

Civil society associations and the values of social justice

A report for the Carnegie UK Trust Inquiry into
the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland

Professor Gary Craig • 2008

The **Carnegie UK Trust** was established in 1913 and is one of the leading foundations operating in the UK and Ireland. Through its programmes, the Trust seeks to address some of the changing needs of the less advantaged in the UK and Ireland. The Trust supports independent commissions of inquiry into areas of public concern, together with funding action and research programmes.

The Carnegie UK Trust currently has two programmes:

The **Democracy and Civil Society Programme** has two elements to its work. The focus of the programme is the Trust's Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland, chaired by Geoff Mulgan. The purpose of the Inquiry is to: explore the possible future threats to and opportunities for civil society, looking out to 2025; to identify how policy and practice can be enhanced to help strengthen civil society; and to enhance the ability of civil society associations to prepare for the opportunities and challenges of the future. The findings of the Commission will be presented in 2009. The second focus of the programme is strengthening democracy and aims to: enhance our understanding of power and influence, and how it impacts on democracy in the UK and Ireland; and to increase the ability of citizens and civil society associations to influence public decision making.

The **Rural Programme** examines and promotes ways in which rural communities across the UK and Ireland can be empowered to shape and influence change and works to ensure that rural priorities are fully recognised by decision makers. The programme began with the establishment of the Commission for Rural Community Development in 2004 in the light of significant political, environmental and economic challenges affecting rural areas. The Commission's work is now complete and the findings are contained in the report 'A Charter for Rural Communities.' To date, a core part of the work has been the Rural Action Research Programme. Carnegie has worked with over 40 partners to demonstrate cost effective, community-led solutions to the challenges facing rural areas. Now the Rural Programme is now leading on the creation of a 'community of practice' (with participation from community activists, professional community development workers, policy makers and funders) and the implementation of the ideas set out in the Charter for Rural Communities in real places.

In addition to the Trust's core programmes, the Trust supports efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of philanthropy. For example, the Trust has invested in the establishment of the first Research Centre on Charitable Giving and Philanthropy.

Contents

Executive Summary	4
Preamble	5
The Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society	6
The nature of civil society	7
The values of social justice	12
Civil society associations and social justice	16
Preamble	16
The meaning of social justice for civil society associations	17
How are the values of social justice reflected in organisational policy and practice?	25
How do these values impact on wider publics?	28
Are civil society associations distinctive in relation to the values of social justice?	34
Conclusions	38
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Methodology	40
Appendix 2: Interview schedule	42
Appendix 3: Postal questionnaire	43
Footnotes	46

Executive Summary

This is a report of a study undertaken in 2008 into the relationship between civil society associations (CSAs) and the values of social justice. The paper was commissioned to inform the Carnegie UK Trust Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland.

Social justice is one of the key values underpinning the Commission's notion of a 'good' civil society.

The report explores how civil society associations (CSAs) understand and operationalise the concept of social justice and in addition, it considers what distinguishes CSAs from organisations in the public and private sectors and the obstacles civil society associations encounter in operating as social justice organisations.

The research found that civil society associations (CSAs) most commonly referred to the concepts of "fairness" and "equality" as the key components of their social justice definition; although it was clear that respondents had different ideas about what fairness and equality mean. In relation to fairness, respondents focused on the distribution of resources and fairness in the way society treats people. The concept of equality was referred to almost as much as fairness and often in conjunction with it. Most common were references to equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes.

In terms of translating social justice into policy and practice, in relation to their organisation's internal policy and practice, most respondents focused on a range of formal policies, including equality or diversity policies, equal opportunities, and so on. In answering how the values of social justice impact on wider publics, four key dimensions emerged: 1) the external presentation of the organisation's mission; 2) the groups to which the work or services are targeted; 3) how the organisation works with those target groups; and 4) which other organisations are chosen to partner with.

Respondents in the research were strongly critical of both state and market and saw civil society as a rather embattled sector attempting to promote the values of social justice. The private sector was distrusted ideologically because of its adherence to market economics, that is, that services were provided essentially on the basis of people's ability to pay for them rather than their need for them. Criticisms were also made by respondents both of the role of the state, where the New Labour government was seen as moving away from a social justice agenda and local government having to follow suit in most cases.

The major obstacle to operating as social justice organisations was perceived to be structural. Society as a whole does not operate within a recognisable social justice framework and government, in particular, has not done enough to change the terms of this national value framework. It is striking that only those CSA's largely free from government funding felt free to pursue what they saw as their social justice mission.

1 Preamble

This is the report of a brief study undertaken in the Spring and Summer of 2008 into the relationship between civil society associations (CSAs) and the values of social justice. The report was commissioned to inform the work of the Carnegie UK Trust Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society, chaired by Geoff Mulgan.

Civil society associations (CSAs) are defined as incorporating voluntary and community sector organisations, faith-based groups, trades unions, informal citizen groups, cooperatives and mutuals, and political parties. At the Commission meeting of September 2007, the role of CSAs in the transmission of norms and values was discussed and it was agreed that this was one area where the Inquiry could pursue its analysis. This discussion gravitated towards values such as social justice and solidarity, civility and norms of behaviour, each of which were felt by the Commission to be necessary to underpin a healthy civil society. To make the research manageable, it was agreed to focus on the values of social justice and their relationship with the work of civil society associations in the UK.

The brief then narrowed down to three dimensions:

- i Examining how the values of social justice manifest themselves at an organisational level. This would involve, first, clarifying how CSAs define social justice and then exploring the employee and trustee profiles of organisations that are committed to social justice, their membership and how such organisations manage their assets. What are the characteristics of organisational behaviour and make-up that reflect the values of social justice? What is distinctive about CSAs and how they operate in relation to the values of social justice compared with the public or private sector? How strong are CSAs that are led by, and benefit, those that suffer from social injustice (e.g. black and minority ethnic groups)? Given the social justice deficits in the UK and Ireland, in which areas are CSAs strong and in which are they weak? Do CSAs compare favourably with the market and the state in promoting the interests of social justice?
- ii Exploring the processes, practices and strategies that CSAs adopt in the implementation of their actions to achieve external social goals in the interests of social justice. What is distinctive about how civil society associations act that makes their approach more socially just? Are there examples of good practice showing how the values of social justice are operationalised?
- iii Exploring the outcomes of CSAs that are committed to the values of social justice, given that such associations rarely have direct control over these outcomes.

2 The Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society

The Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland was launched by the Carnegie UK Trust in late 2006. Informed by an Inquiry Commission, chaired by Geoff Mulgan, and an International Advisory Group, the goals of the Inquiry are to:

- Explore the possible threats to and opportunities for the development of a healthy civil society, looking out to 2025.
- Identify how policy and practice can be enhanced to help strengthen civil society.
- Enhance the ability of civil society associations to prepare for the challenges of the future.

Drawing on the work of Michael Edwards¹, the Inquiry's working definition of civil society has three dimensions. Civil society is understood as a goal to aim for (a 'good' civil society), a means of achieving it (through civil society associations such as voluntary and community organisations, trade unions etc.), and a framework for engaging with each other about ends and means (arenas for public deliberation).

To better understand what might be the future threats to and opportunities for civil society in the UK and Ireland, looking out to 2025, the Inquiry applied futures thinking. This futures work identified: the key drivers of change that are likely to impact civil society, for good or bad, and a series of faultlines that present significant challenges for civil society. Drawing on this analysis the futures work concluded with the development of four scenarios that illustrate what civil society might look like in 2025.

The Inquiry futures reports; *The shape of civil society to come* and *Scenarios for civil society* are available at www.futuresforcivilsociety.org, but in short the findings are as follows:

The key drivers for change focused on uncertain drivers such as the limits of economics (pressure on resources and social and economic inequalities), personal values (the growth of individualism), shifting activism (in particular away from formal political life), and the relationship between the state and these values (notably the growth of state surveillance and regulation of individual life). These drivers may lead to a range of outcomes for civil society such as an increased emphasis on third sector public service delivery, and a growing professionalisation of the third sector (but with concomitant divisions within it, particularly between large and small organisations and between the centre and the periphery).

The nine faultlines identified by the futures work are 1) the challenge of sustainability; 2) growing isolation of the poorest; 3) social cohesion under pressure; 4) shifting activism and increasing obstacles to engaging with civil society; 5) traditional political engagement on the wane; 6) the application of technology; 7) voluntary and community associations lose their distinctiveness; 8) diminishing arenas for public deliberation; and 9) marginalisation of dissent.

The way civil society associations choose to respond to or influence these drivers of change and the above faultlines is significantly shaped by values.

This futures work led to a series of questions, including: the conflicts over economic, social and environmental divisions; the implications of globalisation for economics, politics and social life; the tools which are needed to support the development of a coherent society; and the particular role which civil society can play in developing a 'good' society. This of course begs the question of what the values of a 'good' society are and the extent to which these are reflected in the values of CSAs. Given the importance of values that underpin the work of civil society associations and the Commission's concerns with social justice, this study to explore civil society and the values of social justice was commissioned.

The nature of civil society

At about the time this study commenced, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), the 'peak' third sector organisation in England, published the UK Civil Society Almanac 2008.² This represented a significant departure, both in its terminology and in its scope, since in earlier years, the corresponding publication had been termed the Voluntary Sector Almanac. In other words, it broadened the notion of the voluntary and community sector to include a range of organisations or associations which had previously been excluded from its annual analyses. The NCVO argued that they had been forced to rethink the conception of charities as the main engine of civil society's economic contribution, given that their contribution was significantly smaller than that of the wider civil society 'universe'. A comparison between the third sector and civil society would thus be instructive, although we will have to wait for a longer-term picture of trends within civil society as a whole.³ The new analysis from the NCVO has suggested that the scope of the third sector and of civil society may both need to be redefined.⁴

The third sector (what have characteristically been known as voluntary and community organisations), according to the 2007 Voluntary Sector Almanac, covers as many as 400,000 voluntary and community sector organisations in England and Wales alone, including, according to an earlier estimate, at least 250,000 general charities.⁵ It has an annual income of £28bn, a paid workforce of some 611,000 (38% of them part-time), representing 2.2% of the total UK workforce. Fifty per cent of the population of England and Wales volunteered in the period covered by the 2005 Home Office Citizenship survey – 1.6 million people volunteering at least once a month – whilst 78% gave to charity over a four week period – figures which have steadily increased in recent years, as has the number of general charities.

However, although the income of the third sector has been increasing, average organisational incomes have been static or falling. Whilst the 2006 Voluntary Sector Almanac suggested that "the greater emphasis on delivery of public services [one issue identified by the Carnegie Inquiry and a source of considerable concern within the sector] and the drive to increase active citizenship are leading to a larger, more visible sector", it is one where "competition for resources remains fierce" and where resources are increasingly being concentrated on the largest organisations⁶. The 87% of all organisations in the sector which have incomes of less than £100,000, generate less than 7% of the total sector's incomes. The 2007 NCVO report, however, challenges the notion that dramatic increases in government funding to charities is leading to a loss of independence; government funding to the third sector has only increased by 1.5% since 2001 with varying combinations of donations, fees, earned income, etc making up the bulk of the overall increase in third sector income. One more worrying trend for those concerned with issues of fairness is that the growth of charities is not equally distributed between different parts of the country. There is clearly a north-south divide, with more charities operating overall in the south of England, while the number of charities per 1000 people living in deprived areas, measured on a range of typical socio-economic indicators, is less than those in prospering suburbs and very substantially less than in so-called 'fashionable city living areas'. (This may of course in part reflect where charities are based, rather than their area of benefit).

The Civil Society Almanac 2008 suggests that civil society consists of 865,000 organisations (i.e. more than twice the size of the third sector) with a collective income of £109bn, three and a half times that of the third sector (whose income had grown to £31bn by 2008). Clearly, some civil society organisations (for the purposes of this report, the terms 'civil society organisation' and 'civil society association' are regarded as identical, hereafter, the latter or its abbreviation as CSA, already introduced above, will be uniformly used), such as the larger cooperative and trades union bodies, have substantial incomes and there will be a concentration of resources in larger organisations, as in the third sector, but the average income of CSAs is substantially higher than that of the average third sector organisation. The total workforce of civil society is estimated to be 1.37 million - more than twice that of the third sector alone and about 5% of the total UK workforce.

The 2008 Almanac notes that “general charities, co-operatives, universities and housing associations dominate the civil society landscape ... between them they account for over three-quarters of the income and assets of civil society organisations. They originate from three relatively distinct strands of the civil society tradition – charitable activity, mutualism and education. This reflects the breadth of civil society and its multi-layered contribution to life in Britain.” Looking at wider civil society, the Almanac notes a number of important but distinct trends affecting different elements of it.

Trades unions: mergers have led to a concentration of resources, with the 26 largest unions accounting for 88% of membership and 86% of income. In 2005/6 (the last year for which detailed figures were available), there were 193 trades unions with a combined income of just over £1bn. This process of merger is continuing.

Political parties: The two major political parties in England, Labour and Conservative, rely far more on donations (from trades unions and business respectively) than other political parties. These two parties receive only 8% of income from their members, less than one-third of the proportion received by other political parties. In 2005/6, total income of all political parties was around £72m. A decline in political party membership will thus affect larger parties less than it will smaller ones.

Co-operatives: The income of co-operatives in 2005/6 was more than £26bn, with funds of £7.4 bn and about 11 million members. Whilst relatively small within the economy as a whole, their economic performance is increasingly significant.

Housing associations: These own about 2.3 million houses and flats, housing about 5.3 million people. Some, of course, are co-operatives as well, particularly – in relative terms - in the black and minority ethnic sector. The housing association movement accounts for about 10% of all UK homes, a proportion which will continue to grow as stock transfer occurs and as the demand for sustainable and affordable housing grows. The current economic difficulties may also provide a boost to this housing sector.

Social enterprises: in 2005/6, enterprising activity within civil society organisations earned about £77bn, i.e. three-quarters of the entire income of the sector. This is significant given the government’s recent drive to increase social enterprise activity. The Civil Society Almanac suggests that a clearer definition of social enterprise may be needed to inform government thinking; at present it implies a combination of enterprise and non-profit distribution.

Other: this includes a range of organisations focusing on faith, sport and leisure, and including informal community groups, for which detailed financial information is generally not as readily available (the global figures for civil society may, therefore, be underestimates).

The suggestion that we need to revisit and redefine the nature and scope of civil society has also attracted attention from other quarters; indeed, some have argued (in this case drawing on the experience of Wales) that “the concept of civil society has enjoyed increasing currency in both political and academic discourses in recent years.”⁷ This is a view which is growing in support worldwide, as we shall see. It is certainly the case that there is a burgeoning academic literature, starting perhaps from Deakin’s ground-breaking 2001 work *In Search of Civil Society*.⁸ Deakin offered and adopted the definition of civil society given by an American historian: ‘... civil society names the space of uncoerced human association and also the set of relational networks – formed for the sake of family, faith, interest and ideology – that fill this space.’ In short, civil society is all forms of human association which fill the space between the state and the individual, between the public and the private spheres. This begs some questions, but it is a definition which many subsequent commentators have more or less signed up to and seems both reasonably precise and yet wide enough for the purposes of this report.

The key dimensions marking out civil society are the lack of direct involvement – in a dependent sense - with the state (although civil society organisations are often funded by the state or engage with or against it); it is substantially wider than the definition of the third sector or Voluntary and Community Sectors as it includes bodies which may have political or even party political ambitions, or may distribute profits (both of which would

disbar organisations from charitable status); and includes - that currently most sensitive subject of all - bodies oriented towards faith issues. Civil society thus also sits between state and market and, as Deakin notes, is probably most helpfully understood as an arena 'in which the various activities that take place are informed by the different values determined by the different perspectives'; this is helpful as it reminds us that there is no presumption that civil society organisations share a common set of values (but again see below), a point which becomes particularly pertinent when we examine the way in which the values of social justice are understood within the arena of civil society, the focus of this report.

