DISCOVERY, ARGUMENT & ACTION
HOW CIVIL SOCIETY RESPONDS TO CHANGING NEEDS

JULIE CAULIER-GRICE, GEOFF MULGAN & DAN VALE

Geoff Mulgan

Geoff is Director of the Young Foundation. Between 1997 and 2004 he had various roles in the UK government including director of the Government's Strategy Unit and head of policy in the Prime Minister's office. Before that he was the founder and director of the think tank Demos. He began his career in local government in London and has also been a reporter for BBC TV and radio and a columnist for national newspapers. He has lectured in over 30 countries and is a visiting professor at LSE, UCL and Melbourne University, and a visiting fellow at the Australia and New Zealand School of Government. He is chairing the Carnegie Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland.

Julie Caulier-Grice

Julie joined the Young Foundation in January 2007. Since then she has been working on social innovation, civil society and campaigning and funding for community and voluntary organisations. Previously, Julie worked at the Social Market Foundation where she focused on education policy, co authoring 'Fade or Flourish: how primary schools can build on children's early progress'.

Dan Vale

Dan runs the Young Foundation's Mapping Unmet and Emerging Needs Project, a two year research programme exploring pressing and hidden social needs in Britain. He has nearly twenty years experience of policy, campaigning, research, user participation, community development and social work. He was most recently Head of Social Policy at Citizens Advice and has previously worked for RNIB, a mental health NGO, a special needs housing association and for the Sandinistas. Dan has conducted research in the fields of advice need, stigma and discrimination, blindness, education, poverty, health and social care and has worked with Polish civil society organisations building civic capacity and developing evidence-based policy.

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THE SOCIAL LANDSCAPE OF HUMAN NEEDS

Many of the different parts of what we now call civil society have long played a decisive role in identifying and meeting changing human needs - from the associations of ancient China, and the charity of the mosque and the church, to the poverty studies of Rowntree and Booth, to more contemporary innovations like the Big Issue and integrated childcare. Even though needs are met by the market, the state, civil society and in the private sphere of family and friends, this paper is primarily concerned with civil society organisations' response to changing and emerging human needs.

Civil society is a relatively modern term that came into use in the 18th century in tandem with new thinking about rights and democracy. It was associated with a cluster of ideas about need: with liberty (for people to define and meet their own needs); with equality (and universal claims for recognition, treatment and rights); with a public sphere of debate and argument in which needs could be debated; and with changing views about what made people good citizens.

When 'civil society' came back into widespread use in the late twentieth century, it also came to encompass two much older traditions. One is charity, the tradition of directly responding to need and suffering. The other is mutual self-interest, people cooperating together to meet their needs and interests for everything from sports and music to credit and education.

Contemporary civil society in its diverse forms includes all these traditions, and the full range of organisations outside the state and the market, from charities and sports clubs to churches and trade unions. It plays a central role in identifying, understanding, articulating and responding to needs – albeit often in competition and cooperation with other civil society organisations and institutions in the media, politics and business. Indeed, meeting needs and aspirations provides much of the raison d'être for charities, social enterprises, campaigns, foundations, co-operatives, faith groups and so on. These roles sit alongside its other roles – as a place for fun and expression, belonging and identity.

This paper raises a number of questions about how well some civil society organisations fulfil their stated aims of understanding and meeting needs. It shows that civil society organisations, and their assets, can sometimes become frozen around past needs rather than current ones, and it highlights the need for more systematic and overt processes to identify changing needs, particularly less visible ones. The Young Foundation is embarking upon a two year project to map Britain's unmet and emerging needs in part to do this. The paper also discusses the potential for more systematic innovation to find new ways to address new and old needs and, faster learning to deliver services. Finally, it looks at how the new public benefit test could provide a helpful spur for charities which sometimes face relatively few pressures to ensure that they really do address important needs.

WHAT ARE HUMAN NEEDS?

There is a vast literature on the definition of needs. It has included contributions from:

- researchers on poverty (for example, defining minimum nutrition levels);
- economists (interested mainly in utility as expressed through spending choices);
- political scientists (interested for example in collective claims to such things as pensions and health services);
- psychologists (for example Abraham Maslow's famous hierarchy of needs; and more recently Richard Ryan's self-determination theory) and;

- philosophers (such as Amartya Sen's work on capabilities or John Stuart Mill's distinction between "lower" and "higher" needs or Hegel's emphasis on the need for recognition).

Needs can be hard to define and pin down, both because of the distinctions that have to be made between more objective definitions of need and those which are more subjective, and because of the nebulous relationship between personal ideas about need and needs which are more broadly or socially recognised. We have adopted a pragmatic definition of need, based on the work of Ian Gough: "**need is what, if not met, can cause serious harm or socially-recognisable suffering**".[1] This negative definition remains a starting-point for this analysis, and a more sustainable one than definitions which regard needs as precise and unchanging, or which go too far in asserting a particular political or ideological stance. It acknowledges that there is constant argument as to what are common understandings of need, and in particular of needs that can make claims of others.

From this starting point it is possible to use a simple framework for distinguishing different types of need:

Physical needs & resources	Basic needs for shelter, health, food and reproduction. Lack of these can bring considerable harm to the individual, ranging from homelessness to illness.
Needs for skills and capabilities	Skills and aptitudes necessary for taking part in society and exercising freedom – lack of which often leads to other kinds of need.
Need for care and advice	Care, advice, nurture and support – the need for others.
Psychological needs	Related needs for love, recognition, understanding and happiness.

[1] G. Mulgan, A. Buonfino, L. Geissendorfer, 'Mapping Britain's Unmet Needs', London: The Young Foundation, 2006.

These needs overlap and interrelate, and are met through many different routes – some in the most personal and intimate ways, others through the impersonal mechanisms of the market and the state.

The socially embedded definition we use recognises that needs will change. A criminal behaviour that at one point may be attributed to wrongdoing may at a later date be attributed to a poor upbringing, or genetic bad luck, and turn from a vice into a need. Social norms also adjust in response to economic and technological change – for example, commodities such as central heating and refrigeration, once thought of as luxuries, are now considered to be basic needs.

Perhaps the biggest shifts in perceptions of need come from changing levels of development. For most of the last 150 years the primary concern of social justice and social action was to meet basic physical and material needs: shelter, food, healthcare – alongside campaigning for capacities, including access to education and libraries. However, over the last 30 years the success of most western societies in meeting basic needs has shifted attention more to questions of quality of life; relativity; well-being and happiness. The work of economists like Richard Easterlin in the USA, and Andrew Oswald in the UK, has shown the complex patterns of well-being, and cast new light on old questions of social justice. Instead of defining justice in abstract terms, (such as John Rawls' conception of 'justice as fairness' and his famous 'difference principle'), this new body of data provides a more objective way of thinking about need, showing who is not happy, who is suffering and who is least satisfied with their lives. This data often correlates with more traditional definitions of inequality, social injustice and exclusion. But it also points to more complex pictures, where some of the least happy suffer because of weak social supports (from family and friends); it highlights the importance of mental health and some more controversial issues, such as the role of genetic inheritance, and people's varied ability to learn how to meet their own needs and to cope with shocks and rebuffs.

The data has also shed light on the relationship between income and well-being: income does have an impact on levels of well-being, but this tends to diminish over a certain level of GDP. Other factors including social trust, quality of governance, freedom and inequality, are also important. The work of the World Values Survey, overseen by Ronald Inglehart, has also charted changing attitudes to need over the last 30 years in the industrialised and developed world. The survey demonstrates a steady shift away from a focus on material prosperity towards well-being, and what Abraham Maslow in his famous (if discredited) hierarchy of needs, described as 'self-actualisation'.

In the UK, as elsewhere, these shifting frames for understanding need have cast new light on patterns of contentment. The great majority of people in contemporary Britain have enough to eat and a roof over their head. Yet research demonstrates that many are suffering from high levels of anxiety, stress and depression – often generated by rapidly changing and demanding working lives, relationship breakdown, the disintegration of extended families and the increasing number of people living on their own. One in six working age adults have a mental illness[2]; between 2003 and 2004, 12.8 million working days were lost to stress, depression and anxiety caused or made worse by work[3] and; it is predicted that by 2020, mental health conditions could be the most common type of impairment[4]. While some research suggests that people on lower incomes suffer significantly higher levels of mental stress than those further up the income scale[5], issues around well-being cut across age, gender and socio-economic boundaries.

So, needs are not static – they can shift, change and emerge, and civil society organisations are integral to this process of social definition and argument – making previously unseen or unrecognised suffering socially visible, and advocating new ways of addressing new or unmet needs. In other words, civil society organisations do more than respond to changing needs: they also identify and articulate need, changing the landscape of needs and how we think about them.

CIVIL SOCIETY – OLD AND NEW

A vigorous civic life is by no means unique to the modern world and as Michael Edwards has commented, '[i]n the late thirteenth century, Marco Polo was struck by the vibrancy of associational life in the Chinese city of Hangzhou, "noted for its charitable institutions as for its pleasures". Public hospitals, market associations, free cemeteries, cultural groups and homes for the elderly abounded. No doubt earlier explorers would have seen similar things on their travels too, since associations like these have existed from at least the days of the Pharaohs.'[6]

[2] N. Singleton et al, 'Psychiatric morbidity among adults living in private households 2000'. London: Office for National Statistics, 2002.

[3] J. Jones, C. Huxtable & J. Hodgson, 'Self-reported work-related illness in 2003/04: Results from the Labour Force Survey', London: Office for National Statistics/Health and Safety Executive, 2005.

[4] 'Fastforwarding Primary Care Mental Health', London: Department of Health, 2003.

[5] A. Rogers & D. Pilgrim, 'Mental health and inequality', New York: Palgrave, 2003

[6] M. Edwards, 'Civil Society', Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004.

