



**Centris : Annual Report**

**A review of activities from**

**January 2007 to December 2007**

**Centris**

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## Introduction

This is the annual report of CENTRIS (officially known as the Centre for Innovation in Social Policy and Practice Ltd)

Charity No. 299877

Company No. 2277906.

CENTRIS is an independent not-for-profit organisation committed to the identification and development of innovative social policy and practice.

The period reviewed runs from January 2007 to December 2007.

## Objects

CENTRIS was established in 1988. Its mission is to support innovative social policy and practice. Its method is to work with partners active in the field to develop solutions to social issues, through a mixture of research and innovatory initiatives.

Its constitution describes charitable objects 'for the benefit of the public to advance education, to promote the relief of sickness and the preservation of health and to promote the relief of poverty, in particular by promoting research into the role of individual self awareness, self development and personal responsibility in these fields, and the dissemination of the useful results of that research'.

## Report

Three main activities are reported on:

- **Civil society**
- **Fathers and masculinity**
- **Social justice and philanthropy**

### Civil society

CENTRIS has had a longstanding interest in civil society, with publications dating back more than 18 years. From the outset of this work, a key concern has been the independence of the voluntary and community sector. As time has gone on, this issue has risen high up the agenda because of the shift towards government contracting of public services. This may benefit the voluntary and community sector while at the same time making it harder for voluntary and community organisations to retain their independence to pioneer new approaches and advocate changes to established services.

During 2006 and continuing into 2007 CENTRIS worked with seven charitable foundations to conduct a study called *'The Value and Independence of the Voluntary Sector'*. In addition to a literature survey, this has entailed studies of 121 different voluntary organisations, together with in-depth studies of 14

organisations using the 'logic model of evaluation' as the methodology.

Fieldwork was completed in December 2006 and analysis of the data collected was completed during 2007. The subsequent report *'The Value and Independence of the Voluntary & Community Sector'* was published in July 2007.

CENTRIS also worked with the City Bridge Trust to help them to evaluate their *'Access to Buildings'* grants programme. This involved interviews with a selection of grant recipients to get their stories and experiences concerning building adaptations for disabled access. The results of this study were written up in a report and also published in a leaflet *'Opening Doors across London'*, which was launched in October 2007.

From 2007 through to 2011 CENTRIS is undertaking a five-year rolling evaluation programme to help the Baring Foundation evaluate its *'Strengthening the Voluntary Sector'* grants programme. The study involves baseline assessments with 22 grant recipients and ongoing evaluations throughout the period along with providing networking and organisational development opportunities to the participants.

### **Fathering and masculinity**

Following the successful publication of the book, *'A Question of Balance'* in 2004, which looked at how men are included in services for parents, Children

North East commissioned follow up work to be carried out in 2006. Detailed interviews were conducted with fathers, workers in Sure Starts, Children's Centres and other service providers throughout 2006. It became clear that fathers have gained ground in social policy in practice and that the field is now quite well developed compared with almost nothing in 1992 when CENTRIS first began to work on fathering. The follow up report to '*A Question of Balance*' was completed in the early part of 2007 and at the time of writing is awaiting a decision on publication by Children North East.

As part of our ongoing commitment to **Fathers and Masculinity** Centris attended and gave a presentation to the '*Fathers Footsteps*' conference in June 2007 held in Edinburgh.

### **Social justice philanthropy**

Social justice philanthropy remains a core area of work for CENTRIS. Two substantial grants from the Ford Foundation in 2006 have enabled this work to continue during 2007. The first grant was designed to strengthen social justice grantmaking among US foundations, building a coalition of individuals and organisations committed to working together to create new foundations and transform existing ones in favour of social justice.

A knowledge management system was created. This is a considerable resource for those involved in social justice philanthropy and it is important to build on this

resource to develop a global network of organizations concerned with social justice philanthropy.

A series of convenings was held. These took place in four main locations where there are the highest concentrations of grantees from the social justice portfolio. The total number of people who contributed to the convenings was 54.

There were additional meetings involving the Rye Collaborative in New York, the Woburn Place Collaborative in London, and Foundations for Peace in Hyderabad and Belfast.

