From Accounting to Learning in the third sector: The Barriers for Funders

Kate Hinds and Dr Kate Mackenzie Davey
(Birkbeck College, London University)

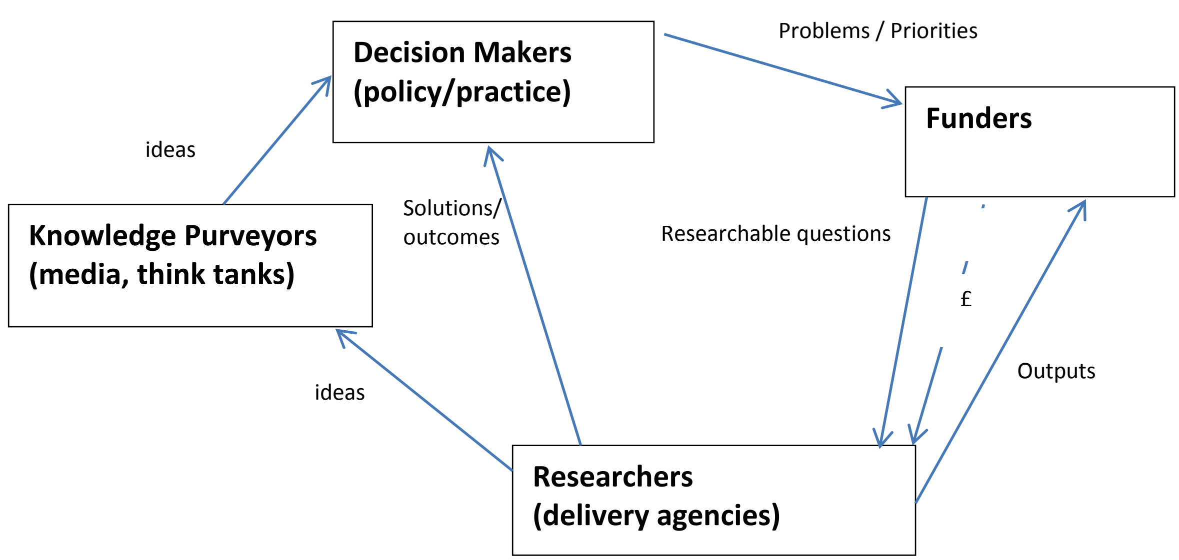
Introduction

Traditionally, the funding relationship has been characterized by funders calling agencies to account for the efficiency with which they manage funds. More recently, charitable foundations have called for improvements to the quality of evidence coming from their portfolios and an increase in their use of evidence before funding (e.g. NESTA 2012).

The commitment to evidence informed decision making reflects the broader appeal of the production of information to bring about the rational management of social problems (Tsoukas 1997). It also signals a move towards more transparent decision making for these foundations, reflecting the enlightened values of rationality and seeming to step away from the political and religious values of their founders.

Using material from the websites of a small group of charitable funders, we examine the move from the traditional role of funders in their relations with their grant holders, that of accounting for expenditure, to one of a greater engagement in supporting learning from projects. We will discuss the barriers that they face in making this change by contrasting the production of accounts with that of knowledge.

Firstly, let us consider the traditional role of funders in the research use process. The model below is adapted from one used by the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF 2000) to situate the various players in an evidence-based decision making process.



In this model, we want to draw your attention to the lack of a reciprocal arrow from the funders to the decision makers. The outcomes, ideas and knowledge that are generated, either by a piece of research or from the practical experience of delivering an intervention, are communicated to the decision makers directly by the delivery agencies, or through mediators such as think tanks or the media. In this model, the role of funder is to administer the funds and to scope a programme that can be responded to by appropriate agencies. They receive an account, the outputs, from their recipients of how the money has been spent.

