRIVES
TO UNDERSTAND THE
EFFECTS OF ITS FUNDING
ON OTHERS, AND SEEKS
TO AVOID AND REDRESS
HARM**

▶ FUNDING PRACTICES

**MAKES ITSELF
ACCOUNTABLE TO
THOSE IT SERVES
AND SUPPORTS**

▶ DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

**UNDERSTANDS THE
IMPORTANCE OF
TRANSPARENCY AND
ENGAGEMENT, AND
ARTICULATES ITS
APPROACH**

▶ TRANSPARENCY AND

**BASES ITS DECISIONS ON
EVIDENCE, INCLUDING
MEANINGFUL FEEDBACK
AND LIVED EXPERIENCE**

▶ IMPACT AND LEARNING

**PURSUES TRANSPARENCY
AND RESPONDS
TO SCRUTINY**

▶ INVESTMENT

CONNECTION

Each thematic report highlights the importance of a foundation understanding the ecosystem in which it operates. The foundation sector is comprised of hundreds of independent charities, each with their own origins, history, governance, source of wealth, communities of interest and accountabilities. They are also part of communities and wider civil society, and their actions have direct implications for others.

As well as the ecosystem, the concept of engagement and collaborative thinking is explored throughout the thematic reports. All these are forms of connection; connection with other funders, connection with grantees, connection with the people and places that the foundation both exists to serve and relies upon.

Thinking and acting collaboratively was a consistent theme throughout the initiative. Collaboration between foundations can happen in a variety of ways. It does not always mean creating a pooled fund or implementing a common application or reporting process, both of which can be valuable. Collaboration – while it may involve these elements – is also a mindset that encompasses shared learning, and values contribution above attribution. In practice, it might be joint learning, joining sector-wide initiatives or, if appropriate, aligning funding, processes and practices.

In thinking and acting collaboratively, a stronger foundation considers its effectiveness and added value alongside other funders and uses this understanding to strengthen its contribution, with collective efforts often leading to impact

greater than the sum of its parts. And not to be overlooked, the connections internally between staff and the board are vital in ensuring stronger foundations.

Connection with the organisations and individuals on which foundations rely to achieve their own mission is also crucial. At its heart is the relationship between the foundation and its applicants and grantees, including the necessary processes of the funding transaction.

The key is that whatever kind of relationship a foundation chooses to form with funded organisations, this should be intentional, with clarity on all sides about the terms of engagement. While it will look very different for different foundations, all stronger foundations ask themselves ‘for whose benefit is our offer of support?’ and they design their funding processes, programmes and policies accordingly.

THE KEY IS THAT WHATEVER KIND OF RELATIONSHIP A FOUNDATION CHOOSES TO FORM WITH FUNDED ORGANISATIONS, THIS SHOULD BE INTENTIONAL, WITH CLARITY ON ALL SIDES ABOUT THE TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

CONNECTION

RELATED PILLARS

**IS AWARE OF THE
EXTERNAL CONTEXT AND
ITS ROLE IN THE WIDER
ECOSYSTEM**

▶ STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE

**THINKS
COLLABORATIVELY TO
PURSUE IMPACT AND
ADVANCE ITS LEARNING**

▶ IMPACT AND LEARNING

**SEEKS TO ACHIEVE
POSITIVE IMPACT
BEYOND A FINANCIAL
CONTRIBUTION**

▶ FUNDING PRACTICES

**PROACTIVELY ENGAGES
EXTERNAL AUDIENCES**

▶ TRANSPARENCY AND ENGAGEMENT

**COLLABORATES WITH
OTHERS TO PROMOTE
AND IMPLEMENT DEI
PRACTICES**

▶ DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

**ENGAGES WITH AND
HOLDS TO ACCOUNT
THOSE MANAGING ITS
INVESTMENTS**

▶ INVESTMENT

APPENDIX: THE 40 PILLARS OF STRONGER FOUNDATION PRACTICE

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

1. Invests time and resources in understanding and defining DEI
2. Produces and reviews strategies that will implement DEI practices
3. Collects, tracks and publishes data on its own practices and performances
4. Has a diverse trustee board and staff team, both in terms of demographics and experience
5. Reflects and implements DEI practices in its funding activities
6. Expresses its DEI commitment, policies and practices publicly
7. Makes itself accountable to those it serves and supports
8. Uses its own power to advocate for and advance DEI practices
9. Collaborates with others to promote and implement DEI practices

► DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

IMPACT AND LEARNING

10. Understands its mission and the impact it is seeking to achieve
11. Bases its decisions on evidence, including meaningful feedback and lived experience
12. Believes that everyone in the organisation has a role in the pursuit of impact and enables a culture of learning
13. Considers the whole toolbox in pursuit of impact
14. Proactively seeks to understand how its operations affect others, and seeks to avoid and redress harm
15. Learns from failure
16. Thinks collaboratively to pursue impact and advance its learning

► IMPACT AND LEARNING

STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE

17. Has a deep understanding of its vision, mission and values and articulates them publicly
18. Continually strengthens its governance, including its diversity
19. Informs its strategy with diverse perspectives and a range of evidence
20. Designs its strategy to make the most of all available resources, and supports good governance in those it funds
21. Recognises the importance and implications of time
22. Is aware of the external context and its role in the wider ecosystem
23. Is accountable, open to feedback and responsive to challenge

TRANSPARENCY AND ENGAGEMENT

24. Understands the importance of transparency and engagement, and articulates its approach
25. Embeds transparency and engagement across all its activities
26. Enables an internal culture of transparency and engagement
27. Proactively engages external audiences
28. Makes the most of opportunities and initiatives that enable transparency and engagement

INVESTMENT

29. Understands that responsibility for its investments sits with each and every member of the trustee board
30. Prioritises its mission when setting investment objectives
31. Engages with and holds to account those managing its investments
32. Pursues transparency and responds to scrutiny
33. Actively seeks a variety of research and views to inform its approach to investment
34. Reviews its own time-horizon
35. Seeks to positively influence the behaviour of others in relation to its investment

FUNDING PRACTICES

36. Identifies and selects funding practices that are most likely to fulfil its mission, and designs its processes in accordance with its values
37. Recognises the unique and vital role of grant funding and is aware of the variety of grants that can be made and the implications of each type
38. Seeks to achieve positive impact beyond a financial contribution
39. Proactively strives to understand the effects of its funding on others, and seeks to avoid and redress harm
40. Regularly reviews its funding practices as part of a culture of learning, and thinks collaboratively to enhance its impact

▶ STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE

▶ TRANSPARENCY AND ENGAGEMENT

▶ INVESTMENT

▶ FUNDING PRACTICES