Yet civil society is a relatively modern term. At first it was defined in relation to the state and contrasted to a variety of antonyms such as 'despotism' and 'barbarism'. For John Locke, civil society was defined in contrast to 'the state of nature'.   He wrote that 'a civilised society was not an essentially systemic entity', rather it was a collection of civilised human beings, 'that is, a society of human beings who had succeeded in disciplining their conduct' through bonds of mutual trust and shared Christian convictions.   A generation later, Adam Smith and James Ferguson challenged those who assumed that commercial society would undermine 'the virtuous society', arguing instead that it would bring new solidarities held together by interdependencies of need and 'natural sympathy' rather than trust. Civil society for them was as much about the civilising effect of markets as it was about voluntary action, and Smith identified two realms within the new commercial order – one of market exchange which fulfilled existing needs and generated new ones, and the realm of personal relations, governed by 'natural sympathy' and moral affections, which included the family, friends and other social ties. Hegel was a subsequent major influence on thinking about civil society. He defined 'civil society' as an institutional domain distinct from the state but embracing more than just the 'system of needs' – or what we would today call the economy. For him it encompassed not only the instrumental relations between isolated individuals, but also the 'corporations' or voluntary associations which mediate between the state and the individual, the legal system or 'administration of justice' and the police. For Hegel, civil society was the sphere where people achieved freedom and liberation from base needs and the dependence on nature. It was also the sphere where people gained recognition.

Recently, Michael Edwards has provided another typology which distinguishes between civil society as a sphere of associational life (including voluntary and community organisations, trade unions, political parties, faith-based organisations and so on), as a normative vision of the 'good society' (sometimes in competition with the visions which come from political ideologies, religions and market ideologies) and as a public sphere, a space for deliberation, dialogue and social interaction (again, in competition with the world of politics on the one hand and the media on the other).[7] Each has a rather different relationship to need, with the first and third leaving great flexibility as to how people think about defining their needs and how these should be met.

The most recent serious intervention in this long-running argument has come from Jeffrey Alexander in his book 'The Civil Sphere'. In it he argues that there is a core of modern civil society which is about the assertion and recognition of solidarity, and of universal rights and universal claims for treatments. According to this interpretation, the growth of modern civil society is inseparable from the evolution of democracy and of public spheres of argument and deliberation. The rise of feminism, movements for civil rights or disability rights, or more recently for children's rights, fit well into this schema.   His account deliberately steers away from the view, expressed well by the Italian political philosopher Norberto Bobbio, that '[i]t is difficult to provide a positive definition of "civil society" because it is a question of listing everything that has been left over, after limiting the sphere of the state' and the market and the private sphere.[8]

THE THREE DISTINCTIVE DIMENSIONS OF MODERN CIVIL SOCIETY

These arguments about definition matter because civil society has been invoked by academics, politicians and activists alike as part of the answer to a panoply of social, political, cultural, economic and even ethical ills afflicting society today. For many, civil society promises 'democracy, prosperity, autonomy and the means to exercise it'.[9] Or, as Jeremy Rifkin claims, civil society is 'our last, best hope'.

To some extent, definitions of what civil society is or should be depend on whether it is viewed through a sociological, political or ethical lens. Sociologists interpret civil society as a set of organisations and associations, political theorists tend to define civil society in relation to the state, while those who focus on the ethical dimension of civil society emphasise its role in constructing and defining 'the good society'.

Here we suggest that the term civil society is particularly difficult to define because it combines a number of strands, some of which have their roots in ancient times and others which have developed since the 18th century, and have subsequently become more mainstream.

The first of the ancient strands is **charity**, the concern for the needs of others – the personal and direct response to suffering. This unmediated

[8] Ibid.

[9] S. Kaviraj and S. Khilnani, 'Civil Society: history and possibilities'. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

motive of charity remains present in people's response to disasters, floods and famines, and has been amplified by the immediacy of the mass media. It is often a private response – and often driven by some kind of identification with those suffering. This is the heart of the altruistic and compassionate side of civil society, expressed in perhaps its purest form in Corinthians in the New Testament.

The second ancient strand, that of **mutual self-interest**, encompasses the concern for the needs and interests of others like us. In all societies there have been independent clubs and associations to provide everything from housing and schooling to credit and books to read. In contemporary societies there are a multitude of clubs, from sports clubs to book clubs, as well as more formal associations like trade unions and professional bodies that exist to support common interests, largely unmotivated by altruism or compassion for others, and largely independent both of the state and of big business.

THE DISTINCTIVE PERSPECTIVES OF MODERN CIVIL SOCIETY

These two ancient strands of charity and mutualism have, over the last two centuries, become interwoven with a series of distinctively modern perspectives and understandings of **universal rights and principles**, accountability, voice and structures. These perspectives have encouraged very different approaches to meeting needs.

First, these modern perspectives seek to generalise from the direct impulse of charity to address the **underlying causes of suffering and need**, which can include attempting to challenge hegemonic power structures. Naturally, different actors will identify different causes of suffering and need and consequently the course of action chosen will vary.

Nevertheless, civil society remains a critical sphere were these arguments about causes and approaches are played out. So, while the motives might be the same as those for charity, the expressions can be very different, concerned much more with the workings of current political and economic systems, and their inherent inefficiencies and inequalities. This shift of emphasis came out of a critique of traditional

charity as dealing with symptoms rather than causes, and has prompted the growing interest in developing a more systemic or theoretical understanding of change. Kathryn Merchant, President and CEO of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation even recently described philanthropy as 'applied social science'.[10]

Second, these modern perspectives place a strong emphasis on **rights to voice**, or democracy - and compared with traditional approaches to charity - assert that beneficiaries are best placed to define and understand their own needs. They are suspicious of actions, however well-intended, that leave beneficiaries passive and powerless.

Third, and again beyond traditional charity and mutual self-interest, the modern perspectives are also concerned with **universal principles and claims**, as well as universal accountabilities. So, rather than merely making a claim for an individual who may, for example, suffer from a severe mental illness, the group to which this individual belongs becomes the focal point – and one which needs to be given due recognition and a societal response.

Fourth, these perspectives imply that **actions in civil society are public in nature**, rather than being extensions of private life. Hence the pressure for greater transparency for charities (as promoted by organisations like Guidestar International or the Center for Effective Philanthropy), the view that large non governmental organisations should be more formally accountable for their actions, and that wealthy philanthropists exercising power in a community through spending money should be in part accountable to the beneficiaries and others affected by their actions.

These modern perspectives distinguish civil society from its previous incarnations, making it increasingly concerned with the conditions and structures that cause needs to arise rather than simply addressing their symptoms. These changes have been most visible in those parts of civil society dealing with children, people with disabilities, race, gender and poor communities, but they can be found to some extent in almost every field. These concerns with accountability, universality and openness can exist in tension with the more traditional roots of civil society – with charities which can at times be seen as private, unaccountable, unconcerned with causes. They also exist in tension

[10] GEO Conference 'Learning for Results', New Orleans USA, May 16/17 2007.

with mutual self-interest organisations which can be seen as too partial and exclusive. Despite these tensions, however, there are also many points of overlap.

Development charities mobilise both immediate human urges to respond to suffering and sophisticated arguments about the principles that should govern trade or aid. Equally organisations based around mutual self-interest can spread much more widely. So, for example trade unions sometimes campaign as advocates of universal rights and solidarities (for example, the campaign for a higher minimum 'living' wage in London) and sometimes as advocates of much more exclusive rights (for example, the British Medical Association campaigning for higher pay for doctors). Religious organisations sometimes act in more universalistic ways, meeting the needs of anyone who comes through their door, and sometimes in more exclusive ways, acting as if they are the guardians of exclusive insights.
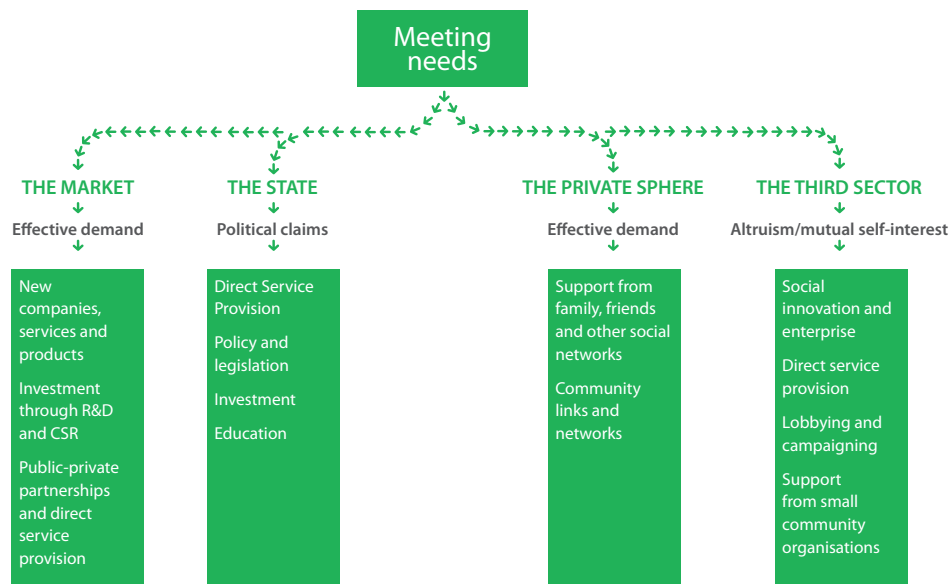
Drawing on these dimensions we can place civil society organisations in a simple two dimensional space that helps to make sense of their responses to need. On the vertical axis we chart how much those in need are active in defining their needs and exercising power over the solutions. On the horizontal axis we chart whether the response to need sees it as specific and contextual, or more universal (there is bound to be some disagreement over exactly where civil society organisations are positioned and how that might change over time).

HOW ARE NEEDS MET?