However, more recently some charitable foundations have wanted to take on a more pivotal role in these relationships. Not only do they expect to scope the programme, but also to evaluate the funded projects and promote their outcomes to the decision makers. This quote below illustrates this new ambition:

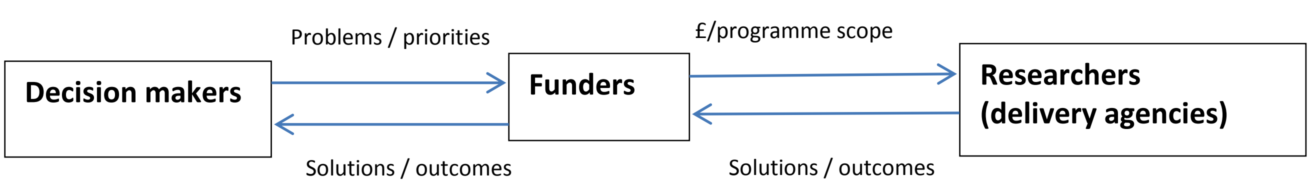
'The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is an independent grant-making charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement, ensuring that children from all backgrounds can fulfil their potential and make the most of their talents.

We aim to raise the attainment of children facing disadvantage by:

- *Identifying promising educational innovations that address the needs of disadvantaged children in primary and secondary schools in England;*
- *Evaluating these innovations to extend and secure the evidence on what works and can be made to work at scale;*
- *Encouraging schools, government, charities, and others to apply evidence and adopt innovations found to be effective.'*

(The Education Endowment Foundation, Sutton Trust 2013).

So a new model emerges:



However, this move from an accounting to a learning relationship has proved challenging for funders (e.g. Marsh et al. 2008). Scholars have written about the disappointment of those advocating for greater accountability at the lack of transferable learning generated by accounting processes (Yang 2012, Graefe and Levesque 2010, O'Dwyer and Unerman 2008), despite the reformist promise of continuous improvement leading to change and innovation (Dubnick 2011, Yang 2012).

In considering why there is this disappointment, we argue that funders face three major barriers to this move towards an evidence based culture. First, a learning culture requires acknowledgement of failure which risks damage to reputation; secondly, like any change it involves disruption of existing administrative practice; and finally accounting and learning have a shared language that confuses as terms, such as evaluation, have different meanings in the two contexts.

Firstly we discuss accountability and its role in the funding context. Then, taking the newer model as our guide, we outline the implications for the role of funder in evidence production. We go on to explore how a relationship based on the notion of accountability creates barriers to learning. We consider the problems that have been identified by scholars in the creation and transfer of knowledge from auditing processes to organizational practice, and their ideas for improvement. We conclude by stating our own views on whether the new model of funding could become a reality.

Accountability and the Funding Context

Accountability is a slippery concept as a recent article complained, listing the synonyms commonly used in the literature: good governance, transparency, equity, democracy, efficiency, responsiveness, responsibility and integrity (Bovens 2010). This chameleon like quality (Sinclair 1995) makes it difficult to research and collect empirical data about the phenomenon (Bovens 2010, Dubnick 2011). How accountability is defined can also be affected by the discipline shaping the meaning. For example auditors will emphasize numerical values, whilst philosophers consider it a branch of ethics (Sinclair 1995).

However, following Yang's work on reviewing accountability research (Yang 2012), we also adopt Bovens' (2005) definition of accountability as 'a social relationship in which an actor feels an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct to some significant other' (p. 84). In our context, we are particularly interested managerial accountability as described by Sinclair (1995). She identifies three subtypes contained in this concept:

1. Fiscal accountability: has the money been spent as expected?
2. Process accountability: have agreed processes been deployed?
3. Programme accountability: have outcomes or results been achieved?

If we look at the questions framing a report to funders during and at the end of a grant, we can see these subtypes are represented in the questions. For example the Trust for London asks in its reporting guidelines: what are the activities you have undertaken with our funding to date? (process accountability); what are the anticipated outcomes you hope to achieve through this work and what progress have you made towards each of these outcomes? (programme accountability); are you spending the budget as planned? (fiscal accountability) (Trust for London 2013).

Theories about inter-organizational relations, specifically agency, stewardship and institutional theory, all suggest the underlying need for accountability (Carman 2010). Agency theory frames accountability as a form of control exercised by funders to ensure that their agents (the funded organizations) put in the agreed level of effort to address a problem. Whilst stewardship theory suggests that both funder and agency have a shared mission to 'do good', and accounting for performance will improve the efficiency of the sector generally. Finally, institutional theory conceives of accounting processes as part of normative practices, where funders are compelled to conform to conventions held by similar institutions in the field.