Civil society is also increasingly being understood as incorporating a growing dimension of 'bottom-up' activity and movements, in contrast with the typically 'top-down' approaches which characterise many of the larger elements of the voluntary sector, for example. Whilst many people associate the voluntary sector with large voluntary agencies such as Barnardos, Scope, the NSPCC, the RNIB and Oxfam, civil society is reflected as appropriately in the work of national social movements and local campaigns around environmental issues, protests against post office closures, anti-racist campaigns, or the day-to-day work of local community associations, mother and toddler groups, or of local trades union branches.

Civil society is thus much broader than any of the various categories of entity to which it is often applied in different parts of the world – voluntary organisations, third sector, voluntary and community sectors, non-governmental organisations, charities, non-profits, mutuals, philanthropic organisations, the social economy or independent sector. It comprehends all of these.

Some commentators now attribute huge importance to the concept of civil society; Edwards, for example, suggests it may be the "big idea" of the 21st century.⁹ Deakin's analysis, as noted, also attributes great significance to civil society: it is an arena in which voluntary action, albeit in partnership with the state (or merely funded by it), might supplant the state as a deliverer of welfare (which has recently become increasingly contentious); it provides the space for the building of communities and creation of social capital; it is a public sphere in which democratic rights, responsibilities and the practice of citizenship is enabled; it protects democratic systems from totalitarianism; and it provides a space in which social movements may emerge to challenge aspects of globalisation. In relation to the latter, Giddens, Beck and others¹⁰ argue that the current popularity of the concept of civil society has derived from the consequences of "structural changes associated with the processes of economic, cultural and political globalisation that have been taking place over the last three decades."¹¹

The very diffuse nature of civil society raises an important issue, which has been characterised by Kumi Naidoo, former Secretary General of CIVICUS, the global CSA, as the Klu Klux Klan question. In one form, this simply asks whether anyone can join any civil society organisation regardless of their values or whether civil society organisations have the right to debar some from membership. Put another way, do civil society organisations all hold some basic values in common, those of the so-called liberal western democratic tendencies? This, again, is at the heart of this study. As we shall see from the interviews with CSAs, it is a question which worries some organisations and many have devised indirect ways of dealing with it: for example, the representative of one major national organisation interviewed said that if the British National Party (BNP) were to apply for membership, the organisation's Board would be recommended to refuse the application on the grounds that the organisation would be brought into disrepute. Essentially, the person argued, the BNP's views would fly in the face of the organisation's commitment to race equality and equal opportunity. This may not of course be an adequate defence for those organisations which do not have such policies in place.

Some commentators see this as one of the most complex issues faced by civil society associations. If civil society is defined in terms of a basic democratic freedom to associate, does this not implicitly permit the formation of organisations which promote terrorism, racism or under-age sexual activity, for example. As with debates about freedom of speech, civil society's response generally is to argue, with de Tocqueville, that rights of association are intimately connected to democratic struggle and that there is no such thing as absolute freedom. The freedom of one to associate may turn out to be a form of oppression for another: the right to associate within civil society is thus always contingent on others' freedoms being protected. In this

sense, there is a bedrock of value underpinning civil society although this may find expression in many different contexts: the freedom to associate is, after all, about the struggle for political, economic and social rights (what Marshall classified as the elements of citizenship¹²) and, increasingly also, for environmental and cultural rights.

The relationship between civil society and the state remains a critical issue. In particular, the growing interest in the roles that civil society might play in governance has led to a range of partnerships particularly in areas characteristically and historically the preserve of CSAs, including addressing social exclusion and improving the quality of life of local communities. This has had the effect, as one commentator suggests, of redrawing the boundaries between civil society and the state leading to what has been called “manufactured civil society ... that is, groups that look like civil society but are in fact a mixture of state/voluntary sector organisations”¹³ in which “civil society plays a high price for involvement with the state.” This price includes a greater level of control by the state over local community activity, and the imprisonment, rather than liberation, of local initiatives.¹⁴ In particular, “...within manufactured groups, there are increased levels of frustration and a heightened sense of distrust between state and voluntary bodies... rather than engendering social norms, governmental values are imposed on communities... where groups are coerced into partnership by outside influences rather than coming together of their own volition, specific problems can arise which can undermine the values and ethos of civil society and threaten, rather than strengthen, social capital. The evidence from this study suggests that manufactured civil society undermines social capital rather than encourages it.”¹⁵ This analysis is underpinned by parallel work on partnership working where voluntary and community sector organisations are seen as significantly disadvantaged in terms of power and resources compared with statutory ‘partners’ and run the risk of becoming co-opted into governmental agendas.¹⁶

For some, civil society is a relatively new conceptual phenomenon. Others have argued, however, that the concept of civil society has not been coined recently but has re-emerged after a period of quiescence. For example, Eberly argues that civil society “has made a sudden reappearance after near complete disappearance in the public discourse”¹⁷, a view supported by a number of other writers. Now, however, the term has become significant in a growing number of ways. Murphy, for example, suggests that it is significant in education theory and research with radical adult educators viewing civil society as “the privileged sphere of radical learning and social change”¹⁸, a site to engage in “democratic struggle, social movements and political change.” Murphy understands this as linked to a wider political struggle over definitions, incorporating tensions between Marxist and post-Marxist definitions of civil society. Clearly, this is a much wider notion of the political significance of civil society than simply an enlarged version of the voluntary sector. For Murphy, civil society provides, again, the space between state and market but one where adult educators in the radical traditions of Freire are “free to learn”, untainted by the distorting effects of power or money. If civil society is free to develop in this way, and those working within it free to develop their thinking, civil society then has the power to regulate the state, rather than the other way around, a truly radical inversion of the traditionally-understood power relationship.

Dunkerley and Fudge¹⁹, on the other hand, understand civil society to have been given a key role – in this case by supranational institutions of the European Union - in facilitating effective governance, in the interests of promoting European integration. They argue that EU policy initiatives that have gathered momentum over the last decade have been increasingly geared towards garnering support and legitimacy from the “transformative potential of this new level of political participation.” They go on to cite other commentators that civil society has “the capacity to broaden democratic practice by creating additional channels for popular participation, accountability, consultation and debate.... [and] ...holds the promise of improving both quality of governance and also levels of political support.”²⁰ This is indeed also a highly significant political role for civil society but one which is ascribed, as it were, top-down, rather than, as community development workers or adult educators might argue it should properly be, bottom-up.

Clearly, too, how one understands the nature of civil society depends in part on the political context in which one is operating and analysing its role. In many countries of East Asia, for example, where welfare states are relatively undeveloped (and where they are more developed, have been largely so primarily to support economic development)²¹, civil society is also relatively undeveloped. In many of these countries, states have characteristically ruled by coercion (most obviously in Myanmar which depends heavily upon slave labour for its efficient functioning). Civil society in these areas is only just beginning to emerge, making “small gains” as Wood and Gough put it²², but at a more basic level than is reflected in the goals which civil society is struggling for in Europe: basic rights and freedom even to organise as civil society, beyond the “category of organised labour.” These remain however only small gains and Wood and Gough contrast the optimistic rhetoric of participatory social action (from bilateral and multilateral official agencies) “as the means to improve public institutional performance, poverty-focused policy implementation, and community-based social development” on the one hand, with civil society restraining the excesses of the state, and the “gloomy rhetoric” of those who evaluate the actual gains made by civil society on the ground, on the other.

Civil society, like the concepts of social justice or community, in fact appears to be one of those terms which can “transcend political ideologies and reside comfortably in all political perspectives.”²³ In the context of the UK, for example, on the one hand, neoliberal philosophers such as Hayek, see civil society as protecting individual liberty through voluntary association from the coercive forces of the state; on the other, in the model espoused by the Blairite (and Brownite) Third Way agenda, “through renegotiating the level of community participation and control in decision-making in the local state, such groups [as those community and civil society groups active in partnership working] are unravelling the municipal model of public service and replacing it with a more participative form of civic structure.” Other tendencies on both left and right of the political spectrum see different roles for civil society, but the point is that all see a clear role for it between state and market (although the actual difference in outcomes between left and right is often rather smaller than is claimed by political spokespeople).

Given this continuing debate (and perhaps confusion) about the precise nature of civil society, CIVICUS has attempted to develop a civil society index, drawing together a range of indicators to measure civil society’s level of activity in different countries as compared with public and private sectors. This project, which is ongoing, also aims to strengthen CSAs in their local contexts, building alliances across national borders and developing a tool for measuring and marketing a vision for civil society. The basic indicators are being developed with regard to the structure, space, values and impact of civil society. Early analysis suggests for example that, on a scale of 0-100, the impact of civil society ranges from 68 in Canada to 41 in Pakistan, and the legal, political and cultural space which civil society occupies ranges from 56 in South Africa to 35 in Croatia, suggesting that a healthy civil society depends strongly on, or is closely associated with, a healthy democratic life.

In the context of contestation about the nature and meaning of civil society, we now examine the nature of another concept which is deeply contested, that of social justice.

The values of social justice

Whilst respondents to this study were not given a single definition of social justice with which to agree or disagree, it is important to outline the nature of current discourse about social justice.²⁴ This is because almost everybody now appears to be in favour of social justice. What they mean by social justice, the priority they accord to it relative to other objectives, and the public policies they believe follow from it, however, vary widely.

In 2007, the recommendations of the Conservative Party's Social Justice Policy Group, chaired by ex-leader Iain Duncan-Smith, while attempting to distance themselves from laissez-faire approaches, nevertheless focused on reinforcing the 'welfare society' rather than the welfare state. Tackling "an underclass, where life is characterised by dependency, addiction, debt and family breakdown"²⁵ was to be achieved largely by means of charitable and family help, including support specifically for the institution of marriage. The approach was described as based on the belief that, "people must take responsibility for their own choices but that government has a responsibility to help people make the right choices." Just over a decade previously, the Labour Party's Commission on Social Justice (CSJ), instigated by its then-leader John Smith, came to radically different conclusions.²⁶ For that Commission, social justice meant the:

- equal worth of all citizens;
- equal right to be able to meet their basic needs;
- need to spread opportunities and life chances as widely as possible; and
- requirement to reduce and, where possible, eliminate unjustified inequalities.

A number of key differences are apparent. The CSJ approach is based on rights, rather than charity, on society as whole, rather than on an underclass, and the recommendations identify government action as central to tackling structural inequalities. Of the several options examined by the Commission, their preferred approach was described as "Investor's Britain."

In office, (New) Labour's approach has been somewhat different from that propounded by the CSJ. Although some elements of Investor's Britain have been apparent, for example in the emphasis given to education, other policy initiatives appear to have been based on quite different conceptions of social justice. The Social Exclusion Unit, established almost immediately by Tony Blair following Labour's General Election success in 1997, initially tackled street homelessness, teenage pregnancy and pupils excluded from school – rather closer to the Conservative's notion of an underclass than to the CSJ's emphasis on the equal right of all to meet their basic needs. Social policies more generally have extended beyond these groups in extreme circumstances, including tax and benefit reforms to "end child poverty within a generation", and welfare to work programmes not just for the unemployed as conventionally defined, but also for lone parents, disabled people and children and young people more generally. However, these policies remain focused on 'the poor', rather than the Commission's aspiration of eliminating unjustified inequality. New Labour has not fundamentally tackled inequality, neither the stretching of the upper half of the income distribution, nor the runaway accumulation of wealth at the very top.²⁷ This was seen by many on the left as one of the most fundamental flaws in New Labour's social programmes. Moreover, New Labour policies reflect a somewhat narrow interpretation of "opportunities and life chances" – reduced in the main to the chance to engage in paid employment. This is summed up in the Department for Work and Pensions statement of principles of welfare reform: "The Government is committed to achieving a fairer, more inclusive society where nobody is held back by disadvantage or lack of opportunity. To achieve this, we are tackling child poverty and extending employment opportunity to all."²⁸ Neither the quality of employment, nor other aspects of inclusion, are considered. For example, as Lister reminds us²⁹, being a carer is economically and socially vital but is not given the political recognition nor the financial support appropriate to it, nor, as many have argued, are the needs of older people out of the labour market adequately responded to by the government's social policy programmes.³⁰

Conservative, Liberal (the main UK centrist party), traditional Labour and New Labour 'third way' approaches are all advocated in the name of social justice. Internationally, too, the rhetoric of social justice and tempering

the pursuit of economic growth with concern for the less fortunate has gained ground. The Millennium Declaration of the United Nations affirmed: “we have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. [...] We are determined to establish a just and lasting peace all over the world.”³¹ Even the World Trade Organisation, not generally associated with a social justice agenda, explains that it promotes free trade, “because this is important for economic development and well-being”,³² and asserts that one of its principles is to make the trading system, “more beneficial for less developed countries.”³³

When governments and organisations implementing such a diverse range of actual policies, including some which manifestly fail to advance social justice according to any reasonable criteria, all nevertheless claim to be promoting social justice (or, in some cases, the benefit of the least well-off), there is clearly an urgent need to be more explicit in political debate, nationally and internationally, about the different conceptions of social justice being employed. In this study, as noted earlier, rather than provide respondents with a working definition of social justice we encouraged them to identify, by the use of a series of keywords, their own notion of what social justice means. This would help, we hoped, to see if there was a conception of social justice around which most of civil society could form a consensus.

Theories of social justice

John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*, published in 1971, has defined academic debates about social justice ever since. Rawls argued that justice meant: “the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social co-operation.”³⁴ A “well-ordered society” was one in which “everyone is presumed to act justly”, where vested interests are put aside. Specifically, Rawls derives a number of principles of justice: first, each person is entitled to the most extensive set of basic liberties compatible with the same liberty for all; second, any positions of public responsibility or private advantage should be open to all on the basis of fair (not merely formal) equality of opportunity; and third, any inequality in the distribution of “primary goods” is permissible only in so far as it is to the advantage of the worst-off group in society. Primary goods include income, wealth and the social bases of self-respect, among other things – a set of resources which everyone can be presumed to need, whatever his or her individual conception of the good life. Rawls accords the first principle priority over the second, and the second over the third.

The third principle, often referred to as the ‘difference principle’, is potentially critical to the work of CSAs. Those who wish to justify a deviation from total equality in key social and economic outcomes must demonstrate that such an arrangement will be of benefit to the least well-off in society. One such justification might be that unless socially necessary occupations which require long periods of training - such as doctors and lawyers - were rewarded with higher salaries, these roles would not be filled and the worst-off (along with others) would suffer. This is relatively uncontroversial - even though in practice the same logic is not applied to other equally socially necessary occupations which involve exposure to significant risks such as firefighters and miners – but other potential justifications for inequalities are more debatable. For example, some have sought to argue that the six- and seven-figure salaries currently enjoyed by top executives benefit the least well-off in society through a “trickle-down” effect³⁵ even though this global theory of economic development supported by, among others, Margaret Thatcher, has now been thoroughly discredited. Thus the strength of the difference principle depends on the range of justifications for inequality which are admitted, and their admissibility according to Rawls’ criteria in turn depends on questions which can be resolved only empirically.

The reach of the difference principle may also be limited by its position as the last in Rawls’ order of priority. For example, an early and influential critic of Rawls, Robert Nozick,³⁶ argued that compulsory (state-mandated) redistribution was incompatible with taking liberty seriously. Nozick’s conception of justice instead emphasises the fairness or otherwise of the process by which material goods and other benefits are acquired. More recently, Young³⁷ has argued that distributional issues are only one part of social justice; other dimensions such as the relations between people also need to be considered, in particular “the elimination of institutionalised domination and oppression.” Similarly, Fraser and Lister³⁸ draw attention to culturally- and

socially-constructed differences based on gender, ethnicity, sexuality and disability. As well as thinking about how benefits are distributed among the club, we need to consider who is counted as a member of the club – to whom respect and recognition are afforded.