Meeting needs is not the sole preserve of civil society organisations. The state, the market and the private sphere all play their part in identifying and meeting needs and each sector or sphere responds to needs for different reasons. The state responds to citizens' needs out of a duty to protect its citizens and provide welfare where appropriate, but governments are also influenced by their need to remain popular with the electorate and to distinguish themselves from competing parties. The market responds to effective demand in the form of purchasing power and meets needs not out of love or care but out of self-interest. As Adam Smith discovered, '[i]t is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their

Meeting needs

THE MARKET
Effective demand
- New companies, services and products
- Investment through R&D and CSR
- Public-private partnerships and direct service provision

THE STATE
Political claims
- Direct Service Provision
- Policy and legislation
- Investment
- Education

THE PRIVATE SPHERE
Effective demand
- Support from family, friends and other social networks
- Community links and networks

THE THIRD SECTOR
Altruism/mutual self-interest
- Social innovation and enterprise
- Direct service provision
- Lobbying and campaigning
- Support from small community organisations

Needs for... Met by...	Physical and resources	Care and advice	Skills and capabilities	Psychological
The Market	Renting a flat	Hiring a nanny	Paying for a degree	Paid therapy
The State	Housing benefit	SureStart	Primary schooling	Publicly funded mentoring, therapy
The Private Sphere	Housing an aged parent	Informal eldercare	Cultural capital in the family	Publicly funded mentoring, therapy
The Third Sector	Hospice; homeless shelter	Assistance for the elderly e.g.Help the Aged	Workers' Educational Association, University of the Third Age	Befriending services

advantages'.[11] In the private sphere people respond to personal claims. Civil society contains within it the full gamut of other motivations but the community and voluntary sector has traditionally been seen as the site of altruism and care, and of a more universal, generous side of human nature. Broadly speaking, the diagram below outlines the processes involved in identifying, articulating, defining and then meeting needs.

During critical moments needs move from one sector to another: so energy and water are now provided through the market not the state or community organisations; eldercare is increasingly provided by the state and private providers as well as by the family; voluntary and community sector organisations are increasingly involved in the provision of housing, and so on. The table below provides a rough summary of how people in contemporary developed societies meet the different kinds of needs we identified earlier:

[11] A. Smith, 'On the Wealth of Nations', Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

HOW ARE NEEDS MET WITHIN CIVIL SOCIETY?

The routes whereby new needs come to be acknowledged and acted on are diverse – from the needs for fair treatment of transsexuals to the needs of Roma. Some individual cases will be explored later in this paper. However, there are some common patterns as needs are taken up in ever more public ways.

At one end of the spectrum there are the needs which are identified and reflected on in the private sphere – often within families and amongst friends. At the other end of the spectrum, the state will take responsibility for ensuring that a need is met, often after it has become socially or publicly recognised.

However, most needs fall somewhere between recognition in the private sphere and take up by the state, and it is in this space that civil society identifies and meets needs, and makes them more commonly recognised. That process of recognition is complex: some needs may be too difficult or painful to express, and take time to bring to the surface.

They can then be represented in the arts and literature; researched by policy makers and academics; taken up by the media; charities can raise awareness, lobby government and raise and distribute funds and resources; collective self-help groups can meet the needs of its members and voluntary organisations and social entrepreneurs can respond to the need directly through service provision. In addition, how and whether the need should be met can be discussed and argued within the public sphere; while new social movements bring new needs to the fore and provide a platform for self expression in post materialist cultures.

Recent history is full of examples of charismatic individuals who have devised innovative ways of meeting unmet social need, and acted simultaneously as campaigners and service providers, including Abbé Pierre whose approaches to homelessness have been copied around the world; Muhammad Yunus who pioneered microcredit and Chad Varah who founded the Samaritans. There are also many examples of groups and networks which have achieved similar successes.

These are some of the ways in which civil society organisations can meet needs directly. There are, however, other civil society organisations which while not explicitly charged with meeting needs, do so indirectly. Such organisations or groups may have been established to promote and defend universal ideas of rights and equalities or satisfy a common interest (such as book clubs or community choirs). Even these can play an important role in meeting needs, for members of book clubs and community choirs these gatherings may meet psychological needs – for belonging, recognition, sociability and so on.

The lines between rights, needs and interests are often blurred, and struggles to meet particular interests can also meet a more universal interest. For example, even though trade unions at the beginning of the twentieth century espoused what they considered universal values of workers' rights, they were still acting on behalf of their members' self-interest and against the prevailing, mainstream opinion in civil society. Yet, through their struggles and campaigning, unions played a significant role in making fair pay and conditions for workers a recognised and legitimate need.

This and countless other examples, like the suffrage movement in Britain or the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, illustrate how

received or conventional wisdoms are contested, then change and shift to create new paradigms and norms. The Gay Rights Movement is currently following a similar trajectory but as the recent debate about the rights of gay couples to adopt shows, the rights and needs of homosexuals remain contested and seen as illegitimate by some – a reminder that civil society is a space for argument.
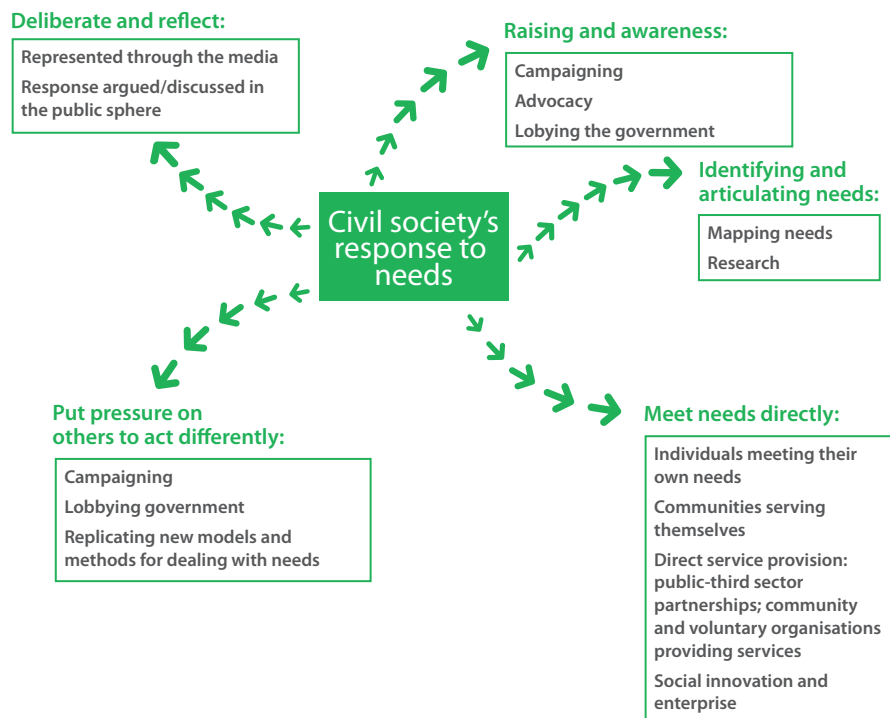
To summarise, the groups, organisations and associations which make up the civil society ensemble can:

- **Identify needs** so that they are socially recognisable – giving them a name (for example, domestic violence or elder abuse);
- **Raise awareness of the need** through campaigning and lobbying (for example, debt and poverty);
- **Deliberate and reflect** on the merits of various options for meeting needs (for example, the impact of aid and changes to trade rules)
- **Meet needs directly** through action, mutual self-help, social innovations and service provision (for example, hospices) but also by providing capacity building support (for example, The National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Community Matters and Bassac).
- **Put pressure on others to act differently**, compelling states to provide services (for example, welfare for the homeless) or businesses to act differently (for example, with higher payments to poor farmers), in part by enabling networking.

Intensifying needs have sometimes brought about dynamic responses. The industrialisation and urbanisation of the early nineteenth century was accompanied by an extraordinary upsurge of social enterprise and innovation in response to truly appalling conditions to be found in the major cities. Innovations included mutual self-help, microcredit, building societies, co-operatives, trade unions and reading clubs and many others.

At other times civil society has lost ground to politics and the state, which come to be seen as more effective ways of meeting needs. In the years after 1945 democratic governments in Europe and north America built welfare states, schooling systems and institutions as various as credit banks for farmers and networks of adult education colleges. This was a period when many came to see civic and charitable organisations

as too parochial, paternalistic or inefficient to meet social needs on any scale. Civil society was also seen to be unable to generate the resources needed to address major needs.[12]

Deliberate and reflect:

Represented through the media

Response argued/discussed in the public sphere

Raising and awareness:

Campaigning

Advocacy

Lobying the government

Civil society's response to needs

Identifying and articulating needs:

Mapping needs

Research

Put pressure on others to act differently:

Campaigning

Lobbying government

Replicating new models and methods for dealing with needs

Meet needs directly:

Individuals meeting their own needs

Communities serving themselves

Direct service provision: public-third sector partnerships; community and voluntary organisations providing services

Social innovation and enterprise

During other periods people want money in their own hands to meet needs – and both the state and civil society lose ground to the market. This is the pattern described by Albert Hirschmann as one in which there are cycles of disappointment that lead people towards the public realm of civic action, and then back again into their private spheres.

So needs are met by all four sectors or spheres – states (and competing parties and politicians) promote ideas of entitlement and rights, encouraging new claims to be made; businesses respond to gaps in

the market by meeting needs and sometimes persuading consumers of needs they had never imagined; individuals and families meet their own needs through informal private relationships; and civil society plays a distinctive role in often taking needs from the private sphere to the public sphere, sometimes meeting them directly, but often articulating them in more universal ways that make a claim on others.

There are some needs which civil society organisations are best placed to meet. For example, they tend to be better at creating trust and solidarity (though public agencies like schools can also do this). They can also be particularly important at the most local level. As Robert Sampson argues, in welfare state societies, '[w]e do not need communities so much to satisfy our private and personal needs, which are best met elsewhere, not even to meet our sustenance needs, which, for better or worse, appear to be irretrievably dispersed in space. Rather, local community remains essential as a site for the realisation of public or social goods, such as public safety, a clean environment, and education for children'.[12b]

m[12] G. Mulgan et al, 'Social Innovation: what it is, why it matters, how it can be accelerated', London: The Young Foundation, 2006.

[12b] R. Sampson, 'The Neighborhood Context of Well-Being', Perspectives in Biology and Medicine, Volume 46, Number 3, Summer 2003, pp. S53-S64

MEETING NEEDS DIRECTLY

We suggested earlier that civil society combines a number of strands, including the tradition of charity, the direct response to the needs of others, and mutual self-interest. Here we look at how people meet their own needs, and how civil society organisations provide funding or services to meet needs. In the next chapter, we then go on to look at the many ways in which civil society organisations go far beyond these types of response to advocate and campaign.