The many definitions of accountability (Mulgan 2000) have allowed writers to discuss the different roles that it can play for organizations. Some highlight its role in increasing democracy (Gibbon 2009) and good governance (Dubnick 2011), others call attention to its contribution to legitimacy (Black 2008, Lister 2003), and to its creation of identity (Black 2008, Ebrahim 2005b). Funders draw on these ideas about accountability to present an account of themselves.

Gibbon (2009), in her research on implementing a social accounting process in a small social enterprise, firmly locates accountability as a moral practice. She presents the arguments of Bendall (2005) and Gray et al. (1996) that accountability contributes to 'a more justly organized and better informed democracy'. This is achieved through meaningful participation of communities in the decisions and processes of the organizations that affect them. Social accounting has come out of the corporate social responsibility agenda (Gray et al. 1991) where organizations are supported through a formal framework to give an account, (non financial), to the communities they affect.

For funders, like private companies, their social account is contained in their annual report, where they present their claim to public benefit in order to justify their tax allowances.

"The information about the impact of our grants and activities will also become a key part of the way in which we fulfill the legal duty placed on all charities to report on the benefit they provide to the public. The Foundation as a charity benefits from a reduced tax bill, which is why we report as fully as possible on how we deliver public benefit. Though the attribution of cause and effect for grant-making foundations is a challenging area, our work this year will provide the most detailed picture to date of our overall impact." (Paul Hamlyn Foundation 2012)

We note in this extract from this recent annual report that impact reporting has become a key feature of accounting to others about public benefit. This foundation implies through the phrase 'the attribution of cause and effect' an agenda that also focuses on the generation of evidence. Funders may adopt the stance of supporting knowledge creation as it aligns the organization with governmental rhetoric and strategy, and thus legitimizes their own activities (Motion and Leitch 2009). Accountability may improve their standing in public policy networks, which may dismiss or downgrade input from funders as unaccountable and undemocratic (Weinryb 2009).

Transparency and responsiveness can increase an organization's legitimacy to act in policy arenas (Black 2008) and so provide the justification for the participation in the policy process (Nelson 1997). Accountability can establish the representativeness and experience of organizations, as Lister (2003) discusses, and give them the legitimacy to reduce the distance between policy and practice actors. In the example below, a funder makes the connection between their work with local communities and their ability to influence publics and governments:

'The Trust describes its approach as 'Funder Plus' and aims to bridge the divide between local communities and policymakers.…The Trust provides opportunities for grantees to influence policy makers and also for them to come together and share learning. The Trust also funds research which aims to influence public policy and practice in order to secure better conditions for beneficiaries.' (Barrow Cadbury Trust 2011)

We note that in the final sentence of this extract, the funder mentions 'research' as an explicit mechanism to bring the two parties together to achieve its charitable aims.

To shape identity, organizations construct and present a narrative of past events or actions in their accounts. Black (2008) explains that narratives are created by organizations to influence opinions of their activities and performance, but the narratives do not form their norms or practices. Rather, accounts both shape the identity of the accounting organization and the authority to which the account is given. Accountability may thus result in a symbolic exchange of information, designed to enhance the reputation of both the giver and receiver (McNulty 2012).

This may lead funders to establish with their grant holders a 'narrative of success' (Ebrahim 2005b). As we can see below in a description of a particular type of funding, impact investment, the assumption is one of success, both social and financial. This text establishes the funder as one concerned only with positive impact, and sets up the reporting task as one which describes achievement.

'Nesta is involved in impact investment because of its growing importance in financing social innovations so that they can grow and maximise their impact.

Our definition of impact investment is:

Impact investment is investment with the primary goal of achieving positive outcomes for individuals, communities or society as a whole, and with a secondary goal of achieving financial returns for investors.

Investment is needed to fund the creation of new innovations, to support their development and testing and to scale up those innovations that work. This is as true of innovation that seeks to achieve social impact as it is of those motivated by creating financial value.

