

**Actions for
Third Sector**

Structurally unsound

**Exploring Inequalities:
Igniting research to
better inform UK policy**



The third sector has been instrumental in achieving major policy and legislative changes in recent years towards creating a more equal society across the UK.

Discussions throughout the project recognised this, whilst also highlighting key evidence gaps and areas for further exploration. These are summarised in the actions that follow.

We don't set out specific interventions or policies that will 'fix' inequality. Instead, we suggest actions and considerations that the third sector could consider to better *approach* the study, analysis and tackling of structural inequalities. These follow the five approaches outlined on page 52 in our main report.

- There is a need for different sectors to collaborate and communicate across each other. This might include noting how campaigns and work aimed, for example, at alleviating inequalities in the UK housing market will, in turn, impact upon health inequalities and educational outcomes.
- To communicate the importance of the structural and cumulative nature of social disadvantages, third-sector organisations should move away from the language of inequality and instead adopt the use of *inequalities* with a focus on *equity*.
- Greater consistency in the terms used to describe and evidence inequalities would enable sharing of datasets and cross-sectoral analysis.
- In many areas, there exists an 'evidence gap' in identifying how to most effectively communicate findings to policymakers, especially qualitative research. Third-sector organisations could partner more with researchers to support exploration of this, recognising that improved evaluation of policies will strengthen evidence bases and be beneficial for campaigning strategies.
- The third sector, research and policy professionals should ensure that they routinely disaggregate data by ethnicity and gender, at a minimum, in order to take account of the differential impacts of policies on women across all ethnic groups.
- Third-sector organisations possess extensive expertise in evaluation practices and methods. The third sector should aim to share this knowledge to ensure evidencing of policy effectiveness and changes over time.

Third-sector policy considerations:

- Devolution and localisation agendas are changing policy levers. This offers the third sector opportunity for closer communication with local policymakers. The next step in devolution should be improved dialogue around campaigning initiatives undertaken in devolved nations and their effectiveness.
- Recognising that all good campaigns require both heroes and villains, third-sector organisations could therefore advocate for government to better showcase, and increase recognition of, initiatives that have made a significant difference. For example, with regard to gender pay gap reporting, employers that have high levels of data transparency and are doing well in eradicating gaps could be recognised.

- Likewise, third-sector organisations should be encouraging government to consider the means through which inequalities can be factored into, and addressed, within broader and interlocking policy portfolios.

Areas for third sector-researcher collaborations:

- In any collaborations, partners should recognise the significant challenges facing third-sector organisations, not least financially and in terms of resources. In many cases third-sector organisations best understand the lived experiences of those facing inequalities – yet such organisations are often least able to engage with and shape policy. External collaborators should endeavour to raise such voices to help develop informed policymaking.
- To ensure the grey research produced by third-sector organisations can be effective and reach policymakers, an understanding of the models of engagement researchers use to engage with policymakers would be beneficial.
- Third-sector organisations could partner with research institutions to advocate that funders ensure diversity, and that equal representation is encouraged within funding bodies and throughout their decision-making structures.
- Third-sector organisations should be encouraged to ensure they have diversity of thought and true representation in their partnerships and collaborations. Drawing upon the same pool of researchers, failing to recognise the lack of diversity across academia, or solely working with individual academics, negates the benefits of wider perspectives and shared learning.
- Recognising the particular legal constraints charities face, and given that laws dictate where a charity must be registered, partnership working should be utilised to negate difficulties of working across devolved nations. The role that research institutions can play to bridge this gap and facilitate cross-working should be recognised.

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