INDIVIDUALS MEETING THEIR OWN NEEDS WITH OTHERS

People are generally good at recognising and trying to meet their needs – in fact, much of daily life is concerned with our individual and collective attempts to secure such things as money, care and support. An Ipsos MORI survey for the Young Foundation highlights the fact that people's most important sources for support are not the state, the market or the organised voluntary sector, but family, friends and neighbours.

Respondents were asked to whom they would turn if a number of situations arose. In one scenario, respondents were asked to whom they would turn if they had an illness and had to stay in bed for several weeks and needed help around the home. The majority of respondents (70%) claimed they would turn to spouses and relatives. Friends were also seen as an important source of support, with 19% of respondents saying they would turn to a friend if they were ill.

In another part of the survey, people were asked to whom they would turn if they had a problem with their husband, wife or partner. Again, the most popular sources of support were friends (32%), parents

MEETING
NEEDS
DIRECTLY

(12%), children (5%) and other relatives (14%). The poll found that 7% of respondents would seek help from a counsellor or psychiatrist, and that women were more likely to do so than men. Interestingly, 7% of respondents would turn to 'no one', 2% would turn to a social worker, and 4% would turn to a religious figure. Answers to other questions (including 'who would you turn to if you felt a bit down or depressed or if you needed help with a gardening job which you couldn't do alone') mirror these findings. Clearly, informal self-help remains critically important, albeit usually undervalued by the state.[13] It continues to be the bedrock on which the more formal structures of civil society rest.

The survey also points to the extent of unmet needs: over the course of a year, 9 million people experienced feeling lonely at weekends and 18% of people aged 55 and over admitted going a full day without speaking to anyone. And 1 in 50 people (2%) said they had no one to turn to in a personal crisis.

COMMUNITIES SERVING THEMSELVES: MUTUAL AID AND SELF-ORGANISING

Evidence collected by the British Crime Survey suggests that the community and grassroots self-help aspects of civil society in the UK are flourishing. For example, the survey points out that recently there has been a recovery in the proportion of people reporting that people in their neighbourhood 'try and help each other' (as opposed to 'going their own way').[14] The following are illustrative examples of the work undertaken by local communities and volunteers:

[13] Burns et al cited in S. Daly, 'For the Common Good? The Changing Role of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland', Dunfermline: Carnegie UK Trust, 2006.

[14] www.esrcsocietytoday. ac.uk.

[15] C. Botham and L. Setkova, 'Local Action Changing Lives – community organisations tackling poverty and social exclusion', London: New Philanthropy Capital, 2004.

THE RUCHILL CHURCH OUTREACH PROJECT, GLASGOW

The Ruchill Church Outreach Project offers an array of activities and projects that cater for a range of ages. Examples include 'Streetwork', which involves staff going out into the community of Ruchill and talking to young people on the streets. This will enable them to find out what young people are unhappy about in their community, and to form new relationships with young people who would not necessarily want to use existing activities. The local police support this work, and believe that it has a positive impact on the area.[15]

APPLE TREE COURT, SALFORD

Apple Tree Court was typical of many rundown inner city housing estates, suffering from poor housing conditions and a lack of local facilities. A group of residents, fired by the enthusiasm and determination of the tenants' association, negotiated to become a Tenant Managed Company, and dug up the barren green lawn around the tower block. They now enjoy vegetable plots, fruit and nut trees, a greenhouse, a wildlife area around a pond, a Japanese garden, a 'village' duck pond, a seating area for picnics or basking in the sun, and a small woodland copse. A number of community projects are in the pipeline, building on what has been achieved.[16]

HEATON COMMUNITY CENTRE, NEWCASTLE

Heaton Community Centre is a grassroots organisation, run by the local community, for the local community. It undertakes a wide range of activities, involving all age groups, from toddlers to pensioners. The centre, among other things, runs a crèche, a social club with a snooker table and bingo, supports childminding groups, and provides sporting activities. The manager of the Heaton Community Centre is a very active local citizen who is also a part-time teacher and has set up various local umbrella organisations.[17]

The effects of community organisations of this kind are, more often than not, benign though in some situations they can also contribute to tensions.

[16] 'Community Self-help', London: Social Exclusion Unit, 2003.

[17] C. Botham and L. Setkova, 'Local Action Changing Lives – community organisations tackling poverty and social exclusion', London: New Philanthropy Capital, 2004.

SMALL COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

Given their sensitivity to community interests and their ability to connect with communities in ways that statutory organisations may find difficult, small community and voluntary organisations are uniquely placed to respond to existing needs.[18] They play an important role in bringing together people who share a common interest or concern, providing a space where mutual needs can be addressed, strengthening associational life and linking people to decision-making structures.[19] In the 19th and early 20th centuries, such groups were the foundations for widespread networks of mutual assistance.

Active community participation, in its various guises, is said to produce different facets of social capital. Social capital is an essential building block to collective action and a healthy civil society relies on its 'production'. Robert Putnam defines social capital as, '[t]he features of social organisation, such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit'.[20] In his work, social capital is conceived as a 'public good'. Associational life is, for him, the transmission belt that enables individuals to accumulate the three types of social capital (bonding, bridging and linking).[21] It is the essential factor in establishing trust, norms of behaviour, shared understandings/values, reciprocity and networks – all crucial to a healthy civil society.

The positive impact of social capital has been linked to a variety of indicators; educational achievement, election turnout, trust in others, labour market participation and crime rates among others.[22] In terms of the generation of trust and norms, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), drawing on data from the British Social Attitudes Survey, has found that those who participate in associational life do tend to be more trusting of other people and that this trust is generated by belonging to the association.[23] Another recent ONS report illustrated the value of social capital for those seeking employment.[24] Nearly 30% of those who commenced employment in 2004 had learnt of the vacancy through someone who worked there – pointing to the clear value of networks. Only 10% found their job via an agency or job centre. In addition, the report highlights the 'norms and trust' side of social capital. The employer, especially when the skill levels (human capital) of prospective employees are more or less equal, is likely to rely on recommendations from existing employees to decide between

candidates. This both builds trust in prospective candidates and makes use of existing social capital within the organisation.

However, Putnam's definition of social capital does not address the private dimension of social capital and has tended to underplay the potential negative impacts.[25] Not all social capital leads to 'mutual benefit'.[26] Using personal networks to secure employment results in another unsuccessful job seeker being at a disadvantage. This is particularly significant for disadvantaged or socially excluded groups who might not have access to networks of employed persons. In fact, levels of mutual trust and social interaction are now often lowest among socially excluded groups, where it is needed most.[27]

Portes and Landolt have also identified three problems with the assumption that bonding will automatically lead to bridging and linking for individuals within strong groups:[28]

- restrictions on individual freedoms; a community with strong social bonds based on identity can exert too much influence over individual behaviour leading to excessive compliance and a lack of personal autonomy;
- downward levelling on aspiration through peer pressure; strong family attachments, ethnic loyalties and so on, can hinder group members from moving geographically, widening social circles or advancing economically;[29]
- social exclusion; the very process of bonding, creating links within homogenous groups, excludes individuals from that group.

These negative outcomes are strongly associated with the bonding form of social capital. Unless bonding can be supplemented with other forms of social capital there is a danger that narrow interests (identity, locality, ethnicity) will predominate over wider community interests. In fact, social exclusion combined with power differentials across society raises questions over whether social capital exacerbates and reinforces inequality rather than helps alleviate it. Individuals with access to power will associate excluding those who do not have similar access ('old boys' networks, professional associations). The ONS point to the events of 2001 in Bradford and Oldham as partially attributable to strongly divided and segregated communities. In some instances it could be argued that the stronger the social capital within a group, the greater the hostility to outsiders.[30]

[18] For example, C. Botham & L. Setkova 'Local Action Changing Lives – community organisations tackling poverty and social exclusion', London: New Philanthropy Capital, 2004 and T. Cantle, 'Community Cohesion and the Voluntary Sector', London: National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service, 2005.

[19] D. Vyas, 'How voluntary and community organisations can help transform the local relationship', London: NCVO, 2006.

[20] R. Putnam, 'The prosperous community: social capital and public life', The American Prospect 13, 1993.

[21] 'Social Capital', Democracy & Civil Society Programme, Carnegie UK Trust, 2007.

[22] K. Brook, 'Labour market participation: the influence of social capital' London: Office for National Statistics, 2005; P. Haezewindt, 'Investing in each other and the community: the role of social capital', Social Trends 33 London: Office for National Statistics, 2003. M. Woolcock, 'The place of social capital in Understanding Social and Economic Outcomes', ISUMA Canadian Journal of Policy Research 2, 2001.

[23] P. Haezewindt. 'Investing in each other and the community: the role of social capital', Social Trends 33, London: Office for National Statistics, 2003.

[24] K. Brook, 'Labour market participation: the influence of social capital', London: Office for National Statistics, 2005.

[25] Social capital can be accrued both individually and collectively and so can be a public or a private good.

[26] The same applies to the OECD's definition of social capital, which has been adopted by the Office of National Statistics: 'networks, together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups' – i.e. not all social action leads 'cooperation … among groups'. Cited in K. Brook, Labour market participation: the influence of social capital, London: Office for National Statistics, 2005.

[27] B. Roger, & E. Robinson 'The Benefits of Community Engagement', London: Active Citizenship Centre, Home Office, 2004.

[28] A. Portes & P. Landolt, 'The downside of social capital', The American Prospect 26, 1996.

[29] V. Jochum, 'Social capital: beyond the theory', London: National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 2003.

[30] P. Haezewindt, 'Investing in each other and the community: the role of social capital', Social Trends 33, London: Office for National Statistics, 2003.

True, the correlation between social capital and positive outcomes is reinforced by the ONS research. But the question remains as to the direction of causality: does being housed, well educated, healthy and happy produce social capital or visa versa? How can the socially excluded build up a network of well-connected individuals, which can facilitate their access to better housing, jobs and general well-being? Or does the research indicate that those with access to better education, housing and jobs are more able to produce social capital (which in turn reinforces their relative position in society)?

