

The Noel Buxton Trust



One Hundred Years of Grant Making
1919 - 2019



Our Founder, Noel Edward Noel-Buxton,
1st Baron Noel-Buxton
(1869 - 1948)

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This year marks the centenary of the Noel Buxton Trust. It's an apt time to reflect on the work of the Trust from its inception, shortly after the end of the First World War, to the present day. An earlier account of the Noel Buxton Trust by the Trust's Secretary, Margaret Beard, charted events in the first 70 years. She described the vision behind the Trust:

“The Noel Buxton Trust was established by a Trust Deed dated 28 June 1919 and the Trustees held their first meeting on 7 November of that year. The original Trustees were the Founder, Noel Edward Buxton (later the first Lord Noel-Buxton), his wife Lucy, his brother Charles Roden Buxton, and his sister Victoria de Bunsen.

“The objects of the Trust were drawn by the Founder to achieve social and economic progress in the broadest sense, by both action and research in Britain and throughout the world. In setting up the Trust, Noel Buxton was inspired by the example of his great-grandfather, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton. Best known for his part in the Emancipation of the Slaves throughout the British Empire, Fowell Buxton was energetic in promoting a variety of philanthropic causes which have been influential in shaping the policy of the Trust.

“At their first meeting the Trustees agreed to make eight grants [*a total of £3,950, equating to £200,000 in 2019, adjusting for inflation*]. Among these were the Fight the Famine Council, the Armenia Relief Fund, and a Bibliography on War and Peace, each of these beginning a special strand in the Trust's policy.”

Margaret Beard (1989) *The Noel Buxton Trust, A Brief Account*

PART ONE: THE FIRST 70 YEARS

From the early days, Trustees were committed to supporting a range of issues, including intractable problems and unpopular causes. Margaret Beard described the work under the Trust's five main themes. Below are some of the notable achievements in each area, abridged from her Account.

1. Child and Family Welfare

"The Fight the Famine Council, which became the Save the Children Fund, had been founded by Eglantyne Jebb and supported by Victoria de Bunsen [both Noel Buxton Trustees]. The welfare of children and the needs of the family have continued to be strongly represented among the Trust's beneficiaries. The Trust helped finance the original research of Dr Mia Kellmer Pringle at Birmingham University on the social and emotional development of children, and this work led to the setting up of the National Children's Bureau which the Trust continued to support.

"The Trust supported causes before they gained wider recognition. A grant was made to the Nursery Schools Association in the 1920s to fund work with pre-school-age children. In the 1960s Trustees funded research into the facts relating to abortion. Family Planning was supported, as was the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child (now One-Parent Families)."

2. Race Relations, Minorities, and Refugees

"The Trust took an early interest in race relations, minorities, and refugees. The records of the Trust reflect in miniature the history of the twentieth century: Armenians in the early 1920s; Abyssinian

refugees from Mussolini's invasion, refugees after the Spanish Civil War, Jews and others fleeing from Hitler in Germany and Central Europe, relief in China following the Japanese invasion, in the 1930s; Tibetan refugees in Nepal in the 1960s; and Asian refugees from Uganda, other parts of Africa and Southeast Asia in the 1970s and 1980s (another wave of Ethiopian refugees were helped in the mid-1970s to make a living for themselves by training provided in Kenya). For many years the Trust gave awards to research undertaken by the Minority Rights Group and the Refugee Studies Programme at Oxford University.”

3. Africa

“Development in Africa has always been a strong part of the Trust's policy. This was due to the particular experience of some of the Trustees as well as to the Trustees' perception of Britain's responsibility for its colonial and former colonial territories.

“South Africa was seen by the Trustees as a potential source of racial conflict. In the 1930s support was given to the Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg, as it was to Senator and Mrs Ballinger in their work for the non-white people of South Africa. Education in other parts of Africa has also been promoted. Grants were made to Makerere University Uganda, to the School of Social Work in Salisbury (now Harare), and to the Legal Resources Foundation in Zimbabwe in 1987 to help train magistrates.

“Trustees' assistance to Africa has gone towards technical development, albeit on a small and 'alternative' or 'appropriate' scale ... through organisations such as WaterAid, ApT Design and Development, and the Machynlleth Centre for Alternative Technology. The Overseas Development Institute received a grant for several years towards the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Overseas Development.”