Even those who follow Rawls in focusing mainly on distributive justice have challenged aspects of his theory. Dworkin³⁹ argues that it pays insufficient attention to individual responsibility. A theory of justice must, in his view, distinguish between inequalities which arise because people have different preferences and hence make different choices on the one hand, and inequalities which arise from characteristics or circumstances beyond individual control on the other. Although both types of inequality may need to be addressed, the extent to which there are obligations on others to do so, and the mechanisms by which they should be addressed, differ. It is important, Dworkin argues, to allow individual choice and responsibility to have some real consequences. In a crude form, the distinction between disadvantage arising from circumstance and disadvantage arising from choice is often mapped onto the deserving and undeserving poor – a categorisation which has had strong resonance in political discourses about the provision of welfare since at least the time of the Victorian Poor Law, and which both current Conservative and Labour Party statements emphasise. Other challenges to Rawls have taken issue with his definition of primary goods as “the distributed” (that which is to be distributed). Equality should be evaluated not in terms of the resources you have, according to Sen,⁴⁰ but according to the substantive freedom you have to achieve outcomes you value or have reason to value.

As is apparent, theories of social justice make use of a number of other concepts which have perhaps more familiar currency in social policy debate, such as inequality, rights and citizenship. The kinds and degrees of inequality which are regarded as unacceptable vary between different theories: there are important distinctions between equality of opportunity (or access), equality of outcome, and equality of status. Similarly, rights and citizenship merit further specification and analysis. Marshall’s ground-breaking work advanced a taxonomy of rights by which one could identify the characteristics of citizenship. These incorporated: civil rights (property rights, legal guarantees and freedoms); political rights (right to vote, right of association, constitutional participation); and social rights (entitlements to basic standards of education, health and social care, housing and income maintenance). Many present-day commentators do not regard these rights as of equal weight. For example, Dean and Melrose argue that, “civil rights underwrite the operation of the market economy and are entirely consistent with class inequality”, whereas, “political rights and social rights tend to challenge such inequality.” From this perspective, there remains a major political question about the degree to which social justice is compatible at all with the operation of a market economy.⁴¹

As one example of how these debates might impact on one section of British society, and on particular kinds of CSA’s, it may be helpful to look at the inter-relationship between social justice and the idea of multiculturalism. This latter concept is now under substantial attack and has been replaced in government discourse by the notion of community cohesion and even, on occasions, by a return to the language of assimilation. Miller’s argument,⁴² for example, about the way in which need may be defined is particularly significant in multicultural societies. If the concept of need is to be validated by all relevant parties, it follows that black and minority ethnic (BME) groups should be a party to this process of validation. Currently, they are largely excluded from the political and policy process, a fact which the token co-option of a privileged few into the mechanisms of the state (such as Asian Peers) cannot obscure. Similarly, arguments about the extent to which the market can deliver social justice must acknowledge that the inequities of market economies bear down most heavily on most BME groups.⁴³ The outcomes of market pressures on BME groups within civil society means that their access to power and resources is disproportionately limited compared with their majority counterparts.

Earlier analyses of social justice also failed to incorporate rights associated with culture and gender, dimensions increasingly recognised in modern policy discourse, or to acknowledge the inequalities associated with geography.⁴⁴ Social justice has a spatial dimension – we must think carefully about different conceptions of poverty and need in different contexts – and for different groups. The position of medical consultants of

Indian origin working in the UK's rural areas provides an interesting illustration. Whilst rural areas are often portrayed as comfortable, higher-income areas, many Indian doctors work in them because they have faced racial barriers in accessing higher status urban teaching hospital posts, effectively being 'directed' towards lower-status positions, including in rural areas. Their higher profile in such areas – where minority populations are relatively small – then exposes them to further racism.⁴⁵

For Britain's BME groups, the ability to exercise cultural rights should imply the ability to be culturally different within internationally accepted human rights parameters, in a society providing the same social, civil and political rights to all.⁴⁶ Recently, however, more questions are being asked as to what the parameters of this 'difference' are and, in particular, whether they incorporate a different value system – that is, a different conception of the fundamental meaning of social justice – or whether they are limited to relatively superficial indicators, for example in forms of dress, religious observation or dietary habits. Essentially, the key questions are, what room is there for compromise when apparently different value systems compete within a national polity, and are these value systems really different?

Rather than close down the debate by arguing that multiculturalism as a political project is dead, there remains – because multicultural societies exist and will not go away – a critically important theoretical and political agenda, that of exploring the nature of social justice within such societies, particularly those characterised by institutional and individual racism. The attacks on the World Trade Centre, the so-called 'war on terror', and the growth of Islamophobia have merely heightened this agenda's relevance rather than implying it should be swept away. CSAs' response to the issue of multiculturalism can be a key element in this political debate, because they work in ways which require them to engage on a continual basis with people from differing cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

As Miller suggests, multiculturalism poses a major challenge in widening the notion of the closed political community within which concepts such as need, rights and desert are contested. His is not an argument for "the elimination of cultural differences, that is, assimilation, but the opening up of national identities so that they become accessible to the members of many (ideally all) cultural groups within existing democratic states." The political and policy task in relation to BME groups operating within the third sector or civil society might therefore be to ensure that all cultural groups are recognised and engaged in both determining and acting on the principles of social justice. Miller argues that there is little empirical evidence supporting the view that cultural differences translate into differing conceptions of social justice although the multicultural 'settlement' is clearly specific to the historical and political conditions in each nation state.

The definition of social justice which can be developed from these debates, recognising the importance of difference and diversity in UK society, and drawing on current political discourse, is that of a framework of political objectives, pursued through social, economic, environmental and political policies, based on an acceptance of this difference and diversity, and informed by values concerned with:

- achieving fairness, equality of outcomes and treatment;
- recognising the dignity and equal worth and encouraging the self-esteem of all;
- the meeting of basic needs, defined through cross-cultural consensus;
- reducing substantial inequalities in wealth, income and life chances; and
- the participation of all, including the most disadvantaged.

This goes beyond many current definitions by privileging equality of outcomes, and the effective participation of those currently disadvantaged. However, as noted earlier, respondents to the present study were not offered a pre-set definition of social justice but left to indicate the parameters of social justice in their own words. The context for this study of course was also the wider debate about the future of civil society; one in which early findings suggested that "there are a number of indicators that suggest that civil society is far from 'good' for many people in the UK and Ireland, especially in relation to the values and outcomes of social justice, equality and non-discrimination."⁴⁷

5

Civil society associations and social justice

Preamble

In this section, we summarise the findings from the fieldwork undertaken for this study. Following the line of questioning of the interview schedule and the postal questionnaire, the section is organised into four subsections:

- i What is the meaning of social justice for CSAs?
- ii How do these meanings translate into policy frameworks, goals, objectives and the day-to-day practice of CSAs?
- iii How do these approaches impact on wider publics?
- iv What is distinctive about the approach of CSAs in this regard?

The data from the postal survey and interviews is drawn together in the discussion which follows.

Most of those interviewed were either chief executives (or similar), or trustees of organisations, or occupied strategic leadership or policy or research roles and thus had some kind of strategic view of the work of the organisation. Most had also been working for their respective organisations for three years or more, and were therefore quite familiar with the organisation. Most were also extremely open in their views and indicated, when they felt there was a significant difference, where their own views differed from that of the organisation. The sample of associations included the following types of organisation:

- Political parties
- Trades union bodies
- Environmental organisations
- Voluntary organisations
- Citizens' groups/community groups/community development bodies
- Faith bodies
- Single-issue groups or organisations
- Think-tanks
- Women's organisations
- Children's/young people's organisations
- Community Foundations/resource bodies
- Co-operative bodies
- Community housing
- Community enterprise (including community media groups)
- Charitable trusts

This is a classification given in order to indicate the breadth of organisations consulted. However, there are areas of overlap: for example, some single-issue organisations were also typical voluntary organisations, others were closer to being community groups; some bodies classified otherwise also had cooperative working arrangements and articles of governance. As noted in Appendix One, the data draws on responses from a total of 56 individuals/organisational representatives.

The meaning of social justice for civil society associations

This research started from the position that there should be no presumption that CSAs would share a common set of values which might recognisably be described as social justice. Organisations were therefore asked how they would define social justice: it was made clear that respondents were not expected to offer a completely formed and erudite definition but to provide a number of keywords which suggested the parameters of social justice. In doing so, they doubtless had in mind their own ideas about whether there were social justice deficits in society, which they had also been asked to think about. These deficits were identified later on in the interviews. One described social justice as “the golden thread” running through all their work; others were more circumscribed although interestingly a Muslim organisation suggested that “99% of social justice’s secular principles are the same as the basic Islamic view – the remaining 1% being special sayings drawn from the Koran.”

Only a very few organisations felt unable to offer any kind of definition of the meaning of social justice; amongst them was one respondent who referred us to the Leader of their political party for a definition. Most offered a reasonably detailed definition and some a very exhaustive outline indeed, suggesting that the concept was a very familiar one and people had thought hard about its meaning, even within organisations which might, on first glance, appear not be concerned with the concept. This probably confirms the sense that the concept is indeed now in widespread use and that respondents had been pushed to think about the extent to which it applied to their own work, an issue we return to shortly. In some cases, the ubiquitous use of the concept brought its own hazards. One respondent commented that since it had become a part of common government vocabulary and connected to the culture of targets and performance indicators, many organisations with which they had contact had been obliged to use it in their reporting even where, in that respondent’s view, a particular organisation with which she had worked (a county council in this case) had no real commitment to the concept as she understood it. She cited the example that in one wealthy area, schools had subsidies of £13,000 per child whereas, in a poorer area, the level was £2,000. The respondent had been outraged because in her view little had been done to move education policy in the direction of social justice or reducing inequality; the county council had simply “ticked boxes” but then claimed to be a social justice organisation.

In many cases, too, it was clear that people’s thinking was probably shaped as much by their own experience and views as those of the organisations they were associated with.

“I am middle class and cosseted, but society is clearly not fair, particularly in relation to financial status ... I do see poverty, see homelessness... So much misunderstanding of faiths and religion.”

Interestingly, very few again suggested that their organisation was not committed to the values of social justice: two were unsure if this was the case and two said firmly that their organisation was not a social justice organisation. Three of these four were ‘umbrella’ infrastructural organisations working at supra-local (regional or national) level offering services to a range of organisations; their view was that amongst their affiliates, there would be many which were social justice organisations but that did not necessarily require them to be so themselves: indeed their approach had, within certain bounds (see below) to be shaped by more general values.

The two most common concepts explicitly referred to in response to this question were those of “fairness” and “equality” although respondents clearly also had differing ideas of what these meant and often used the word fair without demonstrating what, for example, a “fair share” of resources might look like. Indeed, behind many of the comments made about social justice, it was possible to perceive strong currents reflecting the historical split between political right and left, between the traditional concepts of (liberal) freedom and (socialist) equality. The two concepts of fairness and equality were strongly linked in some people’s minds although, in what follows, we separate out respondents’ views on these and other linked concepts.

In relation to **fairness**, there were a number of ways in which respondents approached the concept. When respondents spoke about fairness, most focused on the dimension of fairness in the distribution of resources. Some reflected on the way in which either society as a whole (or its proxy, the state or government or formal agencies) treated people (where fair treatment appeared to mean more or less the same thing as equal

treatment), and took a philosophical approach. Fairness in treatment relates closely to the concept of respect which is discussed later. A sample of these general moral positions follows:

“Social justice should give groups and individuals fair treatment and a share in the benefits of society”

“A fair and just society in which everyone has equal opportunities and full representation in all aspects of life....”

“...giving everyone in society a fair chance”

“Social justice ensures a fair and equitable foundation for a healthy society to grow and develop”

“...fairness for all”

“...every individual and group is entitled to fair and equal rights and participation in social, education and economic opportunities”

“...all people, regardless of their wealth, colour, creed, disability.... are equally valued by the society they live in, have a say in how it is run, are treated fairly ...”

“...ensuring all individuals are treated fairly and with dignity and respect”

“...fairness and equality for all”

Within these broadly philosophical approaches, there was also a recognition that disadvantage was often the result of circumstances beyond the control of individuals and any approach to social justice should take this into account:

“...an equal and fair society where no-one is at a disadvantage due to reasons or circumstances beyond their control”

“...distribution of wealth and who is excluded from it ... this is linked to life chances, there are areas where people are excluded from life chances that others take for granted”

“...giving everyone in society a fair chance, a level playing field.”

The questions this raises of course are who defines when the playing field is level and whether some playing fields are off-limits to certain groups. Is it possible to compare the salaries of hospital consultants, footballers and deep-sea fishermen within one framework of fairness? Some respondents certainly expressed themselves either mystified or outraged by the present government’s apparent rhetorical commitment to reducing inequality when in fact inequality had increased over the past years and government Ministers were now arguing that it was perfectly respectable to have what some regarded as obscene levels of income and wealth.⁴⁸ Instinctively, these respondents argued – on the basis of the work they did – that this was simply not fair.

Some argued that this might also mean referring to a particular dimension of fairness. An organisation working with people with disability argued that fairness meant:

“...ready access to services and benefits that properly meet their full range of needs.”

These services might vary from one person to another; for example, for a visually impaired person, basic access to culture (through television, cinema, theatre, etc) was one of the most important services which most other people would take for granted. For several respondents working in the area of disability, work upstream to halt the onset of disabilities of various kinds was a highly-important, but as yet, hardly-recognised aspect of a fair distribution of resources.

Another respondent working with older people argued that:

“...the underlying need for fairness... means that any organisation delivering services has a responsibility to ensure that services are delivered to all and not just because it is a good business proposition but it is a moral responsibility.”

An innovative take on the issue of access to services was reported by one respondent who described a programme of 'access all areas' in an education system, which took the issue of consulting children very seriously; school pupils had been involved class by class, school by school in debates about buildings, assemblies, field trips and so forth and were now being consulted about the design of new schools. This was seen as highly significant because it introduced children and young people to the notion of a right to participation and to be consulted from an early age.⁴⁹

Some respondents, however, reflected more on the nature of the transaction between individuals and society more widely. Thus, people, in a sense, had both to earn fairness and to generate it by their own behaviour:

"...a fair day's work for a fair day's pay."

"Social justice is about respecting and protecting individual rights and choices but along with these, individuals take on the responsibility to live and work for the mutual benefit of society as a whole."

"It is quite a high ideal, an indicator that you are living in a democratic society based on choice ... this enables you through effort, to get access to issues like employment, health, education etc ... what can you access, what are you entitled to. It's almost like rights and responsibilities, without them you can't be regarded as a citizen."

For some, however, another transaction should be at work, one which recognised that power and control over resources were not fairly distributed and, thus, neither were people's ability to take advantage of these rights. Fairness, therefore, meant that those who had – power, wealth, income, security etc. – owed it to help others who didn't, if a fair society was to be achieved:

"Here, there are many successful businesses and many disadvantaged districts side by side ... it is about redistribution, the successful ones owe it to those who may be left behind."

For a Muslim respondent, who reminded us that observance of Islam requires compulsory charity-giving:

"Human beings are born equal but are never equal in history ... some get a bigger share of the cake, power, technology is not in the hands of everyone ... If someone gets richer than someone else, in our society that means we have to share this richness. We are the stewards of wealth ..."