Michael Edwards highlights another criticism of Putnam's early work regarding the normative dimension of the 'good society'; that is, the idea that social capital was assumed always to be a societal good, despite well documented examples to the contrary. [31]   For example, David Halpern suggests that organised crime or gangs involve a social network which entails shared norms but they do not constitute a societal good.[32] The same, of course, is true of extreme political organisations and terror groups.

Social capital is, therefore, a contested concept. Its formation, however, is crucial to both community and individual development. The question for policy makers and civil society is how to ensure that bridging and linking are encouraged as crucial supplements to bonding social capital.

THE THIRD SECTOR

While individuals, groups of individuals and communities identify, respond to and meet needs usually through mutual aid, self-organising and offering advice and support, larger third sector organisations respond to needs in a variety of ways.

They provide direct and indirect services, free at the point of need, partially subsidised and at full cost. Some target preventative services, some educational and capacity-building. Others are in the form of a direct interpersonal treatment, activity or intervention. Yet others offer a gift, grant, loan or benefit to augment depleted resources. Some services are rationed in the sense of utilising eligibility criteria and needs assessments which are akin to those deployed in the public

sector. Others are offered on demand or first come, first served. Some non governmental organisations specialise in areas of intervention which the state is ill-equipped to provide (for example acute disability rehabilitation) and others corner the market in equipment, technology and training. Many of these services have developed organically, resulting in a pattern of provision which is extremely geographically uneven (which can become politically difficult in cases of crossover with state provision such as residential SEN schooling). Nevertheless, these activities in many cases match or exceed the level of expertise and quality offered by the public sector and account for the increasingly widespread sub-contracting of services to the third sector especially in social and intermediate care.

DIRECT SERVICE PROVISION

From charitable hospitals and probation services to public (private) schools, third sector organisations have a long history of involvement in service delivery. However, during much of the twentieth century, third sector service provision was gradually replaced by state delivery. This transition was a result of the growing scale and scope of the state but was also motivated in part, by a number of criticisms of third sector involvement. Service delivery by third sector organisations was perceived to be unacceptably patchy and uneven, and in many places absent or below an acceptable threshold and third sector organisations were seen to be lacking in capacity and resources. In addition, the services delivered were seen as paternalistic rather than driven by the needs of service users and it was often assumed that charitable services were less efficient because of unprofessional management cultures.

Nonetheless, the third sector remains as strong as ever as a service deliverer. Waning confidence in public sector provision in the 1970s, 80s and 90s brought a revival of interest in provision by third sector organisations. Advocates emphasised the value added by volunteering and an ethos of mutuality and indeed recently, voluntary action has been championed across the political divide, from Gordon Brown to David Cameron. Others argue that because of their links with service users, third sector organisations are well placed to take the user involvement, voice and civil renewal agendas forward.

[31] M. Edwards, 'Civil Society', Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004.

[32] D. Halpern, 'Social Capital: the new golden goose', unpublished review, Cambridge University,1999.

In truth, state and third sector provision are often interdependent and the boundaries are often blurred – many third sector organisations receive public subsidy, while they in return offer innovation, practical experience and resources which are essential in meeting unmet human needs. Indeed, most flourishing third sectors tend to be somewhat reliant on the state. Apart from providing funding streams (the voluntary sector receives 30-40% of its income from statutory sources), supporting initiatives, taking up examples of best practice and then disseminating these services nationally, governments are also responsible for creating the legal framework in which third sector organisations are able to operate.

Some recent state initiatives, such as SureStart, have strengthened both third sector organisations and volunteering around them, and contributed to the apparent rise in **informal and formal volunteering** from 18.4 million in 2001 to 20.4 million in 2005.[33] However, the relationship between the state and third sector in meeting needs is rarely straightforward. Some fairer rules of the game have been devised and introduced, including the national and local Compacts. New ways of thinking about public value- and the impacts achieved by contracting organisations – can encourage a more open and honest recognition of third sector achievements. Conversely the shift of charity law to require demonstration of public benefit may push the more complacent and ineffective charities to think more rigorously about their own actions – and how well they use inherited assets.

In theory, there are five ways in which the third sector can make a particularly good contribution to direct service delivery:

- By delivering services **more efficiently and effectively than the state or market** (either because of lower costs or because of superior service models);
- By being **responsive** to user needs and input (because organisations are more directly mission oriented than public bodies);
- By developing **innovative ways** of meeting need (perhaps benefiting from fewer constraints on risk and innovation than public bodies);
- By creating distinctive kinds of added value or **externality benefits**, such as participation, social inspiration and civil renewal;
- By **joining up services** which are siloed within the public sector.

Take-up campaigns, for example, make an interesting case study. Governments regularly decide, usually in order to alleviate poverty, to introduce a benefit or credit which needs to be applied for. Governments then also set up campaigns to encourage take up. These publicity and awareness campaigns (which have tended to be relatively linear and generic – lowest spend for highest impact) have a relatively high impact on the first five to seven deciles (e.g. Pension Credit) but much less on the last three. There appear to be a number of reasons for this, some of which are to do with stigma and the disinclination of certain groups to claim handouts (especially, but not exclusively, austerity-generation older people), but many of which pertain to **awareness, capacity, complexity and attitudes to authority**. For the last three deciles (this quantum will vary across content areas), the third sector is often far better placed, and increasingly deployed, in helping to meet need by running targeted take-up campaigns. It is able to obviate the four barriers mentioned above.

- **Awareness:** Third sector organisations can reach people who are unlikely to have exposure to or give attention to public information and for whom traditional linear methods of disseminating written material are nowhere near as effective as face to face dialogue
- **Capacity:** There are a significant number of people with what might be termed sup-optimal capacity to recognise the marginal utility of a course of action, such as applying for a benefit or credit for a range of cognitive, psychological, emotional or situational reasons all of which can be intermediated effectively by the personalised advocacy and support commonly provided by charities.
- **Complexity:** It has been long recognised that complexity and difficulty are significant barriers to take-up, prompting the Department for Work and Pension's recent project on Benefit Simplification and the National Audit Office study on the complexity of Government forms.
- **Attitudes to authority:** Research has repeatedly shown that stigma and distrust are very significant barriers to some people turning to or co-operating with statutory bodies, whereas civil society organisations rarely have this problem. The concept of "trusted intermediary" is extremely well embedded in the sector.

[33] R. Murphy, E. Wedlock & J. King, 'Early findings from the 2005 Home Office Citizenship Survey', London: Home Office, 2005. Available at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/rdsolr4905.pdf

Moreover, it is not just take-up campaigns which better lend themselves to third sector involvement. All public information challenges from the roll-out of digital TV to consumer education campaigns have similar topologies and permeation problems.

The risk, however, is that charities can quickly become "them" rather than "us" by becoming involved in contract delivery which includes or even touches upon rationing, sanctions or data verification. And there are a number of other concerns about third sector delivery of public services:

- It **may distort the activities of third sector organisations** through short-term funding, imbalanced target regimes and bidding frameworks;
- It may push the third sector towards responding to already recognised needs and **away from campaigning** or other activities for newer needs;
- It might **squeeze out** independent high-quality voluntary provision;
- It may also accelerate the growth of large third sector organisations **at the expense** of smaller and more community-based ones which may be more responsive.

More recent critics of third sector delivery have also argued that it undercuts the state at the expense of staff conditions and user experience. Perhaps the most basic reason for caution about the growing third sector role in service delivery, however, is that it may undercut civil society's role as a discovery mechanism. Malcolm Dean has suggested that "rather than asking voluntary bodies to take over large slabs of existing services where state provision is proving effective, there still remain huge numbers of holes in the current welfare net needing to be filled. Social entrepreneur Michael Young never stopped finding urgent unmet needs. So should his successors." Put simply the third sector is never going to be able to do more than the state to meet or fund socially recognised needs; but it will often be better placed to spot and respond to changing or new needs.

And what about the effectiveness of civil society organisations in meeting needs? Such evaluation, although important, is often tricky. Much of the literature suggests that a definitive version of "quality", "value for money" or "public value" is hard to arrive at, and that this will always

involve judgments being made about what outcomes are important – whether implicitly, by the choice of a market system of allocation; explicitly by government, through the setting of a few performance targets; bottom-up by users and communities; or a combination of all three. Consistent challenges in such evaluation include:

- The difficulty of tracing the provision or reshaping of services to outcomes improving welfare, especially in multi-causal environments;
- Differentiating between improvements in quality of services provided and quality of life of users;
- The relevance of "equity of outcomes", and how needs for access vary among individuals.

When detailed analyses and evaluations have been carried out, the picture turns out to be uneven, with some organisations clearly better than their public sector equivalents and others clearly worse. In some cases, in fields like residential care, private organisations turned out to be more responsive to beneficiaries.

IDENTIFYING NEEDS, RAISING AWARENESS AND CAMPAIGNING FOR CHANGE

Civil society's role is not just to meet needs directly – but also to persuade others to act differently, often by persuading the public to care about a need in new ways.

RAISING AWARENESS AND CAMPAIGNING FOR CHANGE

We have emphasised that civil society is increasingly concerned with making claims for whole categories of need to be given due recognition. There are two main methods by which civil society organisations try to get attention for issues. One is the traditional, pre-literate form of the story: the personal case which exemplifies a bigger issue, and engages with people's hearts as well as their minds. The other is the more modern medium of research and analysis.

Often, these methods overlap. Organisations within civil society are generally closer to the ground, less formal and less threatening than public organisations and businesses. That makes them well placed to identify and understand emerging needs, and appreciate the transition from personal problems to needs that are socially recognised. The response to the new or unmet need may then be to campaign and raise awareness among the public, media and politicians. Some campaigns are founded on individuals articulating their own needs, and campaigning on this basis (for example, campaigns centred on raising awareness of a particular disability, or for a specific resource such

IDENTIFYING NEEDS, RAISING AWARENESS AND CAMPAIGNING FOR CHANGE

as faith schools). Others are more altruistic, campaigning on behalf of others (for example, the NSPCC's FULL STOP campaign, or campaigns against sex trafficking).