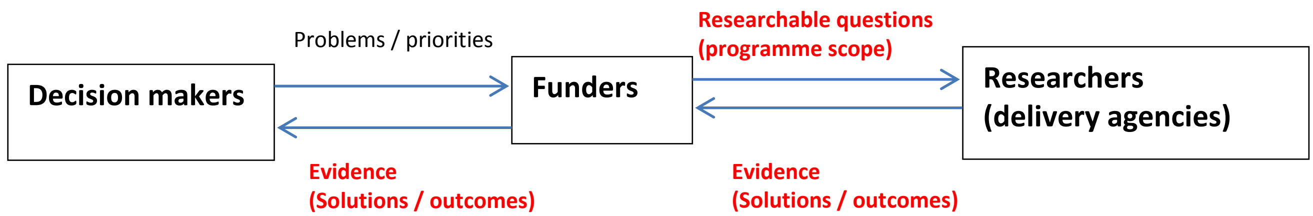
There is also growing experimentation around the world with innovations in financial mechanisms as a means of supporting the improvement of social outcomes.' (NESTA 2013)

As in the earlier two examples, the notion of learning is indicated by the words, 'experimentation' and 'testing'. These three foundations are consciously making the link between learning and accountability, combining ideas of democracy, representativeness and experimentation with their social mission to respond to society's ills. Graefe and Levesque (2010) bring together the notion of learning and accountability by suggesting that reporting can lead to better policy through the sharing of best practice, and that the ongoing citizen monitoring of outcomes will encourage innovation and productivity.

So the claim is made for accounting relationships that they can encompass learning and knowledge production also. Let us examine our new model of the funders' role in evidence production, to see how that task alters the outputs of the funder and reports of the delivery agencies.

New Model: A Pivotal Role in Knowledge Production

In this new role in knowledge production, some key tasks emerge. Firstly, if new knowledge is to be produced, then it must be framed by research questions (Sandberg and Alvesson 2011). Once the focus of the research has been decided on and expressed in the questions, then the kind of knowledge that is to be produced by the research and its use for various audiences should be identified.



We can see some problems that are particular for funders, used to an accounting role, in these tasks. Firstly the creation of researchable questions, or in this context setting the grant programme scope, can be the most difficult part of grant making. The advice from academic textbooks on creating research questions suggest the identification of topic, domain, the populations and type of question, as well as possibly the consideration of contextual issues (e.g. Easterby-Smith et al. 2002). This will seem too academic for the practical concerns of funding, but without some mechanism for defining the area of inquiry, it is less likely that the research will provide interesting and useful material (Sandberg and Alvesson 2011). This need to identify researchable questions will be hampered by the funders' practice of setting broad programme aims to meet their public benefit obligations. A narrower focus may contradict their values of inclusivity.

'1. Investing in inclusive innovations: the product/service innovation has the potential to address one or more of our target outcomes, for all those in the UK population for whom the outcome is relevant (the target population);
2. Accessibility: the business plan for the venture contains a credible long–term strategy to distribute the product/service to all segments of the target population and does not exclude any segment from the opportunity to benefit from the product/service…' (Puttick and Ludlow 2011)

In the objectives of a funding programme here, we can see a dilemma. The stress on inclusivity as well as innovation creates a tension for the organisation. The research questions needed to produce new knowledge may prevent wide application, at least initially, whilst the notion of innovation suggests the early, experimental stages of an idea.

Moving on to the issue of the evidence produced, what kind of knowledge influences policy makers and practitioners? Useful information for these actors will include descriptions of the context, as well as details of implementation, including the barriers and levers to the completion of the project (Arai et al. 2005). For evidence to be used in a policy arena, an appreciation of the political context will also be important, and includes an understanding of the beliefs, values and ideologies of the audience (Nutley et al. 2007).

Pearson (2010) describes three kinds of validity that are important in the policy making process, namely internal validity (the quality of research itself), external validity (whether the findings can be used in other contexts and with other segments of the population) and construct validity (the reasons for change that can be used to make inferences to other samples and situations). This last may be the most important for policy makers, linking to their values and enabling rhetorical debate that is necessary for the adoption of new polices.

Most importantly, organizations need knowledge from evaluations and research that supports decision making and judgment (Tsoukas and Vladimirou 2001, Argyris 1976). This kind of knowledge is characterized by explicit explanation of the context and theory of any case report.

There is a great deal of potential information to be gained from investigating the social interventions that charitable foundations fund. However, we argue that the nature of the relationship between funders and grant holders prevents the realization of that ambition.

How do accounting relationships prevent the creation of useful evidence?