Some respondents' views were rather more narrowly-shaped, as they often acknowledged, by the particular type of work in which they were engaged. Thus a trades unionist active in regional bodies noted that:

"...social justice is about full employment ... and proper democratic representation in the region, social inclusion, political inclusion ..."

and an environmental activist that social justice was actually:

"...about equity, development, rights to development, ecological space..."

although this activist, who had worked in the environmental movement for years, also acknowledged that environmentalists, who he saw as generally politically quite conservative, had a poor record of incorporating issues of social justice into the environmental justice movement. The issue of environmental justice was aired in interviews a number of times: most respondents acknowledged that it had come late to the table and that many of the contradictions and tensions between social justice and environmental justice had yet to be ironed out. For example, local government bodies, particularly in rural areas, were cited as arguing that people should live near to their place of work to reduce their carbon footprint but at the same time were blocking low-cost housing which might allow this to happen. BME groups in particular argued that there was hardly any debate about how BME groups are affected by environmental injustice.⁵⁰

A community worker in a rural setting stressed that:

"...rural areas always get an unfair share, there is a total lack of understanding [in urban areas] of how food is produced, how rural communities work and live."

This seemed to suggest that fairness might be generated if only people understood their interdependence but, despite arguments about the need for redistribution from rich to poor to promote fairness, this more complex notion of interdependence was not a commonly-held view. Most respondents did accept that unfairness was generated by disparities in power and the accompanying greed of the few⁵¹ although ignorance of the facts about others' situations obscured the realities of how unfair society had become and the structural reasons for this. Indeed, again, most respondents seemed to understand that the causes of unfairness lay not at an individual level but at a structural level. Thus, someone arguing from a perspective shaped by the differential access of children to resources asserted that:

“...to understand what happens and how it happens, is determined in a transparent, fair and egalitarian way, with respect for diversity and a variety of views ... at that level we are in the deepest trouble because most of the sources of social injustice are not about individual discrimination but reside at the systemic level where no-one feels guilty, it allows everyone to wash their hands of it ...”

and another, working in a faith setting, commented:

“I think poverty is created, it does not come into being because of laziness. Some of the poorest people in the world are the most hardworking, the brickworkers in India for example work their socks off and they earn a pittance, carrying huge loads to earn less than a pound in a day.”

Social justice could not, some argued, be seen as an autonomous concept or goal – it was connected to other forms of justice:

“I wouldn't separate off social justice from environmental justice, territorial justice and the postcode lottery.... It is ultimately about fairness, the sense that people have equality...”

And the search for social justice meant also that it could not be seen simply within a national context. For example, one respondent argued that the treatment of migrants by the media and many politicians was disgraceful and that:

“...we should tackle the causes of migration rather than its symptoms. We need to point to the fact that the environmental crisis and the arms trade are driving migration, most people don't understand why migrants have suddenly arrived, nor do they see the connections with Auf Wiedersehen Pet, for example.”

One respondent was not comfortable with the notion of fairness because:

“...that means people being nice to each other. It is about everyone belonging equally in society, you don't push people out because they are not our kind, our skin, our politics ... the greatest disease is about people feeling uncomfortable about difference.”

The concept of **equality** was referred to almost as much as that of fairness, and often in conjunction with it. Here, and reflecting the definition given in the earlier section, there were differing emphases on equality of opportunity and equality of outcome although respondents spoke also of being on an equal footing, of equal rights, of being valued equally, of equal treatment, equal access, of equal participation (in society, decision-making and so on), of the equal distribution of resources (which would not mean paying everyone the same; for an example of why and how different jobs might attract different salaries, see the previous section), and of the “equal right to fulfil their potential and have a happy life.” Several, however, stressed the point that equality was not the same thing as sameness: “if you treat me equally, you have to treat me differently”, one respondent noted, going on to say that:

“...it means you recognise my individuality and uniqueness. We are not all the same, integration is not about assimilation but recognising we are different and not being troubled by it.”

A fairly typical formulation of equality was given by a rural development worker:

“Social justice is equality for all, recognising inequalities, the causes of inequality and addressing them so that those suffering disadvantage, discrimination and prejudice can take part in, and contribute to, a democratic society.”

Most respondents spoke explicitly of equal opportunities, sometimes using the term parity interchangeably. This meant being able to take advantage equally of:

“...the full range of goods and services which it is reasonable to expect in the 21st century.”

Equality of opportunity was seen by some as the bedrock of mutuality or solidarity:

“...ensuring that everyone in society, no matter what their background ...is able to live the life they aspire to (assuming that this does not place others at risk) and receives the necessary support to achieve this. That equality of opportunity is at the heart of the way we structure ourselves as a society.”

or, more briefly:

“...equality of access to all the benefits of society, addressing inequalities so taking action to remove barriers to access (a proactive and not a passive stance).”

Another took the view that we should aim for a civil society where:

“...mutual respect is the norm and where all have equal opportunity to access education, welfare support, leisure, the arts and health care.”

But what is it reasonable to expect? Many of these quotations, and others like them, beg the question of what it is reasonable for people to expect, particularly as we know that people's expectations – for example for an adequate income or decent housing - are often shaped by their environment and their personal life stories, as well as the dominant ideology in any society. In the UK, the media generally portray it as acceptable for pop stars, footballers and hedge fund managers to earn huge salaries and/or bonuses and many people are persuaded that this is reasonable with only the Lottery offering them a chance to change the “natural order of things.”

In any case, it is clear that UK society is a long way from achieving any of the states of social justice defined by our respondents above. How would this be achieved? Clearly, most expected the state to have a strong role in promoting social justice and expected individuals, particularly the wealthy and the powerful, to have a stronger responsibility in this regard. However, several respondents explicitly indicated that the private sector should be required also to have a role in promoting social justice and not, as often appeared to happen, to leave it to the public sector simply to protect individuals from the consequences of what was often perceived to be private sector inequities and greed. This was observed to be particularly important for more vulnerable groups such as some BME groups. Here, one respondent commented that the state might do much but the fundamental problem was much wider:

“It is not an issue of how the state can do more, it is about how resources are distributed.”

Equality of any kind was not seen as unconditional. In one view, equality in any society only extended to those who met certain – perhaps very narrowly-defined - criteria:

“...the ability of everyone living in a given country, to be able to obtain fairness and equal treatmentbut with a definite priority given to those who were born here and have paid their taxes for many years and are part of the indigenous population.”

And it had to be earned:

“...fairness and equality for all. Being responsible for one's own actions and accountable for them. Taking responsibility to ensure ... positive social responsibility.”

However, many respondents were aware that equal opportunity was something of a myth because people were not equally able to take advantage of opportunities. To take a simple example, you could not have equal opportunity notionally to live in a certain kind of housing unless you had the ability to furnish and maintain it, and to pay for its running costs; differences in income and wealth severely compromised the achievement of this goal for some people. The housing might be available but it was not equally accessible to all. More generally:

“...equality of opportunity: I don't buy that as a starting point: I think of the gap between rich and poor, the issue of access to quality public services, the distribution of income and wealth ...”

The limitations of the notion of equality of opportunity are also readily apparent when one thinks of people with a disability:

“...to treat me equally, you have to treat me differently: I need money to use taxis otherwise I never go out because I can't negotiate the public transport system. I need a reader to help me at work; if I do not cost society in this way, I will be a greater cost to society in another way because I cannot work.”

The issue, then, was rather less one of opportunity, but of outcomes: people often needed not just opportunities, but support (financial, educational and otherwise) to take advantage of opportunities. Without this support, equality of opportunity meant very little: or to put it another way, equality of opportunity means little to those who cannot take advantage of the opportunity because of the poor life chances they have been dealt: an opportunity can only be defined as such if it is attainable. The UK education system is perhaps the most obvious example of this truism. All children technically, because they all have 11 years of compulsory school, have equality of opportunity to achieve at least to that point (age 16): why then are outcomes so very different and why are gaps between the children of rich and poor people, less able and more able, often greater at the end of compulsory school than they were at the beginning?⁵⁵ Or, as an environmental worker put it:

“The rising tide lifting all boats is not environmentally sustainable nor has it ever been socially delivered.”

Challenging the kind of comment which has often been made by the political right, one worker argued that:

“...equality of outcomes is not about sameness, it is about outcomes and potential related to skills, interests and so on...”

As in relation to fairness, respondents noted that the gap between rich and poor was not just a gap in access to resources and so on, but a gap in comprehension. The relatively rich often failed to understand this gap. Thus, in many situations (probably in reality the majority of the world and the majority of UK society), people are:

“...excluded from life chances that others - the minority but usually the minority which holds power and sets standards, for example, for what is taken to be the [normal] quality of life we should all enjoy - take for granted, including the rights to a whole range of social and economic issues: for example, most women globally are still excluded from reproductive rights.”

To take advantage of opportunities, there was a prior step. The issue of equality was not just about equality of opportunity, but also equality of access, for example to services (which means removing barriers – often different for different people), treating people equally (but not the same) so they feel comfortable with accessing services, whilst also recognising differential levels of need for services. Thus you start with:

“...a robust account of opportunity and equal starting points, but also through each point through transitions in a person's life cycle, you need to address issues and even up again.”

Achieving equality is therefore, in these respondents' views, not a once-and-for-all event. Many respondents spoke of their work as an ongoing struggle (with some gains!) to support a continuous flow of groups and individuals, advocating for them, ensuring they “got their rights”, and representing their interests where they were unable to do so for themselves. As a member of a faith-based organisation put it:

“We know inequality is because of structural factors and not largely because of individuals. Our job then is to help the underperforming, with their internal capacity, to talk with them and for them and to continually empower people.”

The barriers to people accessing services and to equality of outcome may sometimes be quite subtle and obscured. One health worker talked about a programme (part of an international arm) which tested children for hearing impairments and then provided those with impairments (who could not afford private health care treatment) with hearing aids. This made an extraordinary difference to these children's educational attainment. Because these children were poor, no-one had advocated for their needs.

Respondents were clear that wealth should not be the precondition for accessing services. Everyone should have the right to have services at a good basic level: if some people then choose to spend surplus income on, for example, topping up their health care provision and can do so without harming others, then that is acceptable. One apposite comment here was that a socially-just society was one where income should reflect levels of responsibility, contribution and commitment and not one which depended on the ability to speculate financially and gain at others' expense.

A final alternative definition of social justice was as "the expression of all people in an area sharing in the economic prosperity of that area." This was a definition with some difficulties since it left unexplored the issue of the boundaries of an area, where the wealth of an area is generated, and by what means that wealth might be redistributed.

Equality of outcomes is, from these responses, thus a much more significant measure of social justice: equality of opportunity may start everyone, in theory at least, at the same point – but equality of outcomes will show if anyone is being left behind, because of difficulties of access of many kinds, personal, structural, organisational and so on.

The other main area of agreement about key elements within the respondents' definitions of social justice lay in a nexus of ideas about respect for difference and diversity, for promoting individual dignity and self-esteem, and a society where "mutual respect is the norm": this expresses the solidarity of being a human being regardless of differences in ethnicity, colour, age, gender, sexuality and so on:

"Social justice involves ensuring all individuals are treated fairly and with dignity and respect."

At one level, of course, it could be argued that respect for difference and diversity could effectively be regarded as the same thing as equality for all, or at least the value base which underpinned it, and several respondents argued this case explicitly. This did not mean that all were treated the same, though and it was important also to recognise the need for minority rights. Additionally, respect for all did not necessarily mean that they had the same needs or that all members of a minority should be treated the same. As one respondent observed "the line between race and disadvantage is sometimes blurred ... definitions of social justice sometimes seem to suggest that we have to support BME groups because they are BME groups, and not because they are disadvantaged." On the other hand, of course, what all BME groups do have in the UK is their common experience of racism which underpins much disadvantage; respect for difference challenges racism and provides an important base on which to build equality, for example in accessing services.

On the same theme, one trades union activist argued that some BME groups tended to do quite badly (and the record of the trades union movement wasn't particularly impressive here) with poorly-paid jobs and high unemployment levels; this required a targeted response. In fact though, he said, at an individual level, "most people want fairness, to be treated as human beings, in a proper respectful manner and not separated out because of cultural background." Minorities, of whatever kind, want to move beyond respect for difference and to be seen as people with wants and needs, and to have equality of opportunity, of access to services and to achieve equal outcomes. These concerns were summarised by a worker in a multi-ethnic area thus:

"Social justice represents a culture of human rights and respect for the individual and different cultures and faiths."

This dimension becomes highly significant to environmental activists who see large corporations and governments exploiting natural resources often at the expense of indigenous people who have no voice. In these instances, such as logging in the equatorial areas or weapons testing in desert areas, global environmental groups have had to advocate for these groups: their agenda has hitherto been driven more by issues of environmental justice (sustainability of resources and the livelihoods of local communities, for example) but, increasingly, the dimensions of poverty, equity and an acknowledgement of cultural difference is shaping their work.

In a deeply divided society, such as Northern Ireland, the issue of respect (or mutual respect) is highly significant because it is seen as being essentially about national aspirations and this was regarded as more controversial on the ground than the political structures which had been created in the wake of the Good Friday Agreement. Symbolically, this was also important; parity of esteem or respect was seen as being effectively about parity of the spending pound on, for example, third sector organisations. If one group got £x, then the corresponding group from the “other community” would argue it should also have the same funding. However, correspondents argued, this all assumed again that there was a level playing field and when you came to look at the distribution of power between the communities, this was not the case. This required organisations to respond by affirmative action; but in challenging those with a disproportionate amount of power, organisations had to create win-win situations in order to cope with sectarian divisions and this might require an approach which badged work under different headings to avoid the parity argument. Some work could not be badged as social justice as it would alienate those from the other community. In contrast with this situation, where organisations had to manage a delicate balance in terms of respecting all communities equally, a few took a harder line.

“People don’t get respect without earning it. I don’t give people respect simply because they are people, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion etc. I would say that people should not be treated unfairly but respect has to be earned. I don’t disrespect but people may not deserve respect because of the way they treat themselves or others...”

For most organisations, respect for difference and diversity was encapsulated in the organisation’s policy on equalities (although organisations working explicitly with a minority interest group generally felt their whole ethos reflected a commitment to diversity and difference). Thus, for an organisation working with children, the use of diverse images was important, presenting a view of the organisation as equally concerned about children from differing cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, the misuse of images was also important to a Muslim organisation which felt very strongly about the use of cartoon images of the prophet of Mohammed. This was seen as a very clear example of disrespect towards difference – indeed an attack on difference underpinned by religious beliefs - which was characterised as “not criticism, which is acceptable, but vilification.” As the debates about the Danish cartoons of the prophet Mohammed have shown, the line between acknowledging difference and criticising aspects of it on one hand, and using difference as the basis for attacking it, is a complex and controversial one.⁵³ We return to organisational responses shortly below.

Another organisation, also working with children, suggested that the way in which the organisation approached its work could give strong clues as to its views on respect.

“In some countries, children are still seen as property and not people with rights. We recognise them as political actors, who are engaged in consultation, participation in a range of activities, in their own right ...”

One issue which did come up in discussion fairly frequently but only then to be rejected, was the issue of choice, a common refrain in much current political discourse. As one respondent put it, “choice is hyped when we know that choice is limited by circumstance ... the welfare state is commodifying aspects of welfare and this may satisfy the few who can choose to opt out: but you can’t really commodify health and education” and “we know choices don’t really exist for many.” One respondent spoke approvingly of Sen’s work on capabilities⁵⁴ which allow people the freedom to make real choices; another that social justice needed to incorporate a sense of happiness, an issue which is also the focus of an increasing level of interest.

In terms then of general approaches to social justice, most respondents were able to frame their responses in terms of conceptual keywords and to elaborate on their particular meaning; however, these were supplemented in some cases by the more concrete manifestations of rights (although, again, it was recognised that these became rights only when they were operationalised in practice rather than simply being part of a legal code). In Northern Ireland, there was unsurprisingly also rather more attention to the process by which social justice might be attained, that is through peace-building. One respondent argued that it was not possible for funders, as they were doing, to argue for peace and reconciliation because “the burden of that falls on those who are the most troubled and not the wider society; you cannot buy peace, you have to build it and you cannot build peace unless you have some sense of equity and social justice.”

