

# Recommendations and next steps for funders

Findings from the Muslim Charities Forum and The London Community Foundation strategic report 'Overcoming barriers to funding'

May 2021

# Recommendations and next steps for funders

Through the Muslim Charities Forum (MCF) and The London Community Foundation (LCF) [strategic partnership](#) the following recommendations have been identified for organisations responsible for decision making and distributing funding:

## 1. Barrier: Awareness of funding

### Recommendations:

- Disseminate grant funding information to organisations trusted by minoritised groups to instigate awareness-raising. For example, Muslim Council of Britain, MCF, All Ways Network (AWN) and mosques.
- Publish more case studies highlighting Muslim groups who have successfully received grant funding to influence others to apply to trusts and foundations.
- Use social media to share opportunities, particularly when shared by Muslim groups to other Muslim groups not accessing mainstream advertising accounts.
- Increase and strengthen engagement with Muslim-led charities through strategic listening and feedback activities such as steering groups.

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## 2. Barrier: Experience and time

### Recommendations:

- Ensure sufficient time during the application period to make funding more accessible.
- Support practical activities such as bid application training.
- Provide free outreach and open communication about funding opportunities for Muslim-led charities to increase their confidence in applying for grant funds. Such as 1:1 support to answer specific queries; and community sessions such as capacity support to help explain application process to organisations.
- Invest in Muslim-led infrastructure groups and those led by Black people and communities experiencing racial injustice who are well positioned to support marginalised groups.
- Simplify the funding process for applicants. For example, like the LCR model.
- Make specific fund webinars common practice as written guidelines may not be accessible to everyone. These should be recorded and accessible online, as not everyone can attend a live event due to other commitments.
- Application forms should include examples of inputted information to help applicants new to the funding process.

## 3. Barrier: Funder understanding

### Recommendations:

- Improve funder transparency with regards to fund origins and ethical concerns.
- Involve senior management and decision makers in the conversation with Muslim groups to create a direct line of feedback with decision-makers.
- Progress from using the 'BAME' label when discussing marginalised groups as it encompasses diverse communities facing different types of discrimination.
- Listen to feedback and implement changes to make funding more accessible and equitable.

## 4. Barrier: Trust in funders

### Recommendations:

- Understand that building trust will take time as these issues are systemic and therefore deep-rooted. Communication is the first step.
- Encourage more support especially for first-time applicants by ensuring the funding model is accessible to grassroots initiatives such as [LCF and MOPAC's VAWG Grassroots Fund](#).

## 5. Barrier: Decision making

### Recommendations:

- Involve marginalised and representative groups when discussing, negotiating, and making funding decisions and creating eligibility criteria.

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- Reviewing internal policies and procedures that exclude marginalised groups to make decision making equitable.
  - Ensure everyone in the organisation is aware of the barriers marginalised groups face in accessing funding.

## **6. Barrier: Hostile attitudes**

### **Recommendations:**

- Take a proactive stance on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.
- Create open and transparent discussion and engagement with funders about the unique pressures and scope of Muslim-led organisations.
- When creating effective partnerships ensure there is open and honest dialogue between both sides. Vulnerability is necessary to progress learning.
- Commit to future networking and collaboration as roundtables can be useful for networking, sharing ideas, and discussing feedback.

## **7. Barrier: Anxiety about monitoring processes**

### **Recommendations:**

- Use proportionate and less burden-some impact monitoring.
- Make more accessible information available to help writing impact monitoring. Being clear and offering further support will help with performance and compliance.
- Clarify the monitoring process and expectations to alleviate fears around data collection of vulnerable beneficiaries.

## **8. Barrier: Origin of funds**

### **Recommendations:**

- Clarity in the fund description about the origins of the fund.
- Create an eligibility quiz that is required before the applicant progresses to the application stage, which includes questions around the fund origin.

## **9. Barrier: Project vs. core costs**

### **Recommendations:**

- Increase core cost funding opportunities for Muslim-led organisations and those led by Black people and communities experiencing racial injustice to help build resilience.
- Be specific that core costs opportunities for funding include faith-based organisations.
- Improve the accessibility of core funding opportunities that require an income pipeline and organisational budget for groups reliant on community donations, which are a less certain income source.
- Make assurances that core funding applications will be considered equally if not more important than traditional project funding.

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## 10. Barrier: Eligibility criteria

### Recommendations:

- Create more support around governance, finance, and safeguarding eligibility criteria.
- Further partnership work with Muslim-led charities and infrastructure groups for Muslim-led charities voices, and this needs to be represented in funder priorities and criteria.
- Greater criteria flexibility and an understanding that 'one size fits all' is not an effective approach. Funders should include as more standard practice: unregistered or newly registered organisations, faith-based organisations including those which may have evolved from faith community activities such as mosques or religious schools.
- Prioritise investing in Muslim-led organisations and those led by Black people and communities experiencing racial injustice to counteract historical disinvestment.

## 11. Barrier: Constructive feedback

### Recommendations:

- Ensure accountability with decision making by being clear why a funding application was not successful. Involving constructive feedback that can help small groups make positive changes.
- Be more transparent by communicating grant funders' priorities and decisions.



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