Campaigning methods can include raising awareness through the media, advocacy, lobbying and organising large scale public mobilisations. Some campaigns try to effect behaviour change – one need only think of campaigns targeting drink-driving, littering or recycling. Increasingly, these types of campaigns are undertaken in partnership with the state. Third sector campaigns, especially high profile campaigns such as Make Poverty History and Jubilee 2000, often demand specific changes from the state or other centres of power. The goal may be a legislative change, for example equal rights for ethnic minorities; it may involve a demand for resources to be allocated in greater measure or differently to meet a specific need, as with Jamie Oliver's campaign for better school food; or it may be a demand for transparency, accountability and policy change from a corporation, as with the campaign that targeted Union Carbide after the Bhopal disaster.

Campaigning charities today are often more successful than political parties at mobilising large numbers to take action, and recent research suggests that the public sees lobbying the government to change policy as the most effective use of charitable money – a remarkable result, in some respects, which presents civil society as primarily a vehicle for influencing the realm of politics and the state, and reinforces the argument made earlier about the role of civil society as a space in which claims and values are debated and contested, and become more widely accepted and acknowledged.[34] This goal of policy change can be achieved in many ways – directly by persuading or pressurising politicians, or indirectly by targeting opinion formers and the media, civil servants or the broad mass of non governmental organisations.

More often than not, however, campaigns are carried out on behalf of others. Campaigns of this kind bring to the fore questions of authenticity and legitimacy – when can one person speak for another? These issues are particularly problematic in relation to marginalised groups who may need others to fight for them, but these groups are also least likely to be well-understood by those campaigning on their behalf. These questions have been controversial for well over a century, and formed a dividing line between the working class self-help

organisations of the 19th century, and the Charity Organising Society approach of middle class volunteers and philanthropists. More recently these issues have been particularly live in the world of disability. For most of the 20th century, disability charities were largely run by able bodied people, and shaped by a paternalistic ethos of doing good. In the 1970s, there was a shift towards the redefinition of disability as a socially constructed phenomenon, alongside a much more activist stance amongst disabled people themselves. During the 1980s a series of important new organisations emerged that were organised and run by people with disabilities, while fierce battles broke out within existing charities between the new breed of activists and an older generation of managers and trustees. The British Council of Disabled People was one of the results - established in 1981 it is the UK's national umbrella organisation for groups run by disabled people. Their work is targeted mainly around anti-discrimination legislation, removing social barriers which might prevent the full participation of disabled people in mainstream social life. The organisation now represents some 70 groups run by disabled people in the UK at national level, which between them have a total membership of some 350,000 disabled people. In parallel, activism aimed to shape public attitudes – with high impact advertising, direct mail and campaigns to raise awareness amongst employers and public organisations.

Voluntary Organisations for Anti-Discrimination Legislation, set up in 1985, also lobbied government for legislative changes. This group later became 'Rights Now!' with the lead taken by organisations set up and run by disabled people - but still with the active support of the older disability charities. In 1995 the Disability Discrimination Act was introduced by the Conservatives. This led, amongst other things, to the Direct Payments scheme which started to give disabled people more ability to define how their needs should be met through control over budgets, giving them greater control over their lives. The Act has been amended on several occasions and now protects disabled people in employment, access to services and premises and education. In 2005, the disability equality duty was added to the Act, aiming to tackle systemic discrimination, and ensuring public authorities build disability equality into everything they do. The Disability Rights Commission has played a key role in bringing about this legislation, alongside the multitude of disabled people's organisations.

[34] www.nfpsynergy.net

As this case shows, although there are many routes for responding to changing perceptions of need, legislation is often the principal channel through which needs can be met and the marginalised or vulnerable protected. Third sector organisations can monitor the progress of laws in parliament, and will often have an input and provide useful feedback – not just through campaigning, but via consultation, co-governance and helping more directly to shape the actions of government. For representatives, civil society can be an invaluable resource that provides knowledge and expertise in areas of need that may be unfamiliar. The Young Foundation report - Contentious citizens: civil society's role in campaigning for social change – provides a more detailed analysis of the campaigning landscape and recommendations for action, with particular reference to the challenges and opportunities associated with campaigning in a network age.

RESEARCH INTO CAUSES

Social research has traditionally played an important role in articulating and defining unmet needs in order to shape social perceptions, sometimes in conjunction with campaigns, and also to influence government action. During the nineteenth century, Victorian philanthropists and social researchers pioneered surveys and inquiries into the poverty and misery that was visible amongst the working classes crowding into cities. Examples include Chadwick's *The Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population* (1842), Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844), Rowntree's study of poverty in York in the late 1880s and Booth's classic house-by-house survey of London's East End between 1886 and 1903. Booth started his study convinced that poverty had been exaggerated – but soon reversed his position. Together they influenced a growing movement both for charitable philanthropy and for social reform.

Increasingly, however, civil society has lost its leading position in exercises of this kind. Needs mapping has became increasingly common amongst governmental organisations. For example, local authorities such as South Tyneside and Bradford have recently conducted participatory needs appraisals. On a national scale, the NHS has developed health needs mapping to identify those postcodes most at risk of chronic disease, health inequality and disability.[35] In addition,

the current Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill outlines a new requirement for Primary Care Trusts and local authorities to produce joint strategic assessments of the health and social care needs of their local populations. Globally, the World Bank, the United Nations and a number of other non governmental organisations have pioneered many different tools for mapping needs, such as the Human Development Index, and increasingly involving the voices of citizens themselves.

Historically, needs mapping exercises have tended to focus on urban areas of deprivation despite the fact that almost a million rural residents live within the bottom 20% of the UK's most deprived wards. Unless this lack of awareness and understanding of specifically rural needs is remedied, trends such as ageing populations, isolation and access to transport and medical care will continue to have adverse effects on these communities' quality of life, whilst also placing a huge burden on public services.[36]

Academic research also continues to make a contribution to the progress of understanding and providing evidence for emerging social needs. In addition, many academic institutions collaborate with charities on specific research interests. The Higher Education Funding Council for England outlined this relationship in a recent study. It found that approximately three quarters of all research funded by UK charities is done in higher education institutes. There has been a 200% growth of charity-funded research income to higher education institutes in the period 1989 to 2000.[37]

Indeed, most medium sized charities have significant research budgets and regularly commission research on their clients' needs. This work is usually driven by the twin aims of service delivery improvement and user-involvement. There are a number of critiques of the way this is done which are pertinent to the argument.

First, there is a tendency to audit existing beneficiaries' needs, under the rationale that services ought to be responsive to need. What the research usually finds is that needs outstrip supply of current provision (it invariably does, especially in the social care field).

[35] www.healthmapping.nhs.uk/

[36] A. Buonfino & L. Geissendorfer, 'Mapping Rural Needs in Britain and Ireland', London: The Young Foundation, 2007.

[37] 'Research relationships between Higher Education Institutes and the charitable sector', HEFCE, 2002.

Second, when unmet needs are identified the responses vary hugely. A minority may decide to change their core offering to coincide with perceived changes in need. Some will use the gap analysis to lobby for statutory provision or funding to fill the gap. In exceptional cases there may be some entrepreneurial attempt to position the charity as a potential key provider. But the most frequent response will be inaction, and entrenchment into traditional provision niches.

Needs research in this sector can generally be shown to fall short methodologically for the following reasons:

Conceptual problems
- Lack of hypotheses /research questions.
- Mission and vision drift.

Sampling problems
- The sample is restricted to existing users of the service or to those who are clients of other service deliverers.
- The sorts of people who are easily reachable by and comfortable with dealing with charities become something of an unrepresentative and self-selecting group.

Lack of quantitative robustness
- Small samples.
- A tendency to extrapolate from tiny cell sizes to general populations.
- An overly liberal approach to the use of percentages.
- Lack of weighting techniques.
- Lack of sample boosters.
- Unjustified comparisons made between different data.

Lack of qualitative robustness
- Inconsistently managed focus groups.
- Unstructured interviews.
- Use of quotes taken out of context.

There are other serious issues which need to be addressed by the third sector in general. For example, with the exception of medical research charities, there is often no research department per se in large charities – rather, the overall spend will be divided between external relations, policy, service and strategy functions. The overall pot will be significant but there are some real inefficiencies and problems with critical mass and scale. As a by-product of this and cultural and historical factors, recruitment of staff with formal research skills is very low. Consequently, research is often very qualitative in nature, with low academic quality and augmented by opinion poll data which is often used questionably. There are also less likely to be robust governance systems in place and checks and balances, in terms of peer review or other external academic validation, are exceptionally rare. In addition, the style of presentation is often aimed at grabbing media and political attention rather than attempting to manifest academic credibility. This makes it easier for government and policymakers to ignore emerging findings or important policy points by concentrating on methodological weaknesses and thereby lessening the impact of the research. Moreover, there is little or no strategic co-ordination of research objectives between organisations within the same field and there are numerous examples of missed opportunities to collaborate in the production of much larger and more effective research projects. It should be acknowledged that this is slowly improving with joint initiatives between government bodies and non-governmental organisations (for example, the Royal National Institute of Blind People and the ONS Needs Survey of Blind Adults) and between academic institutions and non-governmental organisations (for example, the Disability Alliance and CRISP, Loughborough University on the costs of disability).

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

Although the media does a great deal to raise public awareness of social ills and to amplify pressing campaigns or causes, it is often poor at providing context, analysis and prescription. It can also stigmatise and demonise groups in need – such as lone parents and refugees. Daly suggests that the commercial media occupy an ambiguous place on the edge of civil society because of their motivations to maximise audiences, sales and advertising revenue.[38] Even when needs are identified they are refracted through a prism which emphasises personal stories and dramatic situations rather than understanding deeper or wider causes. Attention is generally temporary – soon the media get bored and move on. Public service media have a better track

[38] S. Daly, 'For the Common Good? The Changing Role of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland', Dumferline: Carnegie UK Trust, 2006.

record – including regulated private broadcasters. However they are constrained in other ways – in particular from drawing conclusions which are too politically overt. A recent example of this is the publicity surrounding UNICEF's child poverty report which placed the UK bottom of a league table for child well being across 21 industrialised countries. This led to a brief flurry of coverage and argument – but there is little sign of any concerted longer term impact.