Asked to think about social justice deficits in society at large, respondents' answers clustered around a number of very clear issues. Of course, many of the organisations had come into being historically to address them although they may not have been conceptualised as social justice deficits at the time and, almost without exception, organisations saw themselves as dealing with these deficits in their day-to-day work. The most frequently-mentioned deficits were (in no particular order of priority), child poverty and inequality – which many saw as growing in recent years – in terms of income, wealth and other resources; in educational opportunities; health inequalities; access to the labour market (for people with disabilities) or to health services (for older people); racism, prejudice and discrimination; environmental injustice (for example the uneven distribution of the costs of pollution); and in terms of the gap between rural and urban people in terms of certain quality of life indicators, including access to, and the cost of, services.

Some respondents felt that, despite enormous gains in the past years, there were still undercutting inequalities or social justice deficits such as between the genders, between able-bodied and disabled people or between majority and minority populations. Others were disappointed or depressed that many of the huge social justice deficits which they saw as a legacy of the 1980s and 1990s had not, in their view, really been properly addressed in the past few years. They argued that the New Labour governments had been strong on rhetoric, less so on performance and that government's concern seemed now to focus far more on economic performance than on social inequality. "My take" said one, "is that people are now judged on their role in the labour market, and not on whether they are poor or disadvantaged." In general, the sources of social injustice were clearly recognised as being systemic and far less now about individual discrimination (although the latter still happened far too frequently): unfortunately, along with this recognition came the sense that no-one need feel guilty and all could wash their hands of the situation. CSAs, however, generally saw their role as addressing these deficits and attempting to make the world a fairer place. Few, however, had any illusions about the impact of their work which was seen as limited and, in a sense, merely holding back the tide of inequality.

Several respondents pointed out additionally that, although inequalities within the UK were serious, of even greater concern were the gaps between rich and poor nations which they also perceived as growing. This linked in many respondents' discussion to issues about both material and environmental injustices: the living conditions of people in poor countries, whether in terms of income and wealth, or in terms of the environment and their quality of life, were linked inextricably through the processes of globalisation and climate change to those of people in the UK. This gave an additional edge to much of their thinking and actions since they had often to consider how what they were doing might be located in an international context. In this sense, many CSAs saw their advocacy role as extending beyond the boundaries of their organisation, their client group or even their nation state to encompass disadvantaged people in other countries.

What was striking was that no respondent had any difficulty in focusing on what they perceived to be serious social justice deficits in society. Whilst it might be argued that many civil society workers were attracted to this work precisely because they identified the need to address these issues, the strength of feeling displayed in discussing this and related issues was frequently palpable.

How are the values of social justice reflected in organisational policy and practice?

Faced with this relatively clear notion of social justice, and a strong sense that the world was not a just place, how did CSAs react? Respondents were asked a series of questions to illuminate how their organisation responded organisationally to these issues. One set of questions looked at their policy and practice in relation to the organisation itself; the other examined how these views of social justice, and social justice deficits, affected the work of the organisation.

In relation to the organisation's internal policy and practice, most respondents focused initially on a range of formal policies, including equalities or diversity policies, equal opportunities, and so on. These shaped, for example, their approach to recruiting, developing, supporting and training staff, ensuring job satisfaction, challenging inappropriate behaviour, and ensuring that staff were fully briefed and signed up to the range

of organisational policies and procedures. These policies were supported by a raft of actions including, for example, ethnic and gender monitoring and training to accept, for example, the need for interpretation and translation in organisations which worked with a range of different language groups. Whilst in most cases these were not explicitly statements shaped by the values of social justice, it was clear that they were closely aligned to these values. Thus, equal opportunities policies stressed the need for mutual respect, recognition of difference and diversity and non-oppressive practice. In one organisation, prospective staff were offered a range of values supporting the organisation's mission and asked to choose one and describe how that might play out in the work of the organisation: it was effectively a part of the interview process which judged the commitment of the individual applicant to the mission of the organisation. In many organisations, paper policies on equalities required serious monitoring and follow-up work more or less on a day-to-day basis. In a virtually monocultural organisation:

“We had a young Muslim girl and, at Ramadan, she was fasting. We had to stop staff offering her biscuits. Some understood, some thought they were trying to be welcoming and had to be discouraged, and we have had to work on changes both of knowledge and attitude.”

Most such policies, of course, are set within a legal framework which enables organisations to take tough action, if they so wish, to promote equalities; and in two cases, organisations reported that failure of staff to observe these policies had led to their dismissal, one for racism and the other for sexual harassment.

In some cases, organisations also placed an emphasis on participatory decision-making, or a “culture of engagement and involvement, providing for staff at all levels to contribute to the organisation.” In one instance, an organisation had taken this dimension further, stating that its approach to staff appraisal involved both upward and downward appraisal, that is, that managers were (unusually) appraised by more junior staff. Some organisations had an unusual practice alongside their view of social justice, justified they felt by their mission and context: one, for example, indicated that it wanted to recruit locally as far as possible. In another, in Northern Ireland, certain staff appointed to key roles were expected to have had experience in working across the sectarian divide: this was an occupational requirement but it also – they hoped – demonstrated to their publics, an ability to put the values of respect for diversity into practice.

Several organisations made a strong distinction between private and public views held by staff. It was expected that staff joining the organisation would do so because they felt attracted, if not committed, to its value base and mission and therefore would hold similar values to those of the organisation – to that degree such staff are almost self-selecting. If, however, they held differing views this was acceptable but they would not be permitted to express or act them out publicly.

“People wouldn't get past the interview stage if they had views which were manifestly against our mission; so long as these views were not manifest in their work they could work here but, if they did something in their work which went against our views, they would have to toe the party line.” (This was not a political party).

Notwithstanding this, there were examples where people worked for organisations and were committed to their values but behaved in a very different way in their private life: for example a key worker in a gay and lesbian organisation was herself not a lesbian but had been recruited because of her professional expertise.

“It is quite logical for someone who is white to engage in anti-racist work. My boss wanted the best-qualified person ... [however] I hope that if someone who was gay had turned up for interview who was equally qualified, I would hope s/he would have got the job because they would understand the work more from their personal experience.”

In one case, an organisation explicitly told prospective staff that they might be required to break the law as a form of civil disobedience; this acted as a form of selection – those who didn't want to do so, didn't join. In organisations which had a very large staff base, it was not regarded as realistic to ‘police’ people's value base very closely, particularly where some staff were in fairly marginal roles in the organisation (for example, running printing presses or packing parcels) but more obvious cases of oppressive language or behaviour were nevertheless challenged. In some cases, respondents suggested that staff were expected at least to show some empathy for the kinds of issues and groups that an organisation worked with but that this was not necessarily critical at the start because, over time, “you can mould people into these values.” At the other

end of the spectrum, several respondents working in sensitive areas said they had to be alive to the possibility that someone might attempt to join their organisation in order to subvert its work. Most felt this was a marginal risk, however.

These approaches towards the expectations of staff also affected the stance of staff in relation to the roles of trustees or members of management committees. How much control they could exercise over the membership of the latter was variable although many attempted to ensure that, where possible, a diverse range of interests was represented and one which was representative of whatever community the organisation was seen as serving. This had to be balanced with ensuring that procedures were democratic and transparent. For many organisations, trustees were nominated by member organisations and thus felt a loyalty and accountability to those organisations in the first instance, although there were very few acknowledged cases where trustees had been placed in a situation of divided loyalties. In a few instances, staff were very proactive in determining the make-up of boards of trustees or management: in one case, the aims of the organisation were very clear and required a strong commitment. In this case, several people approached to be trustees had rejected the invitation. In another case, an Inter-Faith Forum, existing management members applied a kind of litmus test: "is this person respectful, courteous etc.?" This generally worked but we need to review the situation" In this case, the members of the Forum were not seen as accountable to the individual faith groups which nominated them, but to the Forum as a whole. Over time, however, it was acknowledged that this might be a rather limited form of accountability.

In most cases board members were required to sign up to a range of policies and values as indicative of their willingness to serve the organisation and this commitment was then translated in practice into the creation of a range of policies which, in turn, shaped how the staff (and in many cases volunteers) were expected to behave. There is a kind of circularity about this but, of course, it is open to any grouping within an organisation to change policies and practices in line with published procedures (usually in the form of a constitution or articles of association). Examples of this interaction were offered in interviews, for example, a disability organisation was cited where, following a debate within the organisation, a move was made away from the language of working *for* a group towards *with* a group, reflecting a general shift within the organisation to empowering service users. This debate had originated both among staff and among some trustees who were disability activists, and had been concluded when a consensus was reached. In a few cases, organisations had moved to obstruct the appointment of someone as a trustee because it was felt their values were not aligned closely enough with those of the organisation and that, *in extremis*, they might "bring the organisation into disrepute." This might bring conflicts where, for example, a trustee might feel a stronger sense of accountability to the organisation nominating him/her than to the organisation of which s/he was a trustee.

In some instances, membership of boards was limited to people from particular groupings; this might be because of religious orientation or because trustees were put forward as service users, for example. Similarly people might be recruited because they had particular skills which were required, such as financial systems or knowledge of grant-making processes, or simply a high political profile of some kind, and this might be regarded as of more importance than their value base. Once again, however, there was a process of self-selection because it was anticipated that people would not be interested in serving an organisation if they were out of sympathy with its value base. At the same time, some organisations appointed people with specific roles in mind as, for example, 'diversity champions' to ensure that particular values were seen as underpinning the work of the trustees or board of management. Umbrella organisations with wide membership base again tended to have little control over who was nominated to their boards, but they could contain behaviour which appeared to be at odds with their own policies. Thus, one organisation asked the chair of its trustees to stand down when he had been cited in the local media as making explicitly homophobic comments and both this, and other, organisations stressed that the trustees or management committee members, as the interface with a wider public, had a particular responsibility for promoting the values of the organisation. Nevertheless, organisations which had a wide membership base tended to take the view that the key role for trustees was to support the organisation's mission; in a few cases, as we have seen, this tended not to be a mission explicitly connected to the values of social justice. These organisations tended not to see their role as building a consensus, but as reflecting diversity across the particular sector they worked in: however, it was sometimes

necessary, as we shall see again, to take a tougher line. In most cases, trustees were, in any case, required to sign up to various codes of practice such as those governing the holding of public office. Over time, of course, some organisations reflected that they had lost trustees as the latter had come to determine that the work of the organisation was more 'political' (i.e. value-driven) than they had originally anticipated. The more controversial organisations saw this as an occupational hazard, which was raised from time to time as the organisation attempted to move into new areas of work. In a few cases, local or regional organisations which were effectively branches of national organisations had no local accountability of this kind. Senior staff then sometimes created local sounding boards to help advise them on policy and practice issues.

Overall, as respondents reflected on the work of their organisations, it was clear that procedures and processes had formalised over time. Whilst this was welcomed in most senses, because it gave staff and trustees a clear sense of structure, roles and boundaries, it also meant for some organisations that the sense of mission might be rather less clear than it had been at an earlier stage of the organisation's development. A distinction could be drawn here between CSAs which had clear population groups as targets for their work; and those which operate a more-or-less open-door approach to their services. For the latter, it became more difficult to control the flow of work which might be seen as responding to social justice deficits. On the other hand, few organisations appeared to demonstrate a very narrow and centralised approach to their value base: the argument was made that, despite a clear mission statement, it was important to have a degree of flexibility and challenge within the organisation to encourage change and responsiveness to new issues as they arose. Nevertheless, as we have seen, this flexibility was set within a general concern with poverty, inequality and disadvantage and the mode of response was one which was respectful to all comers.

How do these values impact on wider publics?

We have seen how the values of social justice shape an organisation's response to its own staff and to those who have the responsibility for managing it. In this section, we explore how these same values of social justice impact on what we call the wider publics, that is, those connected to the organisation in some way, but not part of it, as service users, partners or those who collaborate with it in some other way. These were identified as the key relationships which CSAs had and they tried to use them in ways consistent with their view of the association's mission. There were, however, as we shall see, barriers to them being able to do this effectively.

There were four key dimensions in relation to those at whom the services of the association were directed: the external presentation of the organisation's mission, how to decide which groups should constitute its target group, how to work with those target groups, and which other organisations to work with. How the organisation presented itself, its use of publicity, the ways in which it promoted its work and the emphasis it put on certain aspects of its work might be significantly affected by its value base. Thus, a large children's organisation, as noted elsewhere, not only used striking images of children in its publicity, but also ensured both that they reflected a commitment to diversity, as part of a general approach to recognition of children as political actors, and that, in line with this approach, the images were the subject of consultation with children themselves.

Organisations also wanted to present themselves, and their employment and other policies as models of good practice, for example, by having recognised trades unions, Investors in People status, with publicity in a variety of formats, and with goods and services provided on a basis which was, however loosely, related to people's ability to pay. These organisations also tried to use more general publicity targeted at the general public to raise awareness of social justice issues; this included working with the media to challenge some of the more common myths such as around the impact of minorities ("they steal our houses, take our jobs") or perceptions of young people as feral and dangerous. Another organisation resented strongly the way in which

the media represented young people as “hoodies and chavs ... I cannot think of any other group in our society who could be discriminated against and discussed in the way they are without redress.” This was seen as completely unfair, but generally beyond the capacity of the organisation to deal with.

In some cases, this publicity extended even to promoting messages about public welfare, reminding people that the state had played an important role in providing welfare in many areas where the market had failed to meet people’s real needs for help, or promoting universal services rather than targeted ones (although, ironically, most such organisations delivering services were having to do so because of funding constraints, on a targeted basis). This kind of general publicity campaigning was also particularly striking in the case of organisations working with groups such as older people whose needs had often been overlooked in debates about disadvantage. Another example of a high-profile publicity campaign was around fair pay for low-paid workers where trades unions, in conjunction with others, leafleted a city centre as part of a regional debate. At a wider national level, some big organisations recognised the need to promote their vision of civil society as a whole and the importance of voluntary action in promoting a fair society, although they often also acknowledged they had done far less than they might have done in this regard. They were, however, engaged in wide-ranging and sometimes highly-controversial debates about the role of civil society as a whole: for example, several national associations had taken very different positions in relation to the delivery of public services from a third sector base. One participant in these arguments took the view that the third sector was too close to government, that in delivering services it was undermining its social justice mission by scaling up services which “we were formed to require government to deliver.” This organisation noted that its only real engagement with the wider public in debate was over the value of charitable giving where it could at least argue that charitable giving enabled groups such as those it supported to “work in areas where the market failed ... and that the third sector was implicitly about disadvantage.”

The second approach lay in the selection of targets or priorities for the association’s work; and the third was in terms of how these targets were treated in practice by the staff of the organisation. In general, most organisations identified themselves as targeting their work with the most vulnerable or disadvantaged groups:

“...targeted community development work undertaken in areas of most disadvantage and with groups to promote their involvement in society...”

“...targeting services to those people who need them most ... knowing who these people are, knowing that we are using the most effective methods of working.”

This targeted work might be through direct service provision, publicity directed at particular groups, or grant-making for example. Umbrella organisations would try to target their work on supporting third sector organisations which worked with these groups although, as we have seen earlier, this type of organisation was less able to limit its members to those explicitly signing up to the values of social justice. Organisations working with the most disadvantaged groups, such as those with a learning disability or mental health difficulties recognised that this often required a mix of methods of work and that it might involve long-term work to ensure they could be “supported to take or regain control of their lives and achieve their goals.” Where provision of services was not appropriate, or was limited by funding available, organisations often acted as advocates for marginalised groups:

“We speak up about local people’s needs, respond to consultations etc, to add strength to what local people are saying and because official consultations are too often taken over by the most articulate...”