We use some extracts from the reflections from a manager who developed a funding programme to produce evidence in order to illustrate some of the problems we identify (Marsh et al. 2008).

The first barrier we want to discuss is the risky nature of knowledge development.

‘Grant holders and applicants remain reluctant to talk about problems or failure; much of the work of the team has been about reassuring projects that any feedback is valuable and does not reflect on the quality of their practice or their effectiveness as an organisation.’ (Marsh et al. 2008)

This quote from the funder shows the difficulty in supporting practitioners to be open about failure. One can understand this reaction from the grant holders because in relations based on the notion of accountability, the account giving party’s role is to justify and defend their behavior. Admitting to failure or problems may be seen as breaking a promise, with the additional feelings of guilt that brings (Roberts 2009).

In a more experimental programme, there is a strong likelihood that projects will fail, bringing with them the threat of damage to the funders’ reputation. Looking back at theories of inter-organizational relations, stewardship theory hints at the danger of collusion, with each organization mutually shaping each other’s identity (Roberts 2009) and reinforcing the other’s narrative of success (Ebrahim 2005)

Ebrahim (2005b) in his study of the relationship between funders and the agencies they fund identified the ‘information struggles’ between them. He described the contract between the organizations as an exchange of economic capital (funds) for symbolic capital (reputation, status and authority). He explains that the products of monitoring processes are ones where success can be shown unambiguously; whilst the process information may be open to greater interpretation. Ebrahim argues that the relationship between the two sides is much more interdependent than seems apparent at first glance. The damage of a failed project affects not only the agency but the funder also since the symbolic capital from the exchange has not been realized.

This capital exchange is endogenous in nature, as the funder 'buys' the information to be reassured of success and so this act of exchange becomes an end in itself. Examples of this can be seen on most funders' webpages where only success stories are presented (e.g. Comic Relief 2013). The legitimizing function of account giving may be more about the organization defending itself against further action or interference from outsiders, such as funders. There are disincentives to using evaluations instrumentally, including beliefs that evaluations will incur personal disadvantage as individuals may lose status and influence (McNulty 2012).

Information for use, however, supposes action based on knowledge of context and theory. This information is used to exercise judgment on the part of organizational actors (Bell 1999, Tsoukas and Vladimirou 2001). When all projects are reported as successful, comparisons become impossible. Funders, policy makers and practitioners cannot make decisions and judgments on the basis of the information presented. Therefore the reports are not useful to them.

The second problem is the change in the purpose of the relationship in the new model and affect it has on understood and established routines.

'Organisations have a good understanding of what funders normally want, and are used to application and management processes. We underestimated the strength of that understanding and associated assumptions, and need to acknowledge that there has been an unwillingness to trust different messages.' (Marsh et al. 2008)

In changing routines, this funder discovered a resistance from grant holders, based on the unfamiliarity with the terms of engagement.

As institutional theory suggests, the legitimacy that organizations seek depends on conformity with dominant discourses, created with others in their discipline. This conformity extends to the structures and practices making up core relationships, here, the nature of information sought from funded groups and contact between the funder and its grant holders. For charitable foundations, the main governance task is to account for expenditure rather than to generate evidence. Hallam (2011) finds that agencies do not expect to learn from evaluations that are commissioned for accountability reasons.

The administrative tools available to foundations enable control of a diverse group of projects, and thus facilitate the management of a broad range of projects that result from an unspecified programme. In contrast, projects with explicit learning objectives will be designed with a method picked to produce the answers to specific questions (Crotty 1998). Thus the move to a learning culture necessitates the rethinking of routine practices, and brings with it disruption to the relations between the funder and the funded.

Lastly, there is a problem with language since accountability in the form of impact assessment uses terms associated with research.

'The way in which people have responded to questions in the proposal and application forms indicates that they tend to equate 'learning' and 'evaluation' with monitoring their project activities rather than improving their knowledge and capabilities for project development and other future work.' (Marsh et al. 2008)

Here the confusion of language made it difficult for the funder to explain what it wanted.

The problem, identified by Tsoukas (1997), is one of knowledge management which has come to mean the management of information rather than development of meaning. More information suggests that social problems can be managed rationally, enabling a greater sense of control.