The 'media' now extends far beyond print and broadcast formats, and the internet is a valuable tool for groups and campaigners in civil society wishing to communicate quickly and effectively with target audiences. It has enabled the development and growth of groups that might otherwise not have existed and has had a particularly positive effect on civic participation, albeit perhaps on a less detectable and measurable level. Bloggers have already had some influence on the mainstream media by showing up inaccuracies, and the internet already provides a broader pool of information for people to draw on, in particular where important personal needs are involved (such as around health). Here the big concern is the lack of reliability of internet sources – and there is some evidence that reliance on the internet leads citizens to be less well informed than reliance on other sources (whether established media or word of mouth).

There are numerous examples of websites which provide a space for dialogue and deliberation, enabling citizens, consumers, service users and so on, to make their voices heard and highlight their own needs. Here we name but a few. Patient Opinion, a UK based social enterprise, developed an interactive website which provides direct feedback from patients on the quality of service provided by doctors and hospitals. It was founded in 2005 by a GP, Paul Hodgkin, who felt that the NHS was missing out on a wealth of patient expertise – information which is crucial to ensure that the NHS can meet the needs of its patients. What is particularly interesting about Patient Opinion is that users' comments are fed back to the NHS, so that patient insights, experiences and opinions can be used to support service and delivery improvements. Since it was set up, 1250 patients have had their comments published and the website received 65,000 hits between September 2005 and June 2006 alone. In 2007 the government announced plans to scale up this model and awarded a contract to a commercial company – an interesting, and not unusual example of a social innovator not benefiting from their success.

A good international example is the Korean website OhmyNews – with the slogan of 'every citizen is a reporter', it is one of the world's most successful and developed online citizen journalism websites in the world. The site was founded by Oh Yeon-ho in 2000 who was concerned by the threat posed to democracy by the politicisation and commercialisation of the Korean media, and its inability to foster public discussions by espousing divergent social opinions. OhmyNews in contrast, aims to create an information database and allow citizens the space to write about and discuss the issues which affect them. Yeon-ho was able to capitalise on a growing discontent with the existing media, the advent of Web 2.0 technology and increasing civic participation, especially amongst young Koreans. As a result, OhmyNews, and its 50,000 regular reporters, or 'Netizens' have been instrumental in creating an alternative media movement, providing a space for contentious, often conflicting views but allowing citizens to voice concerns, beliefs and opinions.

How civil society identifies and expresses needs and the various tools at its disposal to raise awareness and gain attention - campaigning, lobbying, research and dissemination - are integral to a vibrant and reflective democratic society. Often these tools depend on others to make them work – media, the internet in particular – and one of the strategic issues for civil society in any country is whether it can rely on transmitting messages through commercial media, or whether it has to create its own channels for getting messages across. All of these tools are, however, merely the beginning of the process whereby needs are met, and in the next chapter we turn to how needs are met more directly – and in particular, how civil society organisations innovate to meet pressing and unmet needs.

INNOVATING TO MEET NEEDS

If part of the role of civil society is to discover and express new needs, another role is to innovate new methods and models for meeting needs. Innovation is a rather difficult term to pin down – it means more than improvement (which implies only incremental change) and differs from creativity and invention (which are vital to innovation but miss out the hard work of implementation and diffusion that makes promising ideas useful).

As we have seen, 19th century civil society was extraordinarily innovative, pioneering the most influential new models of childcare (Barnardos), housing (Peabody), community development (Edwardian settlements) and social care (Rowntree). At different points in the 20th century civil society has also innovated – new models of healthcare such as hospices, new ways of thinking about consumption (such as fair trade) and new forms of service delivery (such as integrated drugs treatment).

This sort of innovation can be spurred by many factors:

- Beneficiaries themselves trying and experimenting with new models;
- Highly motivated professionals seeking the freedom to innovate outside the state;
- Social movements providing a space for new approaches, like Greenpeace and direct action;
- Social entrepreneurs combining assets in imaginative ways;
- Existing voluntary organisations innovating to achieve more effective results.

As has been argued elsewhere the patterns of social innovation are complex, and often new models grow in ways that cut across traditional sectoral boundaries.

INNOVATING TO MEET NEEDS

BIG ISSUE

The paper was launched in 1991, initially as a monthly publication in London, at a time when street homelessness was becoming increasingly visible. A street count taken at the time by St Mungo's homelessness charity estimated 1,275 rough sleepers in any one night in England. Founders John Bird and Gordon Roddick had been inspired by Street News, a newspaper sold by homeless people in New York.

The idea behind the Big Issue is relatively simple: a newspaper produced by professionals, sold to homeless people who can then sell on the paper at a profit. After being 'badged up', vendors usually receive ten papers. Thereafter, vendors buy the magazine upfront at a whole sale rate of usually 40-50% of cover price and keep the difference (roughly 80p per copy). On average the Big Issue badge up over 3,000 vendors in London and between 8,000 and 10,000 nationally every year.

This also means that vendors are independent retailers and not employees of the Big Issue. As such, vendors are responsible for their own tax, book-keeping, timekeeping etc. This is in-keeping with the Big Issue's ethos of self-help and 'a hand up not a hand out' and provides homeless people with skills they require for employment and a means to a legitimate income.

The Big Issue was a totally innovative approach to tackling the unmet and pressing needs arising from homelessness: rather than traditional paternalistic top-down approaches to homelessness, the Big Issue focuses on the empowerment of the homeless through financial inclusion and enabling the homeless to help themselves. Interestingly, the Big Issue identifies itself as a business response to a social crisis.[39]

LANGUAGE LINE

Language Line, which is now a global language solutions company, started as a small charitable project in 1990. When visiting his local hospital in East London, Michael Young noticed that there were a large number of patients of South Asian origin and that they were having difficulty communicating adequately with the medical staff because of the different languages spoken. Many had to rely on ad hoc interpreters such as kitchen staff which was totally unsatisfactory. Concerned that ethnic minorities were unable to access public services, Young devised a concept to provide access to language interpreters over the telephone. The service started in a very basic way – merely handing a telephone between doctor and patient, therefore not requiring any specialist equipment, allowing the service to be established quickly.

[39] www.bigissue.com/ukdist.html

Language Line was first introduced at the Royal London Hospital in London, initially offering four languages. Young managed to secure a small amount of government funding to test the concept which meant that the service was free for users. It was instantly successful. Interpreters, who were often from the same communities as the non-English speakers, were paid to ensure their availability throughout the day and night. The service was soon being used by other public sector organisations such as the Department for Work and Pensions, the Police, the Ambulance Service amongst others. Today, Language Line spans over 150 languages, conducting almost half a million transactions per annum and fulfilling a vital social need by helping to ensure that all citizens gain equal access to public services.[40]

INNOVATION GAPS

However, innovation remains messy and ad hoc. The main funding sources in the third sector are not well-designed to support innovation, which works best with systematic testing of many models, and investment in the organisations of networks that can then replicate the better ones. Philanthropists and funding bodies often like to support new and emerging ideas but are less good at investing in the effective spread and replication of established projects and innovations.[41] Nor does the third sector have much of the machinery for widespread learning and adoption of successful models. These gaps are particularly apparent in some of the fields where existing practices are inadequate relative to emerging needs. Examples include:

- The problems of ageing populations which require, for example, new ways of organising pensions, care, mutual support, housing, urban design, mobility and new methods of countering isolation;

- The wide gaps between the human capital and skills provided by the state system and those needed, particularly by children from working class backgrounds;

- The rising incidence of chronic disease including arthritis, depression and diabetes which challenge existing medical models;

- The behavioural problems that partly result from affluence, including obesity, bad diets and inactivity as well as addictions to alcohol, drugs, gambling;

- Difficult transitions to adulthood - how to help teenagers successfully navigate their way into more stable careers, relationships and lifestyles;

[40] http://www.languageline.co.uk

[41] See G. Mulgan, R. Ali, R. Halkett and B. Sanders, 'In and Out of Sync: The Challenge of Growing Social Innovations', London: NESTA/The Young Foundation, 2007, and D. Leat, 'Replicating Successful Voluntary Sector Projects', London: ACF, 2003, and K. A. Pearson, 'Accelerating our Impact: Philanthropy, Innovation and Social Change', Canada: J. W. McConnell Family Foundation, 2006.

○ Crime and punishment - in some countries (including the UK) a majority of convicted criminals re-offend within two years of leaving prison, a striking pattern of failure of the criminal justice system and rehabilitation of prisoners;

○ The glaring challenges that surround climate change - how to reorder cities, transport systems and housing to dramatically reduce carbon emissions, and how to adapt to climate changes which may already be irreversible.

Although civil society organisations play a vital role in bringing issues and needs to the fore, and campaigning for change, there are cases where simply doing more of the same is not enough. Undoubtedly, scaling up and replicating social innovations can be difficult. Taking a good idea to scale requires skillful strategy and coherent vision, combined with the ability to marshal resources and support and identify the key points of leverage. Two necessary conditions are a propitious environment and organisational capacity to grow (we provide a much more detailed account in the recent report 'In and out of sync: the challenge of growing social innovations', published by NESTA). Often smaller organisations with innovative ideas will have to find supportive larger organisations with the machineries to scale up activities, whilst bearing in mind that this might place different demands on the organisation that may be more business led than socially led. Despite the pitfalls of scaling up and replication, innovations can meet entirely new needs for which there are no services or meet older unmet needs for which current approaches are inadequate. However, in all of these fields faster experimentation and learning are vital if society is to keep up with the needs it produces.

THE QUALITY OF RESPONSE

demonstrate that they really are responding to the children who are suffering most. Churches need to demonstrate that they are serving the poor, trade unions that they remain concerned with insecure and temporary workers who are not organised and so on. For charities this is particularly important because they benefit from a special fiscal privilege. For many years there have been concerns that some charities do not meet a socially recognised understanding of need (for example, providing education for the wealthy in the case of private schools, or entertainment for the wealthy in the case of the opera), while other organisations that do meet socially recognised measures of need, such as social enterprises providing jobs for the unemployed, are not eligible for such privileges.