4. International Peace and Disarmament

“[From the early years] the Trust promoted international peace and disarmament. In the 1920s and 1930s support was given to such bodies as the National Peace Council, the League of Nations Union, the Peace with Ireland Committee and the Friends Service Council. During the war considerable thought was given to the question of reconciliation after the war. From its inception help was given to the United Nations Association. A United Nations Studentship was financed at University College Swansea for several years from 1960, and a Noel Buxton Studentship in International Relations was established at the London School of Economics from 1963 to 1979. More recently help has been given for research at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex on the effects of armament sales and disarmament on the Third World.”

5. Penal Reform and the Welfare of Prisoners and Families

“The final major area of the Trust's concern was penal matters: penal reform, the rehabilitation of prisoners and ex-prisoners, and the welfare of their families. The first grant in this field was to the Howard League in 1929, and the National Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty was supported in 1932. Since then most of the major bodies in this area have been helped: the Howard League is still receiving a recurrent grant and others include the Apex Trust, NACRO, the Prison Reform Trust, the Rainer Foundation and the Society of Voluntary Associates, as well as a number of smaller local organisations helping ex-prisoners, such as the New Bridge and the Circle Trust, and groups doing preventative work among young people. Help for prisoners' families has been channeled through the Prisoners' Wives and Families Society, the Prisoners' Wives Service, and the Scottish body Families Outside.”

PART TWO: THE LAST 30 YEARS

Like all grant makers set up in perpetuity, the Noel Buxton Trust must grapple with the perennial question of how to interpret the Founder's wishes in a modern context. Lord Noel-Buxton was keen that the Trust should pursue both philanthropic action and reforms supporting the welfare of marginalised groups, with the aim of achieving the 'maximum of good' for all people.

Richenda Wallace, the Founder's great-niece, became Chairman of the Trust in 1983 and served for 29 years until 2012 when she was succeeded as Chair by her niece, Emma Compton-Burnett. Under their leadership the Noel Buxton Trust has sought to respond to the Founder's vision in ways that are both relevant in tackling persistent social problems and make good use of the resources at their disposal.

The Trustees are conscious that they do not act alone. In 1989, the Trust became a founder member of the Association of Charitable Foundations (ACF), where Simon Buxton served for six years on the Executive Board. The Trust remains an active member of ACF. It helps to share good practice with other funders, led by the Trust's manager Anne Murray; it learns about activity in the wider voluntary sector; and it feels part of a community of grant makers with access to the government departments responsible for policies affecting the lives and life chances of the Trust's beneficiaries. This has become increasingly important in recent decades, marked by the growing complexity of the relationship between government and the voluntary sector.

The Trust ranks as a small family fund, currently holding approximately £3m in investments and disbursing £120,000 each year to charitable causes. The Trustees do not rely on fundraising or donations and so are free to make their own decisions. Today's Trustees, like those who preceded them, use this independence to fund work on issues that are

unpopular, supporting people who tend to be overlooked and disadvantaged in our society.

Developments in grant making

Through the first half of the 1990s, the Trust broadly continued its earlier work under the themes of Child and Family Welfare; Race Relations, Minorities and Refugees; Africa; International Peace and Disarmament; and Penal Reform and the Welfare of Prisoners and their Families. Grant making reflected the diversity of voluntary groups in the UK.

Under the theme of child and family welfare, beneficiaries included local groups running holiday schemes for children in deprived areas, and branches of organisations including Women's Aid and Home-Start. Race relations, minorities and refugees were served by grants such as those to Minority Rights Group, Refugees in Jordan, and the Refugee Studies Programme at Oxford University.

Work in Africa focused on education and training, essential infrastructure, and the welfare of children, especially orphans. Action on Poverty received several grants, as did WaterAid, Y Care International and Africare. The welfare of prisoners and their families was promoted by recurring grants to the Prisoners' Family and Friends Service and the Help and Advice Line for Offenders and Wives. The theme of international peace and disarmament proved more difficult to fund effectively, although in the early 1990s the Trustees supported the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust and the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education, both doing work to integrate a divided community closer to home.

The majority of the Trust's spending took the form of small grants supporting community organisations with their core costs or the running costs of particular services. The Trustees also made funds available for larger organisations campaigning for reform in the areas

that the Trust was promoting. The Howard League for Penal Reform and the Prison Reform Trust were long-standing recipients of grants to keep prison reform on the UK Government's agenda. The Trust funded Family Rights Group's campaigning work, giving a voice to families in conflict with social services about plans for their children. The Overseas Development Institute and the National Children's Bureau were funded to provide the secretariats of the All-Party Parliamentary Groups on Overseas Development and on Children. The Trustees stepped slightly outside their usual remit, to fund a campaign by NACRO and International Penal Reform against capital punishment in Jamaica, because they felt it was such an important issue and might encourage other Commonwealth countries to repeal the death penalty.