In some cases, these groups might be the most marginalised of all: in Northern Ireland, for example, political ex-prisoners were seen as the group which had been stripped of all rights and had no advocates, and one organisation argued that they represented the most critical test for its social justice mission. Other forms of advocacy were equally important: a group of BME people which had been formally constituted to represent the views of BME communities at a regional level, saw it as part of their role to “use our learning to help others to navigate and to showcase best practice.” This kind of activity and others, enabled many such organisations to “punch above their weight.”

Even where community development or the promotion of participation was not an explicit part of the organisation's mission, most saw themselves as helping, indirectly or alongside their user groups, to provide them with a voice – whether young people, people with disability, ethnic minorities or older people. In the case of local or neighbourhood organisations, translating social justice into practice meant involving residents:

“...within the whole infrastructure of the organisation ... employing local residents and developing their skills ... encouraging local residents to feedback to the organisation and act on that feedback.”

Alongside this, organisations might want to pursue more subtle political messages. One association, with an extensive range of contacts in deprived communities, saw part of its mission as ensuring that people understood that widespread poverty meant that society was not, in reality, pursuing a social justice agenda, whatever governments might be saying. In historically divided societies such as Northern Ireland, a focus on the most disadvantaged often brought other issues into play such as religious affiliation. This meant, as noted earlier, that organisations concerned to appear to be fair in their distribution of resources needed to balance their work in other ways, making use of such techniques described elsewhere as parity of the pound (as resources given to differing 'sectarian' communities), or by funding organisations under the banner of, for example, mother and toddler groups which were, in reality, closely associated with one community. These tensions were particularly apparent in working at neighbourhood levels because communities were divided along fairly strict geographic lines where the two sectarian communities tend to be; larger sectoral associations delivering services tended to work in a way which, explicitly at least, ignored these divides but more neighbourhood-based groups argued that this also diluted their impact in terms of addressing social justice deficits.

People who used the organisation's services were said to be regarded in the same way as staff, that is, they were treated with respect and courtesy as a matter of principle and, as far as possible, were enabled to have a voice in the running of the organisation and developing its policy, through consultative means of various kinds. In one case, an organisation working in the area of media reported that it made good use of its website as a means for volunteers and others associated with it to participate in policy development. Respect involved a number of aspects: offices, meeting rooms, toilets, etc had to be fully accessible, translation services were available, where needed, referral systems were open and non-discriminatory, for example. In the case of organisations working mainly with people with physical or intellectual impairments, the design and layout, including colour, of buildings might be a critical factor. Where organisations used volunteers they, too, had both to be recruited, and themselves behave, in a non-discriminatory manner. This all required a non-discriminatory attitude within buildings as a whole so that all users experienced it equally as a welcoming environment, quite apart from the attitude of staff. Reception staff were quite crucial, too, in creating this atmosphere of respect.

For organisations which had a membership base of other associations, there were sometimes tensions around the nature of individual groupings. For example, an umbrella forum working with older people had in its membership a number of groups which operated ethnically-exclusive policies – a group which operated in practice just for Jewish older people, for instance. The forum had engaged in an ongoing process of negotiation with the group; it hadn't formally excluded any organisation, but recognised that it could not have an organisation in membership if it operated a formal policy of exclusion. In another instance, a Muslim body operated a two-tier level of engagement with other organisations. Member organisations had to consist of those professing Islam; but, separately, the central body would freely work with others which had a common mission to do with general societal benefit, integration and harmony. It had recently collaborated in a campaign around peace with organisations from other faith groups.

Finally, organisations made choices about the partners they worked with. This was an increasingly important arena for debate as partnership working has become, in one commentator's words “the only game in town.”⁵⁵ The choice of partners was, where possible, also shaped by the organisation's commitment to social justice. This was more complex, however, since it was recognised that the achievement of some of the organisation's goals required it to work with organisations which might not have an explicit commitment to the values of social justice. Even within political parties, there were often tensions as local party organisations chose

candidates based on their known commitment to social justice issues locally, only to be overruled by national party organisations which were seen as having a weaker commitment to these values.

In general, CSAs often saw themselves as advocates for social justice values to other organisations, promoting equality and the addressing of disadvantage. This was not always easy:

“we try to engage with a range of agencies, including public bodies, to learn from, inform, influence and negotiate action that might have an impact on social justice for the general public ...”

“we are strong on local networks so that agencies work collectively to improve service delivery, get to the right beneficiaries ...”

“...we contribute to a range of networks and collaborations with other organisations for the benefit of all. We are keen to share best practice and learning”

But there were, as we noted, barriers to achieving this. Chief amongst these were resources, or rather a lack of them. Most organisations noted that they were not able to pursue a range of particular social justice policies because they received inadequate funding to do this work, or had too few staff (which comes to the same thing). Several commented on the low level of pay in civil society jobs which, in their view, reflected the low value attached to it by government. “We are expected to put up with the fact that the money isn’t as good as it is elsewhere, they play on the fact that you believe in what you are doing.” This implied a lack of concern by government about the values of social justice. One social care organisation commented that:

“the main issue has to be resources, whilst there is much talk of person-centred and self-directed support, the reality remains of service rationing, of eligibility criteria continually being raised, and of people being allocated services rather than being given real opportunity for choice.”

At a broader level, a neighbourhood group noted that:

“... the funding streams which are available to socially just organisations are becoming more and more difficult to access, with major funders seeking more regional and sub-regional bids”

This cut across the ability of local communities to access policy, and was one of several comments which argued that smaller organisations as a whole were being squeezed out by the work of larger organisations which could present themselves as more efficient spenders of money because of economies of scale. This again relates to the wider trends within the third sector, and recurs throughout this report: another respondent commented that their ability to pursue socially just policies was limited because “the third sector is increasingly seen as a ‘service provider’ of local authority services to the individual and there is a lack of investment in any kind of development work which might promote equality.” Delivering services in itself did not constitute a social justice orientation.

The attitudes of other partners frequently presented serious barriers to developing social justice agendas in CSAs’ work with them. This might be linked also to funding issues as, where partner organisations were dependent on funding from government or local government, they were seen as not interested in social justice issues:

“The government agenda might sometimes divert the attention of organisations that might be working on racial justice, for example. If it is considered to be an unpopular cause or not receiving adequate funding, organisations are reluctant to pursue such causes ...”

The agenda of funders, again particularly government, might skew the work of an organisation away from what it saw as important social justice work:

“We depend to a large extent on public and charitable funds ...[and this] ... results in an undue emphasis on service delivery and outcomes, rather than more generic results such as contributing to the building of social capital ...”

Some organisations felt able to take a principled stand where issues of money were concerned although these were generally a small minority. One such was a major environmental group which depended largely on subscriptions and donations; another was a national think-tank which received membership subscriptions

and funding from foundations. Both felt rather freer to pursue their own social justice agendas and to reject funds from sources which didn't fit with these agendas. Several made the point that, as one put it, they had organisational standards and "you don't jump into bed with anyone, because reputation is important." One organisation which handled a small grant scheme was offered a gift from a donor; when it met the donor, it was clear that his values were far from those of the organisation and the gift was rejected. Similarly, a major trades union body had been offered a grant to set up training activities but, in discussion, it appeared that the prospective donor was not interested in skill development for ordinary workers and this gift was also refused. A children's organisation interrogated funders to examine their ethical stance and again rejected funds where it was felt that this would undermine their own moral position: in some cases, this organisation argued, large corporations attempted to make use of their association with charities such as this to be able to badge themselves as having an ethical stamp of approval.

However, most organisations clearly did feel inhibited to some degree in pursuing a social justice agenda by their funding relationships. This was made explicit by one large national children's charity:

"it is true that the very richest should give more but it is not our role to push for that. We tell the government some uncomfortable things about what they should do, we are an irritant with government, but you have to be careful not to bite the hand"

Several political party representatives observed that the critical barrier to addressing social justice deficits in society for them was the electoral system which precluded Parliament from having a representative base.

Partnership working, as we commented earlier, has become a highly significant mode for the delivery of services and for local governance more generally; most associations recognised the reality of this but also highlighted difficulties in persuading other partners to sign up to their agenda. For example, criticising groups it was working with in a partnership forum, one charitable body noted that:

"... the best results will be achieved through cooperation with other agencies, rather than competition ... each organisation needs to look first at the needs of its beneficiaries, rather than at the needs of the organisation ..."

This was effectively saying that though power lay with partnership bodies, the responsibility of the organisation was primarily towards its users, who were disadvantaged. In some instances, organisations had taken a more subtle stance towards partnership working, operating on an insider-outsider basis. One such organisation felt it had been perceived by many of its potential allies as having compromised its social justice agenda by sitting at the partnership table with government and other 'insider' agencies. However, it argued that its particular agenda, in this case for non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, was most effectively pursued by having both insiders of this kind and outsiders who were, in a sense, freer to be 'on the streets'. What was critical was that the two kinds of organisation could work together in a trusted way – being committed to the same value base - and use their different structural positions and their relationships in a creative manner.

More generally, several respondents commented on the continuing high levels of prejudice and discrimination they observed against marginalised groups from many of their partners and indeed from the groups they had historically worked with.

"...naturally we also have to overcome resistance by some bodies who do not take poverty and inclusion seriously or who do not give it priority. Regional agencies often fall into this category ..."

Some tried to address this through persuasion and argument, by providing information, and by presenting the stories of disadvantaged people. Others took a more high-profile approach. One group was faced with hostility against recent migrants from some local communities:

"... we organised a conference which brought together established community members and new community members to dispel some of the myths and innuendoes surrounding asylum seekers: their journeys, dealing with authorities, housing and language issues, schooling and health ..."

A major organisation concerned with issues of disability had similarly brought together a range of professionals, including civil servants and health professionals, to try to draw together a national strategy.

This was implicitly also about trying to get these partners to acknowledge the structural basis of the issues they were addressing, but they felt they had failed to get most of those participating to move beyond their safe organisational silos:

“We were banging heads together and no-one left the meetings feeling comfortable but they have all got different perspectives ... like most of the public, most of them thought the issue was nothing to do with them and won't affect them. We tried to convey messages about regular health checks but it seemed an alien message ...”

Issues of power were also raised: smaller CSAs often felt they were at the bottom of the food chain as far as their ability to influence policy was concerned. One parish council, for example, used the case of the consultation over post office closures as an example. The consultation had been a derisory process with major decisions already having been reached ahead of the consultation⁵⁶ and had included asking those living in a village of more than one thousand inhabitants if “there was anybody important living in their village”, as if that person's postal needs could override those of everyone else resident there. The parish council itself had raised issues of the impact of closure on more vulnerable people, such as older and disabled people, and tried to represent their voices: the council had involved other neighbouring villages in its campaign but those with the power and influence to change a decision – for example, higher tiers of local government - had been largely uninterested and not prepared to introduce their own socially just policies to compensate for this loss of amenity.

Conversely, however, a national campaigning organisation argued that the answer to this feeling of disempowerment lay in the power of direct action, a strategy which it supported in many of its cases: this, they felt, placed power directly in the hands of disadvantaged people.

One BME group observed that they felt patronised when they were involved in partnership working, especially with government. This again reflected disparities in power.

“People say we are privileged to sit at the big tables but when the big players say jump, they expect you to jump. Government office seemed more concerned about how our involvement might help them [tick boxes] rather than help us. But if a funder says I am asking you to do something, it is difficult to refuse.”

This organisation felt their partnership strategy needed to be about identifying like-minded people, “people you can trust who you know will represent your views ... but the trouble is you also have to work with people with whom you have little success because we know we can't be outside this network of agencies.”

Some CSAs had been used by government to undertake consultations for them. This also presented tensions in terms of what a socially just form of consultation might look like:

“We are seen as a reference tool for consulting with local people. The problem is that the local authority consults us and thinks that is the job done, whereas we consult properly and require the space to do it as far and as widely as possible, and then come back with all the issues raised. We need proper notice, proper documentation, time and additional resources: this gives the local authority a headache because we don't go just for having the box ticked.”

This organisation had a view of social justice as being in part about real consultation so that people had an effective voice. This was in conflict with local government's need to ‘tick a box’ and then represent itself as having acted justly.

Essentially, the stance associations took on issues of power reflected their own power base. Larger national organisations, with strong political connections and secure funding bases, felt more able to promote their views of social justice unfettered by relationships with other major partners, including funders, and were able both to choose their partners and, to a much greater degree, determine that funds came from sources which would not interfere with their mission. The smaller an organisation and particularly where it was dependent on funding from powerful organisations such as government, the more likely it was to feel that its freedom of movement to act or speak out on a social justice agenda, might be compromised. This was posed in the following way:

“There is too much power in the hands of commissioners who think they know what is needed, but third sector groups are much closer to the ground and know what is needed; these groups are good at standing up for what is right, but this agenda is not that of the commissioners who have increasing power: funding, rather than need, is driving the agenda.”

Nevertheless, several could give examples of what appeared at first to be small gains, but which had provided powerful models for promoting the values of social justice; for example an organisation working on issues of sexuality had used a small pot of money to train trainers in housing bodies, showing them how to treat people who might be gay or lesbian appropriately and allowing them to feel safe in their homes, which had historically been the target for attacks. This modest piece of work had rippled out and had very significant impacts within housing providers more generally.

In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as a result of the devolution of political power, the opportunities had arisen for CSAs to come much closer to the centre of political power. Respondents in these areas commented on the tensions inherent in this situation: it offered the possibility of greater influence (and indeed one respondent commented that many CSA staff in these countries had mobile phones whose address books were populated largely with the details of government ministers and advisers) but the possibility also of greater incorporation into the agendas of government and a loss of autonomy.

Are CSAs distinctive in relation to the values of social justice?

As we noted earlier, CSAs sit between public and private spheres with many, for this reason, incorporated into what has come to be known as the third sector. Criticisms were made by respondents both of the role of the state, where the New Labour government was seen as moving away from a social justice agenda and local government having to follow suit in most cases, and of the private sector which, despite some good practice, was committed substantially to the maximisation of profit.⁵⁷ Was there anything distinctive about these kinds of organisations, then, in the pursuit of social justice? This was the area of questioning which respondents found most challenging to reflect on, but there were, nevertheless, some interesting and stimulating responses to consider.

The most significant observations related to the relationship between the public sector and civil society, but these need only be dealt with briefly here. The outlines of this and the trend towards outsourcing public services to the third sector has been discussed in Sections 2 and 3; this is a focus both of considerable concern and contestation within the sector, with some major national organisations seemingly pitted against each other in a war of words as to the likely impacts of this trend.⁵⁸ What most commentators are agreed upon is that this kind of tendency will tend to limit the independence of many CSAs, and will favour larger organisations rather than medium-sized ones. This was underlined by one respondent:

‘The development of Local Area Agreements will, without question, lead to the decimation of many small existing frontline VCS services in the near future: this will be because local authorities will have little option but to turn to the larger nationals because of their cost effectiveness. This is not social justice, but the survival of the fittest.’

Even at a neighbourhood level, organisations felt the impact of government policies; government had claimed to support community development, community empowerment and the growth of community organisations but the experience of these groups was that government usually retained control over key aspects of local programmes and especially over funding.⁵⁹

What was also of concern to respondents was the fact that CSAs, particularly those working at grassroots level, were far more likely to enjoy the trust of local people than the public sector was but that of course maintaining this trust was difficult where government funding and policies pushed CSAs away from a social justice mission. One organisation argued that it tended in its work to highlight the barriers to accessing good services whereas, in a time of constrained budgets and government-imposed targets, local government was much more likely to obscure these barriers or to hide behind the limitations of policy. Another respondent, who worked with children, put it in another way:

“In the public sector you – and your work – aren’t as valued as they are in civil society. The main problem with statutory agencies is just that: they are reactive, they don’t have the flexibility to deal strategically with the future, they are target driven: we have more time to think about the future, and users do feel differently about the way we go in. We can also respond much more directly, for example to the media if issues arise. Our problem is that we don’t have the resources to implement our ideas.”

