



Changing Minds – The Financing of the Pro-Mass Immigration Lobby

Summary

1. The Daily Mail recently reported on the Diana Memorial Fund's financing of a campaign supporting large scale immigration¹. We have now looked into this issue and found a systematic attempt by a small group of charities to influence public opinion on immigration by a campaign entitled "Changing Minds". They are, of course, free to act in this way but the "Migration Observatory" which claims to be impartial is in fact a key vehicle in this campaign but, while naming its funders on its website, does not mention its connection with this "Changing Minds" project. There must be some question as to whether such activity is appropriate to a university.

Background

2. The Princess Diana Memorial Fund (The Fund) closed in December 2012 after spending the resources at its disposal. While it was still in operation it commissioned a piece of research called 'A Funder Conundrum'² which reviewed the experiences of The Fund as well as its partners and grant recipients. This document also outlined The Fund's approach and objectives.

3. Since 2007 The Fund's approach had been to achieve a small number of social change objectives rather than, say, to provide service delivery³. Their work was organised into four programmes. One of which was the Refugee and Asylum Seekers Initiative (RASI). Within the RASI programme is the "Changing Minds" programme - a collaboration between the Fund, the Barrow Cadbury Trust, Unbound Philanthropy and a number of other charities⁴. Its purpose is to "track, inform and influence public attitudes towards migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to alter the dynamics of integration on the ground and provide the space for the development of humane policies for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants."⁵

1 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2308315/Diana-fund-hijacked-left-Cash-diverted-pro-immigration-campaign.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>

2 <http://www.dianaprincessofwalesmemorialfund.org/information-and-resources/funder-conundrum>

3 Ibid Page 5

4 These include the Oak Foundation; the Trust for London; the Paul Hamlyn Foundation; the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, among others.

5 Ibid Page 48

4. The main areas of focus have been⁶:

- Funding for the Migration Observatory at Oxford
- The creation and financing of new think-tank, British Future
- Funding the inclusion of questions in the British Social Attitudes survey
- Supporting the Institute for Public Policy Research's "rapid rebuttal" work, presumably intended to counter the arguments of those who are opposed to large scale immigration.
- Funding the Migrants' Rights Network

5. Each Changing Minds project is operated with a different combination of funders. For example, to create the Migration Observatory, The Fund combined with Unbound Philanthropy- who awarded the Observatory \$525,000 over three years – and the Barrow Cadbury Trust who awarded an undisclosed figure. In 2009, the Fund awarded a three-year grant worth £350,000⁷. The Migration Observatory was officially launched in March 2011.

6. The Fund's decision to spend all its resources led it to fund programmes that would continue to have effect long after it had gone. In funding the Changing Minds project The Fund saw this as a long term approach⁸ as "it could easily take twenty years before there is any noticeable effect (at the level of societal change) from the work of the Migration Observatory or British Future."

7. The Fund saw itself as an "agent of change" with the Changing Minds project described as trying to "influence public opinion"⁹ and "change public opinion"¹⁰.

8. The Migration Observatory website and the British Future website list their funders but neither mention the Changing Minds project in either their self descriptions or their output.

9. Indeed there has been little public mention of the Changing Minds project. A report of an event entitled "Voice for Change" and held at City Hall (London) in 2011 describes how Sarah Mulley of the IPPR introduced the Changing Minds Project, which is "aimed at changing public opinion on migration in the UK"¹¹. In December 2011 the Barrow Cadbury newsletter featured a letter from the chief executive which described how the Changing Minds funding collaborative had successfully set up British Future¹². In November 2012 the annual conference of the Association of Charitable Funders listed a break out session entitled "Working together on Changing Minds – reflections on deep collaboration".¹³ It was described thus:

"Changing negative attitudes towards migrants is an example of the sort of 'wicked' social problem that foundations are increasingly likely to encounter – resistant to resolution and where the effort to solve one aspect of the problem may reveal or create other problems. Despite this, a number of funders committed to social justice have formed the Changing Minds group, working together to: better understand the nature of the issue; strategically align their grantmaking; and balance outcomes based approaches with nurturing a spirit of inquiry.

Speakers will describe the work of Changing Minds to achieve attitudinal change and critically reflect on the collaboration.

The speakers were from The Fund, Joseph Rowntree Trust and Barrow Cadbury Trust.

6 Ibid Page 83

7 Ibid Page 84

8 Ibid Page 48

9 Ibid Page 74

10 Ibid Page 40

11 http://www.migrantvoice.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=198%3Avoices-for-change-migrant-voice-round-table-event&catid=44%3Auk-work&Itemid=4

12 <http://www.bctrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/BCT-Newsletter-Winter-2011-122.pdf>

13 Page Six http://www.acf.org.uk/uploadedFiles/Networking_and_events/Conference_2012/ACF%20conference%20brochure%20-%20web%20ready.pdf

10. The latest mention of the Changing Minds project came in January 2013 in the blog of a group called Refugee and Migrant Forum of East London (who also attended the City Hall conference in 2011). The blog was a negative review of the BBC Panorama programme on illegal immigration. It included mention of the "excellent" Migration Observatory and described it as "another Changing Mind's initiative, but possibly only one of a few that has the power to actually change minds¹⁴".

11. There must be some question as to whether it is appropriate for Oxford University, an institution dedicated to impartial pursuit of truth through scholarship, research and teaching, to accept outside funding in order to harbour a unit which is a component of a project designed to change public opinion in a very defined manner, and which, very unusually, is more concerned with disseminating information rather than conducting original research.

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14 <http://ramfelspeaksout.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/ghostbusting-with-panorama-national-and.html>