As agency theory implies, accountability processes involve control by the funder to ensure compliance with a contract. Underlying this aspect of accountability is a desire to increase social trust between organizations (Strathern 2000, O'Neill 2006, Tsoukas 1997). Transparency and visibility are the means through which control is achieved. However, the technologies of transparency abstract and de-contextualize, in order to create administrative procedures which distance us from the reality of delivery (Strathern 2000, Tsoukas 1997), but allow oversight over a wide spectrum of projects. The things that are measured come to stand in for the phenomena themselves, and thus we lose our sense of meaning and reference (Tsoukas 1997).

The types of knowledge needed by practitioners and policy makers as outlined by Pearson (2010) and Arai et al. (2005), would not be delivered by reports written for these administrative purposes. Contextual and theoretical information, stripped out by accountability processes, are crucial to informing decision making. Simple output data without analysis, such as the number of clients seen during a grant period, could not be considered useful for other people.

As we can see in the extract below, from a document produced for prospective applicants to a grant programme, the funder seems to equate research with information management, reflecting a concern more with data than meaning:

'At NESTA we are doing work to innovate with research methodologies themselves. There is a need for new tools and methods to be developed that enable data capture to be agile and low cost, but without compromising on rigour and quality.' (Puttick and Ludlow 2012)

Apparently they wish to improve their administration processes, cheaply so that they are not accused by stakeholders of denying money to good causes, and for use across a range of projects and contexts so they can apply one system universally. Although the language used implies a research or experimental orientation, we can see the funder is not straying from its usual administrative practice.

By contrast, the abstraction process in research as practiced in measurement procedures, for example, is used, partly, to apply learning to other contexts (Tsoukas and Vladimirou 2001). However this abstracting action employs the same terms, such as theory, measurement and evaluation, in both contexts.

In the reporting guidelines from the Trust for London (2013), they also asked for information about learning and problems from the practitioners in their funded projects. Although this is an indication of the interest in these matters, it is may not enough to add some questions to a report format, understood and used as an account giving mechanism.

What have others said about accountability and learning?

Yang identifies the lack of 'actionable knowledge', i.e. knowledge that prescribes how managers should act, (Argyris 2003), as the main problem for accountability in relation to learning. Since account giving is structured to report on the past, it does not inform before the fact, and does not attempt to predict the future. It reproduces the status quo, rather than exploring other avenues for action (Roberts 2009). This focus on the past means that reports commissioned for accountability cannot support managers in decision making. His remedy is a greater focus on theory.

O'Dwyer and Unerman (2008) believe that rather than accountability in itself presenting a barrier, the lack of learning is due to the wrong type of accountability being employed. They distinguish two types: hierarchical and holistic. Hierarchical accounting denies scope for learning as it is a form of external oversight and encourages justifications for actions. Holistic accountability, however, uses a variety of methods to identify the long term achievement of the organization's mission, and its impact on structural change.

Likewise Roberts (2009) discusses O'Neill's (2006) idea of 'intelligent accountability' as a corrective to transparency as accountability. This type of accounting involves active enquiry and interactive exploration, and moves away from the narcissistic endeavor of protecting oneself, to an appreciation of interdependence and responsibility for 'the other'. It extends over time, thereby decreasing the likelihood of performance manipulation whilst revealing the greater complexities that underlie performance.

Graefe and Levesque (2010) point to the confusion surrounding the two roles of reports to funders: that of reassurance that the money is being spent wisely, and enabling learning among practitioners and between funders and practitioners. For them, the accounting process promises that learning is connected to it through the sharing of best practice. However, they find that the reports are of little use and pinpoint the problem as one of the wrong type of data (outputs not outcomes) and thinness of reporting. They suggest more reporting of the detail.

Ebrahim (2003) identifies the resource dependency of nonprofit organizations as the problem. This restriction obliges them to focus on the information needs of their patrons, rather than providing the communities they serve with an account of their activities. He characterizes this as upward accountability. This accountability is short term and concentrates on discrete outputs. He argues for a longer view of change and a more sophisticated understanding of the power relationships that govern account giving, to enable greater learning in organizations.

However, none of these prescriptions alter the fundamental aspect of accountability as a relational endeavor (Bovens 2005), concerning the development or the defense of one's identity and the shaping of the identity of the other. Whilst these scholars suggest that it is possible to adjust the process so that it enables learning, we doubt that accounting mechanisms will deliver new knowledge to support social change.