This view was echoed by a staff member of a think-tank:

“... we have more flexibility, being a small organisation and a charity, we can respond more quickly, we are more fleet of foot, not being bound by statutory requirements. We are also not a delivery organisation, it is easier to criticise and question across all the sectors. We have the freedom to say what we want to say. We can also be critical of the voluntary sector in a way which the sector itself may not be able to. We can be proactive, rather than reactive, and do blue skies thinking – although this is the most difficult area to get funding for. Our downside is our limited funds which means we always work to short timelines.”

On the question of trust, one respondent reflected on the history of community mental health provision; this led to a wide-ranging critique of private and public sector provision for both failing to understand how to work appropriately and maintaining organisational norms at the expense of the needs of service users:

“From the early days, it was clear that the third sector approach was almost opposite to that of the statutory sector which didn’t know what to do with people with mental health difficulties. We offered supported housing, employment, individual treatment and so on and the private sector incidentally couldn’t make money from that. Issues of trust and sensitivity are important in health, mental health, community justice and self-help and mutual support are more apparent than in the public or private sector; we have an intuitive approach and [again] fleetness of foot, which is more acceptable to users. The difference is about scale, intent, and, most of all, values.”

Some civil society respondents felt that their organisations – housing associations which had become major registered social landlords, taking over council housing stock were cited as one example – were almost indistinguishable from public sector bodies. This impacted on their ways of working, which then meant that they began to reflect a different value set. “We may not have the same limitations in terms of bureaucracy but we still have that local government ethos and that needs to change, to become more effective. We shouldn’t be restricted in the way that councils are.”

This respondent went on to argue that the housing association movement, for example, actually needed to combine the best of the private housing sector and civil society. In the case of some housing associations in rural areas which had taken over stock from local authorities, for example, he argued that the private sector was some way ahead of the public sector in terms of promoting social justice, being the first organisation to ask about the sexual orientation of its prospective tenants. This was because it had the flexibility of working in an unusual situation which gave it more freedom to explore how best to respond to the different needs of specific users.

The view was strong within most respondents, however, that the private sector – despite a few interesting initiatives – remained simply concerned with maximising profit. One respondent felt that the private sector needed to be more educated around the concept of social justice and that the notion of social enterprise (see Section 3), that is enterprises where the surplus earned is reinvested into the company and not taken as dividends for shareholders, might be a way to bring private and third sectors closer together. A respondent working for a gay organisation noted that they had little problem with the private sector in terms of equalities simply because, for example, “in banks, they don’t care what your personal life is like, they just want you to [help them] make money.” In reality, of course, the private sector does have a considerable stake in civil society through providing funds, nominating trustees and providing specific skills to underpin the management and administration of many organisations. Notwithstanding these positive and sometimes very significant contributions, and a little evidence of collaborative partnerships with the private sector, the interviews gave a strong sense that the private sector was seen as a threat by third sector organisations since it was increasingly seen as competing for the kinds of work that the third sector had traditionally undertaken and thus bringing a very different set of values to that work.

Another strong perspective on the private sector was, despite the comment made earlier, that it was lagging behind civil society, in part again because of its prime concern with profit-making. This meant that an ability to focus on, for example, the needs of disadvantaged groups was only regarded as significant when working with these groups might be turned to the organisation's economic advantage; respondents cited the examples of private consultancies which undertook research into the situations of disadvantaged groups or managed regeneration schemes in deprived neighbourhoods, but had little ongoing commitment to supporting these communities out of poverty. Most of all, the private sector was distrusted ideologically because of its adherence to market economics, that is, that services are provided essentially on the basis of people's ability to pay for them rather than their need for them. Thus, a disability organisation commented that private practitioners simply wanted to sell aids and maximise their income, and that – unlike most CSAs – they were not prepared to be physically based in those deprived areas where their most needy users might live.

Several correspondents, as we noted earlier, indicated that the private sector should be required to have a role in promoting social justice and not, as often appeared to happen, to leave it to the public sector to protect individuals from the consequences of what was often perceived to be private sector inequities and greed. The private sector was most of all associated in many people's minds with, at times, extraordinary corporate greed and extravagance at a time when many people were increasingly struggling financially to survive.

The community foundation movement (from which a number of responses were secured) are, nevertheless, an interesting example of how some civil society organisations have tried to work with the grain of the private sector. Community foundations aim to “work with private sector donors to get them to take an interest in community-based issues by providing financial support which is consolidated into a local grant-making scheme.” One community foundation had taken this relationship further in a context where many private sector employees drove through deprived inner city areas on their way to work in a financial services quarter of a large city. This involved the foundation in a series of educational ventures, involving the private sector in events including, for example, presentations from CSAs and a leafleting campaign entitled “Open your eyes as you drive to work.” This seemed to work because “people give to people, not to concepts.” Although businesses were generally rather cautious and wanted only to fund ‘safe’ projects, the outcome of this work was that they were prepared to support more risky projects such as those working with prostitutes or the homeless. This had had some success, but it was nevertheless regarded as extremely hard work to catch the attention of most private sector interests. Some organisations had run courses on relevant issues such as equalities which were targeted at private and public sector organisations and CSAs but, again, it proved far more difficult to engage the interest of the private sector.

Within the trades union movement, there were often conflicts between private and public sector unions, with different unions often reflecting their position in the market. Thus, a public sector union might argue that, for example, it was important to extend the normal employment rights of British workers to migrant workers, whilst private sector unions took the view that they were a threat to local workers. In general, trades unionists had a clear perspective on their relationship with the private sector: “they see trades unions as in the way – but at least you know where they are coming from!” Of course, the trades union movement retains a privileged position in relation to the Labour Party and, though far less so than in the past, to Labour governments. One instance of this relationship was provided where trades unions had joined with local Labour Party activists to prevent private health care operators moving in on health care trusts seeking contracts.

Some respondents were anxious to distinguish between the corporate private sector and the role of private individuals. Several organisations, including major national organisations, derived a substantial part of their income from private subscriptions and they were grateful for this because, given that subscriptions and donations were usually given freely and with no strings attached, this provided the respective organisations with the ability to remain free from the kinds of government interference and control which was often seen as implicit in accepting government funding. Overall, the view expressed was that corporate private sector finance was difficult to obtain and that it usually came also with some sort of value agenda attached to it: for example, to enable a corporation to adopt an apparently ethical stance by claiming its support for CSAs. Civil

society was in general wary of private sector involvement, whether in situations where small amounts of money were distributed from high-earning corporations to support 'good causes' or the "more recent enthusiasm for venture philanthropy where some wealthy person who has made it in business wants to go in and more or less take over some organisation, suggesting they know how the third sector should work."

Another third sector organisation, however, took a rather more positive view of venture philanthropy describing it as "a means of investing in social enterprise where you can get a return which is not cash, but a measurable improvement in people's lives."

At the same time, it was also important to recognise the role of individuals as promoting civil society. Many individual CSAs had come into being because of the energy and tenacity of not-necessarily wealthy individuals who had perceived a need and organised to create a structured response to it, where government had failed to do so: Barnardos and ToCH were two obvious historical examples.⁶⁰

In some cases, organisations were able to point to the role of the private sector as directly, rather than merely implicitly, promoting social injustice: for example, in one area migrant workers had been piled into poor housing areas and, as a result, community tensions had risen and racism had grown. The CSA here was able to point to the role of private landlords in seeking to maximise their profits regardless of the impact on a deprived community or the exacerbation of local tensions. More widely, the private sector was also identified as being responsible for the existence of many deprived neighbourhoods, for example, through the failure to invest in local industries and thus contribute to joblessness. One respondent observed rather caustically that this was, unfortunately, not a very profitable (sic) line to pursue with potential private sector investors where funding was being sought! Nevertheless, the role of the private sector was seen as inextricably linked to the issues facing civil society and the market as the major cause of inequality. An organisation responsible for delivering services to older people reflected on the fact that:

"...if you have worked very hard and can afford to buy private health care, then fine, that's your choice, but the public health service should be good enough for me to live a good life, I shouldn't have to suffer because I cannot afford to buy it ... yet the existence of private health care means that there is less public health care ... similarly the existence of teachers in private schools shouldn't mean that teachers in the public sphere are not good enough to ensure I can get my qualifications...'

Another cited the example of health care insurance where, because of the failure of companies to offer accessible insurance to poorer people, many children had suffered the long-term effects of impairment.

Ironically, one respondent of Indian origin commented that BME people tended to do better in the private sector: although this, on reflection, appeared to be a comment referring to a relatively limited number of 'high flyers.'⁶¹

Overall, then, respondents were strongly critical of both state and market and saw civil society as a rather embattled sector attempting to promote the values of social justice through its imagery, its organisational policies and its work with users and partners.

4 Conclusions

On the basis of this representative sample of interviews and survey responses, we can draw the following conclusions with regard to CSAs and the values of social justice:

- The overwhelming majority of CSAs have a clear view of the meaning of social justice, one which incorporates the values of fairness, equality – both of opportunity, access to services and outcomes – and respect for diversity and difference. This respect might otherwise be described as a form of mutuality or solidarity with human beings *qua* human beings, regardless of social or economic divisions;
- This definition is close to the mainstream definition which has emerged from the literature and places most CSAs somewhat to the political left of government and in a position which is generally distinct from the public sector and very distinct from the private sector. CSAs rejected the notion of social justice as an ‘anything goes’ slogan which any organisation could sign up to: it represented a distinct and distinctive set of values and practices;
- The great majority of CSAs also perceive themselves to be social justice organisations in their own right. Those which didn’t were clear that this was not because they were hostile to the values of social justice, but because their relationship with civil society as a whole made them necessarily more hybrid in their orientation;
- This perception is supported by both the internal policy and practice frameworks of CSAs – in relation to staff and trustees or management committee members – and to their policy and practice to external users of their organisation;
- Some user-led organisations had policies which were exclusive, in that, only people defined as part of certain tendencies – defined, for example, by ethnicity or faith, were enabled to use the organisation’s services. These CSAs saw no contradiction between this and their self-definition as social justice organisations, but saw themselves as working in a more narrow, sectoral way to promote wider social justice goals;
- There are, however, obstacles to most associations operating as full social justice organisations. In relation to users or affiliates, those organisations operating open-door policies may have little control over how their services are used in practice, despite having frameworks to shape this. Control may be easier to exercise where services are being delivered to targeted populations, where the targets are determined in line with social justice values;
- Many associations work in partnership with other agencies, either for pragmatic reasons or because they are required to do so as a condition of funding, and these partners, whether in public or private sectors, may be less committed to the values of social justice as CSAs understood them. CSAs sometimes saw it as their responsibility to proselytise these values in partnership forums, although they had apparently little impact in doing so. In relation to funders, other compromises may be required which CSAs saw as unavoidable. Although they tried to maintain their social justice stance in their work, this might often be diluted;
- The impacts of these organisations’ stance on service users largely came about either by virtue of the services offered and the ways in which they were offered, or by the model of social justice practice which they offered to the public gaze in various ways: by publicity, the way in which staff behaved, the organisation of their premises and so on. The wider impacts of their work were not the subject of this study, but have been examined in other research;⁶²

- (Lack of) adequate funding was claimed to be one barrier preventing CSAs from fulfilling their social justice mission as effectively as they would have liked; but
- The major obstacle to operating as social justice organisations was perceived to be structural or systemic, that is, that society as a whole did not operate within a recognisably social justice framework and that government, in particular, had not done enough to change the terms of this national value framework. Indeed, in many quarters, the government was seen not only as failing in its original social justice mission but in steadily moving away from it. CSAs do not necessarily have to reflect the ideological position of government (and, indeed, in many countries civil society stands in opposition to government policies), but in a political context where they are heavily dependent on it for funding, they may then feel explicitly or implicitly circumscribed in their scope for action. This may not necessarily be reflected in internal organisational policy and practice, but may result in shifts in emphasis in relation to the core work of an organisation. Amongst the respondents to this study, it is striking that only those organisations largely free from government funding felt similarly free to pursue what they saw as their social justice mission. Thus, for most, ironically, although CSAs saw themselves as pursuing an agenda which they largely felt government had abandoned, like government, there was not infrequently a gap between their own rhetoric and reality.

The Carnegie UK Trust Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland is chaired by Geoff Mulgan and informed by an International Advisory Group. The goals of the Inquiry are to: explore the possible future threats to and opportunities for civil society, looking out to 2025; to identify how policy and practice can be enhanced to help strengthen civil society; and to enhance the ability of civil society associations to prepare for the opportunities and challenges of the future. The findings of the Commission will be presented in 2009.

Recent Inquiry publications include:

- Futures for civil society
- The shape of civil society to come
- Scenarios for civil society
- Using scenarios and futures thinking

In 2009 we will be publishing reports on the following themes:

- Civil society, climate change and growing pressure on global resources
- Growing a civil economy
- Dialogue and deliberation
- Civil society and media
- The marginalisation of dissent

To find out more about the Inquiry go to www.futuresforcivilsociety.org or contact morven@carnegieuk.org

Appendices

Appendix 1 Methodology

The brief required the study to be completed within a two-month timeframe.

Given pressures of time and resources, the study was focused on local, regional and national CSAs in the following way. The samples of organisations were drawn from the pool of those which, on a reasonably self-evident basis, appear to be committed to the values of social justice, that is, those groups which espouse work favouring disadvantaged sections of the population although their understandings of the term were tested during interviews or through the postal questionnaire.

i a group of interviews was conducted with a sample of local and regional CSAs in the Yorkshire and Humber Government Region, drawn from North Yorkshire (a deeply rural area), York, a medium-sized town, and Leeds, a large city (probably now the third largest city in the UK), to ensure that the overall sample of associations was representative of UK political, demographic, social and economic contexts. The sampling frame for these interviews was the membership database of the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Forum for Voluntary and Community Organisations (to which we are grateful), supplemented by detailed review of the types of organisations which were under-represented in this database. A total of 13 interviews was conducted in this group, (one of which was a telephone interview and the remainder face-to face) covering all the types of CSA identified in the working definition put forward by the Carnegie Inquiry. These interviews were undertaken with chief officers and/or senior trustees of the organisation (that is, people who could claim to speak with some authority for the organisation) to explore (a) their understanding of the meaning of social justice; (b) the extent to which this meaning was operationalised in the work of the association, that is, in terms of employee and trustee profiles, day-to-day management of the association, services delivered, organisational frameworks established, campaigns undertaken and choices made in terms of policy and practice frameworks; (c) the extent to which their view of social justice impacted, or appeared to impact, on wider publics, including their service users or benefit groups, and how they would operationalise these impacts. The topic guide is appended at Appendix Two.

The sample of CSAs was chosen to ensure representativeness of key social divisions: groups working with women, gay/lesbian/bisexual people, people with disabilities, members of minority ethnic groups, and organisations comprising and run by beneficiaries themselves, for example, self-help groups, tenants groups.

The responses of interviewees was supplemented by, and analysed alongside, documentary evidence, such as statements of aims, constitutions, annual reports, etc.

ii interviews were also conducted along the same lines with representatives of a range of key national organisations. This was felt to be important as it would offer a distinctive perspective from those local and regional associations which were more likely to be engaged in day-to-day work with beneficiaries/members of the public. National associations are less likely to be engaged in this face-to-face work and more likely to be engaged in lobbying, campaigning, advocacy, providing support services, fundraising and providing a public profile for the work of local or regional branches. Their role in promoting an 'image' of social justice (if this is reflected their value base) might thus be, in some ways, a more considered and explicit one. Eight interviews were conducted at this level; most of these were conducted in London at the head offices of such associations, with senior policy officers, but a few were also conducted with national organisations based in Edinburgh and Belfast. Scottish political rhetoric occasionally makes claims that Scotland has a distinctive and more advanced understanding and implementation of social justice than elsewhere in the UK⁶³ and the governance of voluntary organisations in Northern Ireland is claimed to be quite distinctive from that elsewhere in the UK.⁶⁴

iii a shorter postal questionnaire (using email where possible) was distributed to a wider range of local, regional and national organisations (covering 20 associations in each category). This covered the same range of questions, but in much less depth. The aim here was to extend the width of coverage to enable a broader range of organisations to be sampled. The quality of responses was, as expected, rather more varied than could be obtained from face-to-face interviews but by, for example, asking for specific case study examples of how the organisations' work reflects the values of social justice, a much richer range of experience was gathered from the 35 responses obtained.