There is not space here to rehearse the complexities of this argument. However, what is not in doubt is the pressure on civil society to show that it is in touch with needs. Here we briefly touch on three key questions:

- How well do civil society organisations meet needs?
- How well do civil society organisations discover new needs?
- How well do civil society organisations innovate to meet needs more effectively?

THE QUALITY OF RESPONSE

This paper has explored the varying ways in which civil society, and in particular third sector organisations, identifies and responds to unmet and new needs. In this last section, we address a few unresolved questions about the quality of the response from the panoply of civil society organisations.

The last few years have brought more critical self-reflection in a sector that has traditionally been free from the accountability that is required in the public sector and business. New organisations like New Philanthropy Capital and Intelligent Giving are seeking to encourage more informed giving, giving guidance both on where needs are acute and on which responses are most effective. The global move towards more rigorous evaluation and assessment of impacts is also changing behaviour. Moreover, while it remains unclear to what extent the Charity Commission will employ and enforce the new public benefit test, the test could encourage trustees and managers to scrutinise their own actions more seriously, thereby adding another impetus for greater accountability and transparency within the sector.

Individual volunteers and donors to charity can of course choose to give to any cause they wish. However, the overall legitimacy of civil society organisations does depend to some extent on how well they are seen to abide by their underlying values. So, charities for needy children must

HOW WELL DO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS MEET NEEDS?

Many third sector organisations are recognised as leaders in meeting needs, often of the most disadvantaged and marginalised. However, many organisations face tensions and criticisms over the ways in which these needs are identified. Some of these tensions arise from the new ideas that have become prominent in civil society, described in chapter one. One is the issue of voice. People are often best placed to identify their own needs – but also to identify methods and solutions for meeting these needs. The same holds true of the marginalised and powerless. Even though there have been some moves to give greater voice to beneficiaries – a number of children's charities, for example, have tried to give children a greater say on the issues over which they

campaign – many charities still campaign on behalf of others. In part, this is inevitable - there will always be groups that need others to fight on their behalf, such as children and women who are sexually abused or exploited – but there is bound to be a concern that third sector organisations reflect imbalances of power – and groups which lack money, voice and networks can be as disadvantaged in civil society as they are in other fields.

Second is the tension between causes and symptoms. Many charities are criticised for failing to address causes as opposed to symptoms. This partly reflects their lack of power; but it also reflects the absence of sufficient pressures to deal systemically with problems or involve beneficiaries in decision-making structures. In some cases it can also be the result of a lack of understanding over the underlying causes. A good example of the kinds of argument that result is the case of homelessness in London which has been served at times by an extraordinary number of charities but with poor results in terms of outcomes for homeless people. Indeed, it has been argued that the work of some voluntary organisations has been counter productive and reinforced street lifestyles which are in turn deeply damaging for individuals. For example, soup runs have been criticised for serving as a magnet for people not sleeping rough and also encouraging and legitimising street living. The Samaritans is another example. The number of calls received by the organisation indicates the extent to which people 'need to talk' yet the Samaritans cannot give out specific advice, leading to situations where callers become dependent on the organisation over a number of years. The symptoms of the need may be addressed, but not the root causes. While in some cases the needs of people may be such that they will be dependent on some form of statutory or charitable support for their whole lives, in other cases, a relationship of dependence may suggest that the models or methods used are inadequate or inappropriate.

A third issue is the tension between organisations' desire to grow and expand their income and their commitment to underlying needs. This can be a particular issue for organisations contracting to provide public services – which inevitably become guided by what government thinks are important needs rather than own missions. Similarly organisations that aim to maximise trading income tend to become pushed more towards serving the relatively rich than the relatively poor.

Finally, there is the issue of how well charitable activity and spending aligns with broader conceptions of need. It would be wrong to expect a direct correlation between more objective indices of need and what society deems to be a need (we can gauge this by examining the most popular areas of giving, which, according to figures released by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, are medical research, religious causes and overseas aid and disaster relief).[42] People are, and should be, free to support whatever causes they think most important. However, if there was too great a misalignment between shared understandings of need and the beneficiaries of fiscal privileges, the very legitimacy of charity and charitable status would be in doubt – indeed, this alignment forms the basic justification for the tax breaks charities receive and for the public benefit test.

HOW WELL DO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS DISCOVER NEW NEEDS?

Civil society often claims to be good at spotting emerging needs – ahead of government or the media. Yet its legal forms tend to freeze old needs, thereby accumulating assets and power around needs which are no longer so compelling, or have significantly changed form, this may include, for example public schools and charitable hospitals. This is particularly noticeable in the case of organised religion – in many towns and cities the religions with the greatest assets are no longer the ones with the most adherents.

For charities, the public benefit test has added an extra spur, encouraging organisations to change and evolve. A good example is the City Bridge Trust – originally established to maintain bridges across the River Thames. The Trust still supports City bridges but any income which is above that required to support the bridges can be redirected to a number of charitable purposes as long as they are of benefit to the inhabitants of greater London.

A related issue is how well civil society responds to new voices. This is partly a matter of shifting social patterns. So, for example, the rapid growth of Polish communities in the UK has posed a challenge for existing organisations, from churches and trade unions to educational charities. It also brings in questions of channel – how well older

[42] www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/uploadedFiles/NCVO/Research/UK%20giving%202005-06.pdf

organisations are making themselves open to voices expressed through the new media of Web 2.0 and internet chat rooms. Potentially, these new formats make it easier for people to self-organise over distance and set up campaigning organisations on their own such as Plane Stupid who use Facebook and MySpace to organise direct action against the aviation industry.

Finally, there is the question of whether civil society is sufficiently prepared for future needs. There is a fair amount of research into which needs are likely to become more acute. For example, issues of stress, anxiety and depression affect increasing numbers of people – indeed, by 2020 depression will be second only to chronic heart disease as an international health burden.[43] But resources are often locked into past needs, for example through bequests, and there are no institutions dedicated to scanning and understanding future patterns.

HOW WELL DO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS INNOVATE TO MEET NEEDS MORE EFFECTIVELY?

As we have already mentioned, civil society organisations play a crucial role in discovering new and innovative ways of meeting needs. There are, however, a number of challenges which limit the third sector's ability to innovate. Although some foundations support innovative projects the sector lacks knowledge about how best to invest and then scale up good innovations. Most approaches are ad hoc, driven by enthusiasts – and most innovative projects fail to achieve a wider impact.

We have discussed elsewhere what a more developed approach to innovation might be, and how funders and governments could more systematically focus on areas of particularly acute need, or where need is intensifying, and invest in a range of innovative solutions with a commitment to grow the successful ones. There are various incubators of social ventures already in existence. There are also a growing number of sources of support for individual social entrepreneurs, including funding and support organisations such as Ashoka and UnLtd, and educators such as the School for Social Entrepreneurs and the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at Oxford University's Saïd Business School. The Young Foundation's Launchpad programme takes a more active role in the identification of needs and the design of new organisations as

[43] www.nusonline.co.uk

well as their incubation and launch, with a particular focus on ideas that have the potential to be scaled up. A related approach is to develop 'accelerators' for particular sectors, such as health and education or cross-cutting themes such as ageing or care, with an emphasis on scaleable innovations. Such accelerators can: provide development funding for social entrepreneurs, groups of public sector workers, private companies and academics, as well as partnerships; rapidly test out new ideas in practice, with quick assessments; allow fast learning across a community of innovators; and establish clear pathways for scaling up the most promising models. However, all of these models remain relatively untested and underdeveloped.

CONCLUSIONS

Civil society contains a plurality of voices: from small community and voluntary organisations, faith groups and trade unions to professionalised and international charitable organisations. It is not surprising that its responses to needs vary immensely, and as we have seen, many different traditions of civic action coexist, some strongly shaped by contemporary ideas about rights, or systems thinking, others more traditional. Nevertheless, there are three central sets of issues which must be tackled if civil society organisations are to respond more effectively to changing and emerging needs.

The first is knowledge about the needs that really matter. Some parts of civil society are amongst the first to spot new needs. But civil society as a whole can benefit from systematic and rigorous mapping of existing and emerging needs (of the kind now underway in the Young Foundation's **Mapping Unmet and Emerging Needs** project – a fairly rare example of collaboration between a dozen different foundations).

The second is willingness to respond – not least to **beneficiaries' and stakeholders' voices**. In some cases this may require some organisations to adapt or alter their core offer, alternatively it might mean changing the way services are delivered. Ultimately, these voices should (where they are not already) be integrated into decision making structures. If the Public Benefit Test is rigorously enforced, it will compel charities to remain aware of and adapt to the changing landscape of need.

The third is a commitment to **innovation**. Civil society has often been the site where innovative methods for meeting needs have been devised, but the systems for supporting and spreading innovations are weak, and there are only weak cultures of learning – both from successful innovations and projects which have failed.

Finally, for those organisations that meet needs under contract to the state there remains a difficult challenge of demonstrating the **full value** they create.

ABOUT THE YOUNG FOUNDATION

The Young Foundation is a centre for social innovation. Our main goal is to speed up society's ability to respond to changing needs through innovating and replicating new methods and models. Our work programme has three strands - Launchpad, Local projects and Research - all of which complement each other in the shared goal of finding practical initiatives to meet unmet needs. The Foundation was launched in 2005, but builds on a long history. Our predecessor organisations under Michael Young were responsible for far-reaching innovations such as the creation of the Open University, as well as pioneering research on changing patterns of community and family life.

For more information please visit **youngfoundation.org**

DISCOVERY, ARGUMENT & ACTION
HOW CIVIL SOCIETY RESPONDS TO CHANGING NEEDS

Civil society in its many forms plays vital roles in discovering and then meeting social needs – from poverty and disability to discrimination. This report investigates the many ways in which these roles have been played, analysing civil society's role as a campaigner, innovator, researcher and service provider. It includes new data on how people meet their needs in contemporary Britain, as well as providing a new analytical framework for understanding civil society. The report warns that civil society's legal structures often risk becoming frozen around past needs, and advocates using the new 'public benefit test' to ensure that civil society organisations remain focused on the most pressing contemporary needs.