The knowledge and expertise of charitable foundations is traditionally based on the technologies of accountability, thus it is impossible for conventional funders to produce evidence that influences change. In future research, we will test this by examining the efforts of foundations, who have publicly committed to using and developing evidence from their grants, to change their core relationships to produce evidence and policy learning.

Conclusion

'Accountability myopia' (Ebrahim 2005a) hampers funders in their desire to use knowledge to affect social change.   We see there are three main barriers to their success. The need to control assumes that all interventions will be successful, including the programmes of the funders' themselves. The management processes and reports from the funded create a narrative of success, so that it is impossible to judge whether interventions have succeeded or failed from this information. Further, the endogenous nature of the accountability relationship increases the likelihood of collusion between the two parties, to maintain the reputation of each other, and reduces the opportunities to produce knowledge that supports judgment and decision making. Fear of acknowledging failure and thus damaging the funders' and the funded agencies' reputation limits their ability to learn from grants.

Secondly, the bureaucratic practices of funders use abstracting processes to produce performance indicators as an administrative convenience to control their contracts. These same processes cannot deliver learning as they de-contextualise and render a-theoretical the practice they are funding (Ebrahim 2005b). To produce learning, funders need to rethink fundamentally their routines.

Lastly, the borrowed language of learning may suggest that innovation and change could be expected from the accounting process; indeed some may mistake the development of learning as its main aim. On the one hand, this scientific turn adds credibility to account giving, but on the other hand misdirects observers into believing that accountability offers more than the legitimizing process that it has been created for. Funders, therefore, may believe that there is no need to change their practice.

References

Arai L, Roen K, Roberts H, Popay J (2005) 'It might work in Oklahoma but will it work in Oakhampton? Context and implementation in the effectiveness literature on domestic smoke detectors' *Injury Prevention 11 pp 148-151*

Argyris C (1976) 'Single-loop and double-loop models in research in decision making' *Administrative Science Quarterly 21 pp. 363-375*

Argyris C (2003) 'Actionable knowledge.' In H Tsoukas & C Knudsen (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational theory*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Barrow Cadbury Trust (2011) ' Trustees Report and Consolidated Accounts for the year ended March 2011' http://www.bctrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/BCT-annual-report-2011-final.pdf (accessed 19/04/13)

Black J (2008) 'Constructing and contesting legitimacy and accountability in polycentric regulatory regimes.' *Regulation and Governance 2 pp 137-164*

Bell D (1999) 'The axial age of technology foreword: 1999' in *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society.* New York: Basic Books, Special Anniversary Edition, ix-lxxxv

Bendall, J. (2005) 'In whose name? The accountability of corporate social responsibility'. *Development in Practice, 15 pp.362-374.*

Bovens M (2005) 'Public Accountability' In E. Ferlie, L. Lynn and C. Pollitt (Eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Public Management pp: 182-208*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press

Bovens M (2010) 'Two concepts of accountability: accountability as a virtue and as a mechanism' *West European Politics 33 pp. 946-967*

CHSRF (Canadian Health Services Research Foundation) (2000) *Health services research and evidence-based decision making* Ottawa: CHSRF.

Carman JG (2010) 'The accountability movement: what's wrong with this theory of change?' *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly 39 pp 256-274*

Comic Relief (2013) http://www.comicrelief.com/how-we-help/the-difference-we-have-made (accessed 3/5/13)

Crotty M J (1998) *'The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process'* London: Sage

Dubnick MJ (2011) 'Move over Daniel: we need some accountability space.' *Administration and Society 43 pp 704-716*

Ebrahim A (2005a) 'Accountability myopia: losing sight of organizational learning' *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly 34: 1 pp 56-87*

Ebrahim, A. (2005b) *NGOs and Organizational Change: Discourse, Reporting and Learning.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Educational Endowment Foundation (2013) http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/about/ (accessed 19/04/13)

Easterby-Smith M, Thorpe R and Lowe R (2002) *Management Research.* London: Sage

Graefe P, Levesque M (2010) 'Accountability and funding as impediments to social policy innovation: lessons from the labour market agreements for persons with disabilities.' *Canadian Public Policy 36 pp 45-62*

