



CALOUSTE  
GULBENKIAN  
FOUNDATION

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## **STRATEGIC PLAN 2009**

# **CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION (UK)**

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### **Introduction**

Maximising the beneficial impact of our work is at the heart of this strategic plan for 2009. It presents a new way of working which is in response to a change in the external environment within the UK and beyond. In particular, the growth in the number and size of foundations means we need to define a distinctive role and focus where we can have most impact.

### **What we are: our parent Foundation and founder**

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is a charitable foundation established in 1956 with cultural, educational, social and scientific interests. The Foundation's headquarters are in Lisbon with offices in London and Paris. Its founder, Calouste Gulbenkian, was an Armenian born in Turkey who worked in Britain and became a British citizen, lived in France and settled in Portugal. He was multicultural and multilingual and spent his career bringing people from different cultures and nationalities together.

### **Context and vision**

We believe there are two big challenges: the way, as a society, we treat others and the way we treat the environment. Our vision is one of a society that is creative, inclusive and environmentally sustainable. Three key issues therefore concern us:

1. how we encourage understanding between people of different cultures;
2. how we assist the full participation of all individuals in society especially the vulnerable; and
3. how we protect and care for the environment.

### **What we are: our purpose**

The purpose of the UK Branch is to help enrich and connect the experiences of people in the UK and Ireland and secure lasting and beneficial change. We have a special interest in supporting those who are most disadvantaged.

We have a history of being innovative. This also fits well with our size since we can be nimble but cannot provide large scale continuous funding. We are part of one of the largest European foundations and so are well positioned to address transnational issues and act as an 'exchange' for ideas that can benefit the work of the Foundation as a whole. We want to make the most of the synergies between the cultural, educational and social interests laid out in our statutes: these areas are broad but, harnessed together, powerful in addressing the challenges of our times. Taking this approach does not mean we act in a way that is crudely instrumentalist: there are considerable benefits to working in partnership and giving those whom we support – charities, not-for-profits and artists – freedom to act whilst retaining our vision and independence.

### **Our aims for 2009**

Though this plan is for 2009, our aims and some of the programmes and projects that support them will continue for some years. During 2009, we will identify new initiatives with colleagues and partner organisations, scope new work and develop new programmes and projects that meet our strategic aims.

**We aim:**

1. **..to help change people’s perception of each other by providing opportunities for understanding *through* culture and *between* cultures;**
2. **.. to help build relationships and reduce social exclusion in order to assist individuals, families and communities to fulfil their potential and contribute to society;**
3. **.. to support imaginative interventions that contribute towards the protection of the environment, and explore how environmental change affects the way we live.**

In addition, we aim:

4. **...to support exceptional ideas and unusual partnerships between people and organisations that might not otherwise come together;**
5. **..to ensure high standards of administration and management of our resources (our people, finances and premises).**

**Our Aims**

*Encouraging understanding between people of different cultures*

*Assisting the full participation of all individuals in society*

*Protecting and caring for the environment*

*Identifying and responding to new issues*

*Supporting the delivery of our other aims*

**How we work: our approach**

In order to fulfil our aims we manage a number of time-limited programmes and other activities (some undertaken directly and others by partner organisations with our support). We will be objective-driven and work proactively to identify needs and work with others to help meet them. Occasionally, we will request funding applications for specific initiatives.

Our interests, inspired in part by our founder’s approach to business and his artistic interests, lie in bridging divides, bringing together people from different backgrounds and sectors, and looking across issues.

To achieve a greater impact, we will support fewer organisations with larger amounts of money. This will require a greater emphasis on undertaking assessments of those whom we intend to partner and greater clarity about the basis of our support – as sole funders, in partnership with small groups of funders, or in consortia.

As part of a charitable foundation with recourse to significant long-term funding, we can set long-term objectives for our impact in any area. However to stay nimble we will only support individual initiatives for a few years.

The tools we use will depend on the context and be tailored to deliver our aims:

- *exploring* – gathering evidence from research, identifying what works;
- *exchanging* – connecting to practical experience and building coalitions;
- *explaining* – advocating and communicating the outcomes of work to those who can effect change;
- *exiting* – ensuring a legacy and moving on when the time is right.

## **How we work: our values**

The qualities or values that characterise all our work include aspiring to be:

- innovative;
- international;
- independent yet involving

### ***Innovative***

We value new ideas and approaches. We are particularly interested in approaches that are adventurous and/or inspiring.

We have a history of originating ideas and supporting them to fruition. Our scale suggests that focusing on innovation rather than mainstream support for charitable activities enhances our impact.

### ***International***

We value approaches and experiences drawn from other countries, working to exchange ideas so that they may benefit particularly, though not exclusively, people living in the UK and Ireland.

We are privileged in being part of a foundation headquartered in Portugal and with geographic presence in three EU countries. Although some charitable foundations in the UK undertake international development work, none takes a transnational perspective in looking at issues. Within the EU, there is limited capacity for international policy and practice development work.

### ***Independent yet Involving***

We value our independence from government and other outside pressures. Although we listen, we will make up our own minds. We value the power of collective action and want to work in a spirit of genuine partnership with other organisations that share our values.