In 1996, conscious that the wide remit of the Trust attracted many more applications than it could fund, the Trustees decided to streamline their support into three main areas: Africa, Children and Families, and Penal (current and former prisoners). These areas have remained our key themes to the present, with some small refinements along the way.

1. Africa

Trustees, led by Brendan Gormley and Jon Snow, began to move away from funding African educational projects, which can attract international aid from government and other donors. Instead, the aim has been to fund projects promoting sustainable livelihoods, with special attention to projects for women and women-headed households. These included a series of grants to Excellent Development, for sand dams providing water management in arid zones.

From 2010, the geographical focus moved away from South Africa, Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia, to Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and Uganda. This decision reflected Trustees' desire to support people in greatest hardship. They placed their emphasis on work in urban slums and semi-arid regions, where poverty is extreme, with many grants supporting micro-credit schemes and business development. Some of this work was done through UK-registered charities such as Build Africa and Advantage Africa.

More recently, however, the Trustees felt it important to demonstrate their faith in the capacity of African communities to develop their own ways of working. This has been achieved in two ways. Since 2016, Trustees have committed about a third of their Africa budget through AFFORD, a UK organisation that supports economic development in Africa using strong diaspora links. Via AFFORD's network, the Trust has been able to fund a series of small-scale, community-based groups in East Africa. In another move, the Trustees have given direct funding to several African organisations, including the Dandora Dumpsite Rehabilitation Group and Trace Kenya, notwithstanding the difficulty for a small grant maker in assessing overseas work.

2. Family

Family work in the UK was shifting too. Trustees had long supported play groups and children's holiday schemes, via very small and sometimes repeat grants, but newer funders with much larger budgets, such as BBC Children in Need, were also covering this kind of work. Jo Tunnard and Joyce Morton, lead Trustees in this area, decided to focus more on family-based projects that plugged gaps where there was little or no statutory provision.

The result was an increase in grants for voluntary organisations working with families affected by domestic abuse, children in care, and families from black and minority ethnic and refugee communities.

Family Action was funded to support single parents, and Who Cares? received regular contributions for its work with children in and leaving care. Asylum Aid was given core grants over several years for its work with refugee and asylum seekers' families. And, in line with the Trust's ethos of tackling unpopular causes, Trustees were among the first to fund Respect, a charity dedicated to work with those (overwhelmingly men) who perpetrate domestic abuse.

In 2012, shortly after Katie Buxton came on board, the Trust narrowed its remit further by devoting its total family budget to work with families affected by domestic abuse. This coincided with an increasing recognition in society and government of this pernicious and widespread problem. The Trust's grants have funded local groups to run support and advice projects for women and child survivors of abuse, and there have also been grants for Family Rights Group's advocacy work and for the work of several organisations dedicated to helping men acknowledge, understand and change their abusive behaviour.

3. Penal

Between 1996 and 2008, grants for penal work continued to address the welfare of prisoners and former offenders, support for prisoners' families, deterrence projects with young people at risk of getting involved in crime, and the campaigning work for prison reform.

In the last decade, however, steered by Katie Aston and Simon Buxton, Trustees have focused on those who are marginalised, even within the prison population: women prisoners, those leaving prison after longer sentences and, latterly, those who have committed sex offences. In a related field about loss of liberty, Trustees supported asylum seekers held at immigration detention centres.

Grants have been awarded for projects that help prisoners develop the life skills that will enhance their successful release from prison and

deflect them from further offending, such as SOFA's grant to engage current and former prisoners in work experience restoring household goods, and the Landworks scheme at Dartington Hall in Devon that offers prisoners intensive practical support and employment opportunities. Community chaplaincies have been funded to help prisoners make the difficult transition from prison back into the community. Unlock, a charity run by and for former offenders, has had grants to run a peer support helpline after release. The grant to Birth Companions provided pregnant women and new mothers with ante- and post-natal care while in prison.

Grants have also been awarded to support arts activities in prisons, such as Pimlico Opera's grants for musical productions and the *Rubies Project*, a poetry-writing programme run by RECOOP for older women prisoners. The value of arts projects includes helping prisoners build or maintain relationships with their families. An example of this is the grant to Create for *Inside Stories*, which enabled fathers to make story books for their children to have and read at home.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF GRANT MAKING

As the Noel Buxton Trust reaches its centenary, the current Board of Trustees has reflected on its current work and the aspirations of the Founder. Conscious of being a small grant maker, the Trust has tended to fund small charities with an ethos of harnessing the expertise of the people they help, as well as encouraging the involvement of volunteers. The Trustees believe that modest grants of around £3,000 per year could have proportionally more impact in such charities than in those larger organisations where fundraising has become increasingly professionalised. They also remain concerned to balance support for work with beneficiary groups at the 'grass-roots' level with the funding of campaigning organisations whose pressure for reforms can offer a wider and lasting impact on society.

