



Promise Foundation

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Chair's Report 2020 (Mike Hulme - Chair of the Trustees Group)

Having started as another successful year for our charity and with much hope, 2019/20 has proved to be the most challenging yet due to the outbreak of the Covid 19 viral pandemic. Our public benefit remains a service to targeted young people based predominantly around the 13 to 18 age range in secondary schools, and those from backgrounds of high deprivation or significant need.

Our peer mentoring model suffered a period of suspension as the schools we serve closed resulting in our ability to continue to supply a face to face service being curtailed. This presented key challenges to our operational model with our adult volunteers unable to provide our key purpose when this was probably most needed. It has been abundantly clear that the vulnerable young people we target required such support, enhanced confidence and help in addressing their social divide which has become even more exposed during the lockdown.

The Trustees have considered how our core purpose might be re-addressed within a much changed environment in which we now operate and have re-assigned our direction whilst looking to reaffirm our core values. These remains as: - *"We are committed to social mobility and our belief that this should be a collective responsibility"* and we fully understand the continued need to reinforce closing many of the opportunity gaps now unfortunately re-widened. Trustees recognise that the C-19 pandemic has impacted our target group of young people significantly and the difference made through mentoring support has been eroded. We are therefore confident that our need is still paramount and that there is a shifting requirement to re-assign our methodology of approach to mentoring support.

As with many charitable organisations, the C-19 closedown and ensuing effects this has had on our strategic planning has resulted in a reflective analysis on how we might now operate. We will need to refocus our ambitious five-year plan and will need to consolidate our current position within the three schools in which we currently operate. The Trustees recognise that this and the forthcoming year will present particular and unique challenges and there is a desire to continue to meet these with enthusiasm and a positive spirit.

Central Co-ordination: The work of the Central Co-ordinator (Khadija) has been somewhat remodelled since the March 2020 closure of schools and we were able to sustain her duties through a mixture of remote working and continuous development duties. There were no furlough arrangements made because the charity did not qualify for this scheme due to our continuous funding status through our sponsors at the time. We were not dependent upon sales, footfall charges or subscriptions during this period and therefore were not penalised fiscally.

Central co-ordination time was divided between maintaining contact with our mentors and mentees and devising a model of remote mentoring within the guidelines and principles of safeguarding our young people within each school's policy. A pilot programme enabled testing of such an adaptation with initial matters resolved around access to sufficient technology and ample virtual connection for both parties. We were also able to co-ordinate our work to support and compliment that of the schools utilising such IT platforms as 'Google classroom', 'Google meet' and 'Zoom'.

As our schools emerged from lockdown and into the new academic year 2020/21, the charity found itself in a position to pursue this new operational platform within our three centres. Khadija has conducted training for existing mentors and engaged in a programme of capacity building to recruit new volunteers from our community. The Trustees have devised a supportive action plan for the remodelling of this approach with targets set to guide Central Co-ordination towards a revised structure.

Initial analysis from Khadija provides encouraging outcomes and potentially positive recruitment towards the new methodology for virtual mentoring. Khadija has been guided to follow the direction as set below to address potential success in our revised operating structure:

Establish new operating structures for PF mentoring across all three schools.

Ensure that all three institutions are supportive and fully compliant with PF aims and objectives.

Develop systems for on-line mentoring for all mentee relationships.

Ensure that comprehensive training is offered to all existing mentors for on-line interaction with mentees.

Work with safeguarding leads in each PF school to ensure that mentoring processes meet each school's child protection protocols.

Liaise and regularly support PF co-ordinators at NCC and CCA.

Liaise closely with current funding organisations via reporting/publicity and link development meetings as required.

Work on capacity building via recruitment of PF volunteers.

Continually pursue links with potential supportive organisations and develop close working relationships with individuals/leaders in such organisations.

Regularly review IT requirements with PF mentees ensuring that all are able to access on-line mentoring successfully.

Continue to plan for future visits/experiences for PF young people as part of the 'Skills Club' agenda.

Prepare an update of this target list on a regular two-week review schedule for MH.

Prepare a report set against the targets listed for Trustees meetings as calendared.

Trustees recognise that such an operational change should continue to reinforce their remit and a desire to continue to make a significant difference to the target group of young people involved with our charity.

Mentoring: the mentoring of our young people has been somewhat disrupted during the reporting year with so much needing refocussing due to the C-19 pandemic. Most mentor/mentee relationships were suspended for several months and were unable to fully complete and impact upon potential outcomes.

It has therefore not been fully possible to provide the usual data from our summative and evaluative questionnaire or to fully track student outcomes as previously reported. However, data captured leading to the C-19 closure suggests the following:

51 young people from disadvantaged communities received mentoring and training and made significant progress.