Our independence is of immense value, it engenders trust, and enables us to act as 'honest broker' and to link disparate groups and individuals from across different and diverse sectors.

We draw our ideas and legitimacy from working with other organisations. We do not have all the solutions nor can we develop them on our own.

## **Where we work: UK and Ireland**

Although we work closely with colleagues in other parts of the Foundation, the funding channelled through the UK Branch is exclusively intended for organisations based in the UK and Ireland. We will, where possible, ensure that the benefits of our work are spread throughout these countries. We will support projects outside the capital in preference to those based in London. Though funding at national, regional and local levels, we want to ensure that we support projects that have a benefit beyond the locality in which they are situated. We will support a limited number of projects local to our Hoxton offices where we will be operating from summer 2009; this will give us a better understanding of specific community issues and diversity.

## What influences our work: the external context

### *Big themes*

The world is changing fast; previous assumptions cannot be taken for granted.

We live in a world of great creativity; artists afford us a different and beneficial perspective on the world and its affairs.

Some citizens enjoy unprecedented levels of economic wealth and independence. But wealth is inequitably distributed both within and between countries.

Within our ageing population, there are too many older people whose independence is constrained by low income, disability and/or prejudice. Many will be dependent upon the success of the younger generation from whom they are increasingly disconnected.

The experiences that young people have in their formative years are important from the perspective of their educational performance – and their subsequent potential to contribute in an increasingly demanding environment – but also in terms of their ability to connect to and participate fully in our changing world. And there are others – not necessarily young or old – whose experiences are impaired by the interrelated problems of homelessness, mental ill-health, substance misuse and periods spent in detention.

Areas in which foundations can have an impact include:<sup>1</sup>

- environmental crises and the multiple aspects of climate change;
- human rights, migrations and intercultural dialogue;
- poverty in both developing and developed countries;
- global health issues including specifically HIV/Aids;
- promotion and support of scientific research and the translation of new knowledge;
- social entrepreneurship and innovation.

A globalised world presents many opportunities but also challenges, not least the effects of migration and the cultural differences that are a feature of life in the UK, Ireland and elsewhere.

The increasing threat to our natural environment both in terms of biodiversity and through climate change is a global concern that requires local, national and international action.

As these challenges are common to countries the world over, there is much to learn from each other and a more transnational approach is appropriate.

### *Wider economic and institutional context*

The slowing economy will place the voluntary sector under pressure as funding reduces. The trend towards higher levels of intervention from government in all areas of social policy is not likely to reduce although the voluntary sector is likely to be expected to play an increasingly important part in delivery.

Political parties in the UK will be preparing for a general election, expected to be in 2010, with a frenzy of policy development.

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<sup>1</sup> Speech by the Foundation President at the 2008 Annual Assembly of the European Foundation Centre.

Within Europe, there is an unprecedented level of interest in the role and development of third sector organisations as deliverers of social ends and as partners in ensuring the institutions of the European Union are more closely aligned to the aspirations of individuals within the member countries.

#### **European Years 2009 to 2012**

- Creativity and Innovation 2009
- Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010
- Volunteering 2011
- Intergenerational Solidarity 2012

#### ***Key opportunities***

At the same time, there are a number of opportunities for 2009 and further ahead:

- the bringing together of cultures at the 2012 London Olympics;
- major capital investment in schools and greater focus on young people's behaviour;
- increasing government interest in the challenges of ageing;
- the 2009 Copenhagen UN Climate Change Summit.

#### ***Conclusion***

There are significant challenges that relate both to the planet we live on and the people who live in it. It is clear that there are opportunities to contribute to the agenda of other organisations domestically and internationally: this is essential to maximise impact and charitable foundations have an important contribution to make.

#### **Our positioning**

There are some 165,000 general charities in the UK receiving a total of more than £28 billion (in 2004/2005) from individual donations, the public sector and from charitable trusts and foundations. The charitable sector as a whole represents just 5 per cent of total UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Within the UK, there are some 8,800 charitable foundations which, together, contribute in the region of 15 per cent of the turnover of UK charities (less than half a per cent of GDP). The majority of these have an annual grant expenditure of less than £150,000 per year whilst, at the other end of the scale, the top ten grant-makers account for over half of the top 500's grant-making.

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's expenditure in the UK falls a long way short of the largest: our annual grant expenditure amounts to a little over £2 million annually compared, for example, to the Wellcome Trust's (£500 million), the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation's (£30 million), the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's (£20 million), or the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's (£10 million). We are 99<sup>th</sup> in the table of grant-giving in the UK. Our position is strengthened – and all the more distinctive – by our being part of the Gulbenkian Foundation as a whole, which itself is in the top ten largest foundations in Europe by charitable expenditure and assets (at something over £100 million per year and €3 billion in assets).

The majority of charitable foundations, certainly in the UK, have remits which focus them on specific areas such as education, science or the arts. Whilst our broad remit gives us greater flexibility, it also has the potential to dilute our impact in areas in which we have an interest. Our annual expenditure on arts, for example, is less than 1/500<sup>th</sup> of that spent by the Arts Council in government and Lottery funding.