In all of these meetings, CENTRIS has used its expertise in capacity building, evaluation, and research as well as its knowledge of philanthropy to support initiatives in social justice philanthropy.

The second grant was designed to strengthen social justice grantmaking in other parts of the world. This was done through a grant to evaluate the International Initiative to Strengthen Philanthropy, a two-year programme to offer grants, technical assistance and peer learning opportunities to private foundations across the globe. Indications are that this work will continue beyond 2007 with a further grant from the Ford Foundation.

In 2007 CENTRIS continued to support Foundations for Peace, a network of community and independent foundations working in divided societies. Those involved include foundations in Northern Ireland, South Africa and the Balkans as well as organisations in Israel and Sri Lanka. The aim of the Foundations for Peace network is to support each foundation's work in its own community, and to enable foundations to work collaboratively, and together create a platform for the common aims of social justice, inclusion and peacebuilding.

### **Structure and operations**

The effectiveness of CENTRIS depends on an energetic group of staff, associates, and volunteers, combined with extensive use of modern technology, and oversight from a skilled group of trustees: Roy Evans, Penny Lee CBE, and Chris Webb. Barry Knight is Secretary to the Trustees and Allan Sked is manager. Kevin Briggs is currently appointed as auditor.

### **Finance**

The audited accounts for 2006-2007, show that CENTRIS is in a healthy financial position. Reserves stood at £484,373 at the end of the financial year on 31 July 2007. Of this £271,286 was 'restricted' and £213,087 was 'unrestricted'. This is in line with Trustees' policy which recognises the requirement for a level of resources sufficient to ensure effective financial management. The investment

policy is to maintain sufficient funds in a current account to address cash flow requirements while keeping the balance in an interest bearing deposit account.

### Summary of accounts 2006-2007

<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>
Grants	116627	Technical support	7820
Investment	14357	Project Costs	121692
Fees, sales etc	9073	Administration	11341
		Office costs	4425
		Accommodation	18682
		Sundry	4023
<b>Totals</b>	<b>140057</b>		<b>167983</b>
<b>Balance Sheet</b>			
Tangible Fixed Assets	10024		
Net Current Assets	474349		
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>484373</b>		

### CENTRIS' future plans

CENTRIS has undertaken a review of its activities and has set priorities for the future. A number of important projects, begun in earlier years, are now coming to fruition. The work on social justice philanthropy, begun seven years ago, has become established and the Ford Foundation now has an established portfolio on social justice. CENTRIS is continuing to support a global network of

'Foundations for Peace', which is a group of private foundations that work to bring peace in areas divided by violent political conflict.

CENTRIS will continue to give high priority to this area, and work with the range of foundations mentioned earlier in the report.

In addition CENTRIS will continue to work on the international initiative to Strengthen Philanthropy with partners in the UK and around the world.

On fathering and masculinity CENTRIS awaits the decision of Children North East as to whether a follow-up to the book '*A Question of Balance*' will be published and whether a launch will be held to disseminate the results to practitioners.

## **Risks and resources**

CENTRIS is now responsible for running its own office and originally took out a five-year lease on the premises it currently occupies.

In 2008 CENTRIS will continue to run its own office and facilities, and will - if necessary - improve on existing procedures for managing this resource. This includes building maintenance, security, recycling of waste, use of facilities by others and Health & Safety implications. The original lease will expire in 2009

and therefore in 2008 CENTRIS will begin a review of its needs, so that it is prepared and able to make informed decisions well in advance of the expiry date.

CENTRIS minimises risk by using an ongoing review system. The system is IT based and has comprehensive features which alerts users to up and coming issues, reviews dates, logs events and assists in the planning process. Continuous planning and budgeting coupled with regular reporting provides a detailed overview and appraisal of progress achieved

During 2008 CENTRIS reviewed and made minor amendments to its website. These changes were made after usage and content of the 'forum feature' were closely monitored and it was found that inappropriate material was being posted on site. The new system requires prior approval before postings are allowed so that membership of the forums and material being submitted are strictly controlled.