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Cripplegate Foundation

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) through the lens of Charity Finance

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Who we are?

- Cripplegate's history goes back to the year 1500 where the first recorded gift, of £40, was made.
- We work exclusively in Islington and the Cripplegate ward of the City of London.
- Our vision is of a society where everyone has the opportunity to live a rewarding life free from poverty and inequality.
- We try to achieve this by:
 - Giving grants and support to organisations working in Islington to benefit residents
 - Developing and working in effective partnerships with local and national organisations to identify need, and bringing more resources into our area of benefit
 - Promoting and championing effective ways to tackle disadvantage

How we started

- According to Trust for London, Islington ranks in the lowest third of London boroughs on child poverty and income inequality indicators so it has always been important for us to address this.
- Cripplegate's ethos was always about addressing inequality. However, we recognise that we shouldn't take this for granted; we wanted to explore how we embed this in the organisation so it is intentional.
- At the same time, it was important that we addressed all inequities; intersectionality was a common thread.
- Above all, we recognised that by being diverse and inclusive this would make the Foundation stronger and fit for purpose.

What happened next

- Important that we had a plan that was demonstrably linked to the Foundation's 3-year Corporate Strategy.
- The need for change came at a time when we were recruiting for new governors (trustees) so there was a real tangible opportunity to start with something meaningful, which we did.
- Forming a working party of staff that met fortnightly to discuss progress against our plan and to take things forward.
- Set up a DEI committee which reports to the board, critically appraises the DEI plan and monitors progress. This now has become an embedded part of the main Cripplegate Board of Trustees.

Role of the Finance Team

- Recognise the breadth of your work and the opportunity there is to influence: Budgeting, Investments, Recruitment, Properties, Policies etc.
- Investment portfolios; huge scope for change...How do you challenge your investment managers, who you bank with and how your reserves are invested? See the work of the [Charities Responsible Investment Network](#).
- Annual accounts – Is it accessible? Who is your audience? Should sell the work of your charity, but does it speak the same language?
- Challenge accepted practice e.g. collection of data. Why collect data? How is it used? Does this extend beyond a numbers game? See the ACF's [DEI Data Standard](#).
- Origins of Wealth – really important for context, but arguments for and against this work. Need to take an internal position.

Role of the Finance Team

- Other stakeholders...suppliers (Amazon?) , contractors aligned with mission? Review Governance processes...recruitment, agenda of committees, use of away days etc. Importance of lived experience on the board.
- Participatory involvement e.g. in grant making and investment decision making
- Resourcing the work; time and money! Budget appropriately and create space for change to occur.
- Use your networks! LinkedIn, CFG groups, ACF etc.
- Does DEI feature on your internal control framework e.g. Risk Register? Make it part of your monitoring process and address the risk of doing nothing!

Achievements...

- Governance – Had two recruitment rounds aimed at further diversifying our board. Board now has representation of over 70% women and over 40% people from BAMER communities.
- Programmes – Did a grant audit using the Race Equality Alliance’s audit tool and used this to create a new programme fund for organisations led by, and supporting, people from marginalised groups.
- Comms – Making our website more accessible, fonts, sizing, language, translation etc. Comms guidelines established to help respond to external environment.
- Resources – Looking at recruitment and equality monitoring forms; why, how and what we do with the information. Trialling a more conversational approach!
- Lunchtime Learning Sessions –Conversation with staff, tenants and trustees to openly discuss all issues relating to DEI. No agenda, no judgement!

...and What we've learned

- Set concrete goals, measurable goals and evaluate these regularly. These shouldn't be tokenistic, but should be ambitious!
- Ensure minoritized staff are involved and contribute, but that the burden doesn't just fall on them to lead.
- Encourage open and honest conversations and be prepared to be out of your comfort zone.
- Accept that we may get it wrong and understand that we may need to change.
- Difficulty with hiring consultants and bringing in external people that may not understand context or internal dynamics. Need humility, patience and open-mindedness.
- Creating a culture of change in a small organisation and recognising internal power dynamics
- Cutting through the jargon...making it more real
- Challenges with positive recruitment in participatory grant panels.

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Get in touch!

Our Plan: <https://cripplegate.org/about-us/our-policies/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/>

Please share with us your thoughts and plans! Get in touch:

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Thank you!