Gibbon RJ (2009) 'Enacting social accounting within a community enterprise: actualizing hermeneutic conversation' PhD Thesis: http://hdl.handle.net/10023/976

Gray, R. H., Owen, D. L., & Maunders, K. (1991) 'Accountability, Corporate Social Reporting and the External Social Audits'. *Advances in Public Interest Accounting*, 4:1-21.
Gray, R. H., Owen, D. L., & Adams, C. A. (1996) *Accounting and Accountability: Changes and Challenges in corporate social and environmental reporting.* London: Prentice Hall.
Hallam A (2011) *'Harnessing the power of evaluation in humanitarian action'* London: Overseas Development Institute.
Lister S (2003) 'NGO legitimacy: technical issue or social construct?' *Critique of Anthropology 23 pp 175-192*
Marsh, S, Cameron, M, Dewar, S, Hinds, K (2008) 'Funding the practice of learning: exploring the relationship between funders and grant recipients' *Evidence and Policy vol.4/4 pp 293 -312*
McNulty J (2012) 'Symbolic uses of evaluation in the international aid sector: arguments for critical reflection' *Evidence and Policy 8: 4 pp 495-509*
Motion J, Leitch S (2009) 'The Transformational Potential of Public Policy Discourse' *Organization Studies 30 pp. 1045-1061*
Mulgan R (2000) 'Accountability': An ever expanding concept?' *Public Administration 78 pp. 555-573*
Nelson P (1997) 'Conflict, Legitimacy and Effectiveness: Who speaks for whom in Transnational NGO networks lobbying the World Bank?' *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly 26: 4 pp 421-41*
NESTA (2012) Alliance for Useful Evidence.
http://www.nesta.org.uk/areas_of_work/public_services_lab/alliance_for_useful_evidence

NESTA (2013) http://www.nesta.org.uk/investment/impact_investments/our_approach_impact (accessed 19/04/13)

Nutley SM, Walter I, Davies HTO (2007) '*Using Evidence: How Research can inform Public Services'* Bristol: The Policy Press

O'Dwyer B, Unerman J (2008) 'The paradox of greater NGO accountability: A case study of Amnesty Ireland.' *Accounting, Organizations and Society 33 pp 801-824*

O'Neill O (2006) 'Transparency and the ethics of communication'. In C. Hood & D. Heald (eds), *Transparency: the key to better governance?* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Paul Hamlyn Foundation (2013)
http://issuu.com/paulhamlynfoundation/docs/phftrusteesreport2011_12?mode=window&viewMode=doublePage (accessed 19/04/13)

Pearson M (2010) 'What do we know? What should we do? Melding research validity and rhetoric in the analysis of policy making' *Evidence and Policy 6:1 pp 77-90*

Puttick R, Ludlow J (2012) *'Standards of Evidence for Impact Investing'* London: NESTA
http://www.nesta.org.uk/library/documents/StandardsofEvidenceforImpactInvesting.pdf

Roberts J (2009) 'No one is perfect: the limits of transparency and an ethic for 'intelligent' accountability.' *Accounting, Organizations and Society 34 pp 957-970*
Sandberg J, Alvesson M (2011) 'Ways of constructing research questions: gap-spotting or problematization?' *Organization 18 pp. 23-44*
Sinclair A. (1995) 'The chameleon of accountability: forms and discourses' *Accounting, Organizations and Society 20 pp. 219-237*
Strathern M (2000) 'The tyranny of transparency.' British Educational Research Journal 26 pp 309-321
Trust for London (2013) Interim Evaluation Report. Available at:
http://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/Interim%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf (accessed 2/5/13)
Tsoukas H (1997) 'The tyranny of light' *Futures 29 pp. 827-843*
Tsoukas H, Vladimirou E (2001) 'What is organizational knowledge?' *Journal of Management Studies 38:7 pp 973-993*
Weinryb N (2009) 'The Policy Paradox of Philanthropy - Accountability Mechanisms, Legitimacy and Policy Influence' *ARNOVA 38th Annual Conference arranged by Association, Ohio, USA, November 19-21*
Yang K (2012) 'Further understanding accountability in public organizations: actionable knowledge and

the structure-agency duality.' *Administration and Society 44 pp 255-284*