- 89% of students have made progress in at least two core subjects.
- Teachers reported that 94% of mentees made an impressive improvement in their grades in English; followed by a 73% improvement in Science and 66% in Maths.
- 77% of students said that 'attending weekly mentoring sessions had made them feel more confident'.
- 74% of students agreed with the statement 'mentoring has helped me to do better in school'.
- 85% of students agreed that 'attending mentoring sessions has had a positive impact on my self-esteem'; with over a third saying that mentoring extremely made an impact.
- 97% of students felt more positive about how they view their future.
- 92% of mentees said that their mentors provided regular feedback and constructive criticism in order to help them achieve their targets.

- A mentee said: "We set goals at the beginning of each term, this motivated me to want to achieve them. We also created study plans for exams".

51 Adults comprising of volunteers from the local area delivered and received mentoring and training. All of these were involved in a mentoring relationship. A number of adult mentors say that they now feel confident enough to get involved in their local community.

100 parents benefitted from having their children participate in the mentoring programme.

60% are single parents or families otherwise identified as having 'complex' needs such as crowded housing.

Fundraising: The need to attract sufficient funding to enable pursuit of our continued support for the targeted young people we serve remains the fundamental business of the foundation. It is increasingly clear that sustaining sufficient grants to cover costs is to be a huge challenge during the forthcoming year.

We currently find ourselves financially secure and able to meet outgoings and salary costs within our projected forecasts, but the need to replace such funding has become a huge difficulty within the new and emerging funding climate.

The work of our Central Co-ordinator remains on a three day per week basis and we are continuing with our employment relationship with our host school QPCS. This does guarantee some funding stability up until the end of the academic year 2020, but our other two main sources are due to lapse within months.

Within this reporting period, we have funding secured from the following organisations:

Queens Park Community School
Wembley Park Community Fund
VSIF Brent

Source funding groups have also experienced a period of strain and a new focus resulting in a higher demand from an increasing number of bodies seeking support. The Trustees understand that there will be even greater challenges in raising sufficient funds to sustain the work of the charity and are looking, once more, at how to secure financing for the new programme of mentoring. We have again maintained solvency during another challenging cash-flow and budgeting year and are mindful of the need to require further successful funding streams during the year 2021.

Funds – reserves/debts/income/expenditure: Trustees continue to be informed at each meeting of the status of the foundation's financial standing via a detailed cash flow/account balance reconciliation provided to by our volunteer Will Leaning. His latest report is supplied as an appendix to this document.

I can report that our accounts have been dutifully and annually audited to September 2019 by *Rouse Partners LLP* being submitted to Companies House for the record in accordance with legislative requirements. Trustees have payed due regard and diligence to the audited accounts during their meetings as required.

Operational organisation:

Strategic planning – The Trustees were able to construct a strategic plan for the academic year thus enabling a coherent overview of our objectives and desired outcomes. The strategic plan has enabled roles and responsibilities to be better understood whilst providing important evaluative scoping for the work of the Central Co-ordinator. The plan has been somewhat curtailed in its impact and status due to the C-19 school closures and it is anticipated that a revue of this will be replaced by the more pressing need of direct targeted working as previously outlined. The exceptional circumstances by which the foundation has had to

operate and a lack of reasonable benchmarking against outcomes has served to abandon desired progress data outturn at the time of writing.

The role of the Trustees – The Trustees group continues to provide impact upon the strategic dynamics of the foundation and our continued support for the core purpose has remained resolute during the immense change enforced upon us this year. There is a recognised need to support the re-modelling of our methodologies and the Trustees have made important and hugely valued contributions towards our new goals. Meetings have been conducted remotely and much business has continued to be as effective within this methodology.

Safeguarding: Trustees are fully aware of their legal duty to dispense their responsibilities under safeguarding legislation. We continue to uphold matters across our three organisations and fully operate and comply with the policy for each. This has become even more acute during our work with on-line mentoring development and there has been liaison with each school DSL to provide continuity and conformity. Khadija continues to monitor suitable DBS checking with all volunteers and at the establishment where they will be working. She is also the DSL for the foundation and, whilst my certification for the L3 training has now lapsed, it is understood that the status is currently rolled forward due to training sessions being suspended because of C-19.

Looking forward: It is a time of challenge and remodelling for our charity to meet the needs of a changing landscape during the C-19 pandemic and the ascent into the ‘new normal’. The charity must meet such tests and emerge offering a remodelled service as required. It is difficult to establish exactly how long or in what context such a revised operational model will be needed and if this will then remain our working standard. I feel that we can be confident in the foundation’s ability to absorb such changes and we may have to totally revamp our method of delivery across the charity should the need arise.

I am certain that the Trustees will be able to realise this and absorb the necessary changes required and to tackle the challenges to raise adequate funding for our small charity. It is unfortunate that we have not fully realised our goal of further expansion in 2019/20, but the charity has been able to consolidate good practice and rely upon our strong operational model in surviving this test. Great organisations cannot simply ‘stand still’ and I am confident that Promise Foundation can meet the emerging needs and rigour of 2021.

Mike Hulme



Chair of the Trustees (Promise Foundation)