On a practical level, the Trustees have aimed to channel resources to organisations and projects delivering tangible benefits. They have also encouraged recipients to explain how they evaluate their funded work, including reflecting on the successes and difficulties that arise. Trustees draw on these insights when considering requests from other applicants. These questions, recurring themes for all grant makers, remain part of the continuing dialogue at our Trustee meetings. Over the years, Trustees have been flexible in their funding, drawing on their experience as grant makers and as people with professional and other experience. They have sought to respond positively to organisations who are keen to trial new ways of working in light of feedback from those who use and run their services.

Today, Trustees remain committed to the three areas of work (Africa, Family, and Penal) that they have funded consistently for the last quarter century. Taking investment advice from John Littlewood, the Trustees have recently decided to set aside additional funding, from our capital reserves, for work that might have a more lasting impact in these areas.

In the spirit of Lord Noel-Buxton, Trustees remain alert to the interests of people who are marginalised in society, and they intend to continue promoting welfare and justice through philanthropic giving that retains a strong focus on practical advocacy and social reform.

Our Trustees

The Trust has always been supported by members of the Buxton family who serve as Trustees. Lord Noel-Buxton chaired the Trust from 1919 until his death in 1948. Gilbert Ponsonby, nephew of the Founder and grandfather of our current Chair, deserves special mention. He joined the Board in 1928 and served as Chair from 1948 to 1975. Over the years, many other people who share the ethos of the Trust have joined the Board, bringing with them the skills and expertise needed to keep the Trust relevant in a changing world.

Anne Murray
Trust Manager
December 2019

Former Trustees

Trustee	Buxton family connection
Noel Noel-Buxton MP, 1 st Baron Noel-Buxton <i>Chairman 1919-1948</i>	Founder
Rufus Noel-Buxton, 2 nd Baron Noel-Buxton	Son of NB
Martin Noel-Buxton , 3 rd Baron Noel-Buxton	Grandson of NB
Walter Birmingham	
Professor David Birmingham	
John Bury	
Rohan Butler CMG	
Charles Roden Buxton MP	Brother of NB
Paul Buxton	Second cousin once removed of NB
Victoria de Bunsen	Sister of NB
Sir Bernard de Bunsen, <i>Chairman 1948 and 1976 - 83</i>	Nephew of NB
Ronald de Bunsen	Nephew of NB
Professor David Donnison	
Leah Harvey	
Gwendoline Hill	
Eglantyne Buxton	
Lady Lucy Noel-Buxton MP	Wife of NB
James Midgley	
Judge Angelica Mitchell	
Joyce Morton	
JK Owens	
Gilbert Ponsonby, <i>Chairman 1948-1975</i>	Nephew of NB
Jon Snow	
John Spencer	
Professor Hugh Tinker	
Richenda Wallace, <i>Chair 1983 -2012</i>	Great-niece of NB

The Board of Trustees in 2019

Trustee	Buxton family connection
Tahera Aanchawan	
Katie Aston OBE	
Hon Simon Buxton	Grandson of NB
Katie Buxton	Great grand-daughter of NB
Emma Compton-Burnett <i>Chair 2013 - present</i>	Great grand-niece of NB
Sir Brendan Gormley MBE KCMG	
John Littlewood	
Jo Tunnard, <i>Vice Chair 1999 - present</i>	

Secretaries and manager over the years

Name	Position
Gilbert Ponsonby	Secretary and Trustee
George R Harvey	Secretary
Mrs V McLaughlin	Secretary
Mr J Gordon	Secretary
Margaret Beard	Secretary
Ray Waters	Secretary
Anne Murray	Manager

Front cover: Buxton Memorial Fountain
 Designed by Samuel Sanders Teulon
 Commissioned by Charles Buxton MP
 Photograph by Jo Tunnard

The Fountain celebrates the emancipation of slaves in 1834 and commemorates those who fought for the abolition of slavery, including Thomas Fowell Buxton (1786 - 1845).

It currently stands in Victoria Tower Gardens, London.

Back cover: Designed and drawn by Helen Wallace



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