Interviews were recorded, transcribed on a notes-and-quotes basis and, with data from the postal questionnaires and from published and unpublished documentation, analysed to follow the framework of questioning outlined above, i.e. what is the meaning of social justice? how does this translate into policy frameworks, goals, objectives and day-to-day practice? how does this impact on wider publics? and what is distinctive about the approach of CSAs in this regard? This informs the structure of this final report.

A total of 56 responses, therefore, form the basis of the data analysed for this report. We are grateful to all those who agreed to be interviewed or responded to the postal questionnaire within fairly pressured timetables. Respondents were promised anonymity and so the discussion earlier has obscured the identity of individual respondents or their organisations.

Appendix 2: Interview schedule

Interviewees will be asked prior to the interview to make documents regarding the mission statement of the organisation available on the day.

- 1 Thanks for taking part. Interview will last around 50 minutes. Individual responses will be anonymised and confidential. Outcome will be reported to Carnegie Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK specifically regarding the relationship between civil society and the values of social justice.
- 2 Respondent's details: name, contact details, organisation: role in organisation. How long been there.
- 3 Please outline the mission of the organisation briefly. Has this changed substantially in past few years?
- 4 Does the organisation have an explicit commitment to the values of social justice in its work? If so, how is this expressed?
- 5 If not, are the values of social justice implicit in the mission/work of the organisation?
- 6 How would the organisation define social justice (not looking for complete definition but some keywords suggesting the parameters of social justice)?
- 7 Are there significant social justice deficits in society at large? If so, which would you identify as the most critical/worrying?
- 8 Is this commitment to social justice a relatively new element in the work of the organisation? Where and when did it come from?
- 9 Has this current view of social justice been shaped by any particular perspective (eg Writer? Political party? Ideology?) How? Why this particular influence?
- 10 Are the staff of the organisation required to sign up to this view of social justice as part of their contract of employment, or in other ways influenced to support this perspective?
- 11 Please give a few examples of the ways in which these values translate into the day-to-day practice of the organisation? (eg via choice of target groups, shaping policy frameworks, public statements, comment on public policy, services delivered?)
- 12 Does this social justice perspective influence your work with other organisations (eg choice of partners)? If so, how?
- 13 Does this social justice perspective influence the messages you wish to transmit to society at large, for example through campaign messages? If so, how? Does it have an impact on public behaviour?
- 14 Does this perspective impact in terms of choice of staff, trustees etc? If so, how? Does the profile of your staff and trustees reflect a commitment to social justice and if so in what ways?
- 15 Is this perspective a contentious issue within the organisation (eg arguments about policy, target groups etc)? Is a commitment to social justice a *critical* part of the work of your organisation?
- 16 Do you see your work as distinctive from that of public sector or private sector organisations in relation to the values of social justice? If so, in what way?
- 17 Can you offer me any particular examples of good practice which most clearly demonstrate the way in which social justice is a key element of your organisation's work?
- 18 What major gains have been made in the interests of social justice which you would attribute to the work of your organisation?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 3: Postal questionnaire

From: Professor Gary Craig

Dear Colleague

March 2008

Carnegie UK Trust: Civil society associations and social justice

I have been commissioned by the Carnegie UK Trust's Inquiry into Civil Society (chaired by Geoff Mulgan) to explore the relationship between civil society associations and social justice. The former is defined as including third sector organisations, cooperative bodies, environmental campaigning groups, trades unions and major faith organisations.

As part of this study I am surveying the attitudes and experience of a number of organisations in the region and I would be most grateful if you would complete this brief questionnaire and return it to me by email or post as appropriate **by April 5**. If you wish to provide supplementary information, please insert it at the end of the questionnaire but in any case, use as much space as you wish. All individual responses will be anonymised and confidential to myself. A summary of the final report will be made available to all respondents.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

1 Your name: (in case we need to contact you)

2 Email address

3 Organisation's name and contact details: (name, address, email)

4 Your organisation's mission statement (please summarise in your own words)

5 Your organisation's area of benefit (ie the geographical area you legally cover)

6 Your organisation's main target audiences:

7 How would **you** define social justice?
(please use your own words, preferably in the form of a number of key words or phrases)

8 Would you say your organisation was committed to this view of social justice? (tick one)

YES NO DON'T KNOW

9 If **YES**, please explain how (with specific examples where possible) in relation to your organisation's engagement with:

Staff

Trustees/management

Beneficiaries of your organisation's work

Other civil society organisations

The general public

- 10 What are the most effective way(s) in which your organisation translates the values of social justice into practice? (give up to three examples)

- 11 What are the barriers (local, regional, national) getting in the way of your organisation operating as a fully socially just organisation

Please add any supplementary comments here.

Thank you for your help.

Please return this completed form by **APRIL 5, or, where appropriate, by post, using the envelope provided, or by email.**

Footnotes

- 1 Edwards, M (2004) *Civil Society*, Cambridge: Polity.
- 2 Reichardt, O *et al* (2007), *The UK Civil Society Almanac 2008*, London: National Council for Voluntary Organisations.
- 3 Email from Karl Wilding, Head of NCVO research, to social-policy@jiscmail.ac.uk list, 21 February 2008.
- 4 Reichardt, O (2008), *Question of definition: an attempt to operationalise definitions of the sector*, London: National Council for Voluntary Organisations.
- 5 NCVO (2004) *Voluntary Sector Almanac*, London: National Council for Voluntary Organisations, cited in HM Treasury (2004), *Exploring the role of the third sector in public service delivery and reform: a discussion document*, London: HM Treasury. The Treasury suggests that there are only 168,000 registered charities in England and Wales.
- 6 Wilding, K *et al* (2006), *UK Voluntary Sector Almanac 2006*, London: National Council for Voluntary Organisations
- 7 Adamson, D (2005), 'Community regeneration policy, the State and Civil Society' in Day, G, Dunkerley, D and Thompson, A (eds) (2005), *Civil Society in Wales*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press. Of course, increasing use of a term does not necessarily mean that its meaning becomes clearer: see, in relation to another fashionable term, community capacity-building, Craig, G (2007), 'Community capacity-building: Something old, something new ... ?' *Critical Social Policy*, August.
- 8 Deakin, N (2001), *In search of civil society*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- 9 Edwards, M (2004), *Civil Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 10 Giddens, A (2000), *The Third Way and its Critics*, Cambridge: Polity Press' Beck, U (2000), *What is Globalisation?*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- 11 Dunkerley, D and Fudge, S (2004), 'The role of civil society in European Integration', *European Societies*, 6(2): 237-254.
- 12 Marshall, T H (1950), 'Citizenship and social class', in T H Marshall and T Bottomore (1992), *Citizenship and Social Class*, London: Pluto Press.
- 13 Hodgson, L (2004), 'Manufactured civil society: counting the cost', *Critical Social Policy*, Vol 24(2): 139-164.
- 14 Davies, J (2002), 'The governance of urban regeneration: critique of the "governing without government" thesis', *Public Administration*, 80(2): 301-322.
- 15 Hodgson, *op cit*
- 16 Craig, G and Taylor, M (2002), 'Dangerous liaisons', in M Powell *et al* (eds), *Partnerships, governance and New Labour*, Bristol: Polity Press.
- 17 Eberly D (2000), 'The meanings, origins and applications of civil society' in D Eberly (ed) *The essential civil society reader*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield: 3-15.
- 18 Murphy, M, 'The politics of adult education: state ,economy and civil society' *.International Journal of Lifelong Education*, Vol 20, No 3: 345-360.
- 19 See footnote 14, p 238.
- 20 Edwards, M and Gaventa, J (eds) (2001), *Global Citizen Action*, London: Earthscan:5.
- 21 See for example, Alcock, P and Craig, G (2009 forthcoming), *International Social Policy: welfare regimes in developed countries*, Basingstoke: Palgrave (2nd edn).
- 22 Wood, G and Gough, I (2006), 'A comparative welfare regime approach to global social policy', *World Development*, Vol 34, No 10: 1696-1712.
- 23 Adamson, D (2005), 'Community regeneration policy, the state and civil society' in Day, G, Dunkerley, D and Thompson, A (eds), *Civil Society in Wales*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press: 271.
- 24 Part of this section draws on the Introduction (by Tania Burchardt and Gary Craig) and Chapter 11 (by Gary Craig) in Craig, G *et al* (eds) (2008), *Social Justice and public policy*, Bristol: Policy Press. I am grateful to Tania Burchardt for her agreement to the use of some of this material.
- 25 Social Justice Policy Group (2007), *Breakthrough Britain*, www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/default.asp?pageref=182:529
- 26 Commission on Social Justice (Chair Sir Gordon Borrie), (1994), *Social Justice: strategies for national renewal*, London: Verso.
- 27 Hills, J and Stewart., K (2005), *A more equal society?* Bristol: The Policy Press.
- 28 DWP (2007) *Welfare reform*: www.dwp.gov.uk/welfare reform (Department of Work and Pensions)
- 29 Lister, R (2003), *Citizenship: feminist perspectives*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- 30 Craig, G (2004), 'Citizenship, older people and inclusion', *Journal of Social Policy*, January.
- 31 UN General assembly (2000) *United Nations Millennium Declaration*, resolution 55/2, www.un.org/millennium, paragraphs I.2 and I.4.
- 32 WTO (2007) *What is the World Trade Organisation?*, www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/fact1_e.htm: emphasis added here.
- 33 The continuing failures of the Doha Round discussions rather undermine this assertion, however.
- 34 Rawls, J (1971), *A Theory of Justice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 6.
- 35 Brummer, A (2006), 'Do city workers earn their megamoney?' thisismoney.co.uk (Published by the Daily Mail) www.thisismoney.co.uk/news/special-report/article.html?In_article_id+414105&in_page_id=108)
- 36 Nozick, R (1974), *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- 37 Young, I (1990), *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- 38 Fraser, N (2001), 'Recognition without ethics?', *Theory, culture and society*, Vol 18, No 203: 21-42; Lister, R (2004), *Poverty*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- 39 Dworkin, R (2000), *Sovereign Virtue: the theory and practice of equality*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- 40 Sen, A (1999), *Development asFreedom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 41 For further reading in this area see the following: Marshall, T (1950), *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Roche, M (1992), *Rethinking Citizenship: welfare ideology and change in modern society*, Cambridge: Polity Press; Dean, H and Melrose, M (1999), *Poverty, Riches and Social Citizenship*, London: Routledge; Lister, R (2003), *Citizenship: feminist perspectives*, Basingstoke: Palgrave; Donnison, D (1998), *Policies for a Just Society*, Basingstoke: Macmillan; Doyal, L and Gough, I (1991), *A Theory of Human Need*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- 42 Miller, D (1999), *Principles of Social Justice*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- 43 Craig, G (2007), 'Cunning, unprincipled and loathsome: the racist tail wags the welfare dog', *Journal of Social Policy*, October.
- 44 Castles, S (2000), *Ethnicity and Globalisation*, London: Sage; Lister, R (2003), *Citizenship: Feminist perspectives*,

- Basingstoke: Palgrave; JRF (2004) *Overcoming Disadvantage*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- 45 Henderson, P and Kaur, R (eds) (1999), *Combating Rural Racism in the UK*, London: Community Development Foundation.
- 46 Hall, S (1990), 'Cultural identity and diaspora' in J. Rutherford (ed) *Identity: Community, culture and difference*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- 47 Carnegie UK (2007), *The shape of civil society to come*, Dunfermline: Carnegie UK Trust: 12.
- 48 Notwithstanding a brief flutter of hostility to those responsible, through their greed, for the near-collapse of the banking system late in 2008.
- 49 The participation of children is now an area of practice which is developed fairly widely across the world: see for example Craig, G (2002), 'Children's participation through community development: assessing the lessons from international experience', in Hallet, C and Prout, A (eds), *Hearing the Voices of Children*, London: Routledge.
- 50 See Adebowale, M (2008), 'Understanding environmental justice', in Craig, G et al (eds) *Social Justice and Public Policy*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- 51 An interesting aspect of this debate and the lack of comprehension amongst the rich of the conditions of the poor is given in Toynbee, P and Walker, D (2008), *Unjust Rewards*, London: Granta.
- 52 See for example, Craig, G (2007), 'Cunning, loathsome and unprincipled: The racist tail wags the welfare dog', *Journal of Social Policy*, October: 605–623.
- 53 See Craig, G (2008) 'The limits of compromise: social justice, "race" and multiculturalism', Ch 11 in Craig, G, Burchardt, T and Gordon, D (eds), *Social Justice and Public Policy*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- 54 See footnote 41
- 55 The quote is attributed to Professor Marilyn Taylor. For a discussion of the way in which partnership working has dominated much policy and service development see Powell, M., Glendinning, C and Rummery, K (2002), *Partnerships, Governance and New Labour*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- 56 For example, one local council was aware that at a time it was being consulted over post office closures, the Post Office had already made a number of key decisions such as ordering the vehicles which would be used when many local offices were closed.
- 57 This was also behind the opposition of many third sector organisations to the increasing privatisation and 'outsourcing' of public services.
- 58 See for example Craig, G et al (2006), *A21CVCS4Y+H*, Leeds: Yorkshire Forward; and Craig, G et al (2008), *Every Organisation Matters: Mapping the children and young people's voluntary and community sectors*, London: NCVCCO/NCVYS.
- 59 See, for example, the burgeoning literature criticising the failure of the government's New Deal for Communities to offer meaningful participation and control over decision-making to local communities; eg Dinham, A (2005), 'Empowered or over-powered: the real experiences of local participation in the UK's New Deal for Communities', *Community Development Journal*, Vol 40, No 3: 301-312.
- 60 Barnardos was established by Tom Barnardo to care for destitute children, ToCH and the associated Talbot House Settlement, by the Rev Tubby Clayton as a focus for social and volunteering activity.
- 61 See for example Cabinet Office (2003), *Ethnic minorities and the labour market*, London: Cabinet Office at www.strategy.gov.uk which demonstrates the fact that most minority ethnic people do far less well in the labour market than the majority, with some minorities, such as those of Bangladeshi origin, doing particularly badly.
- 62 See eg Craig, G et al (2006), *A 20CVCS4Y+H*, Leeds: Yorkshire Forward, for a review of the relevant literature.
- 63 See, for example, the annual reports of the Scottish Executive which were originally (but no longer) titled *Social Justice, a Scotland where everyone matters*.
- 64 See eg Acheson, N (2005) 'State welfare and the development of voluntary action', *Voluntas*, Vol 16 No 2, June: 181-202.

The **Carnegie UK Trust** was established in 1913 to address the changing needs of the people in the UK and Ireland, in particular those of the less powerful in society. Our 21st century role focuses on strengthening democracy and civil society and enhancing the well-being of rural communities. The Trust also continues to support approaches to effective philanthropy in the UK and Ireland.

Published by the Carnegie UK Trust:

CUKT
Andrew Carnegie House
Pittencrieff Street
Dunfermline
Fife, KY12 8AW

This report and other Carnegie UK Trust reports are available free to download from our website, www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk. If you would like further information about our work please contact us on 01383 721445 or info@carnegieuk.org.

Scottish charity SC 012799 operating in the UK and Ireland

Disclaimer: The Carnegie UK Trust normally does not take institutional positions on public policy issues; the views presented here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Trust, its officers, staff, or trustees.