The Sheila McKechnie Foundation’s 2006 Award Programme

‘The Sheila Experience’

An Assessment of the Foundation’s first Award’s Programme

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1. Campaigning and the Sheila McKechnie Foundation

Campaigning has been one of the voluntary sector's most influential activities since the days when the first charities were established during the nineteenth century. The sector has a proud track record of leading change in a wide range of areas of social action. Campaigns inspired by the voluntary sector in Britain have brought about policy change from matters ranging from the provision of local services to international action on areas like climate change and development. From the 1980s onwards larger numbers of voluntary organisations began to see campaigning as a means of delivering assistance to their beneficiaries. Successful campaigns, such as those that took place in the early 1990s calling for revised disability discrimination legislation were able to meet the needs of the voluntary sector's beneficiaries well in excess of what direct service provision could ever achieve.

Unlike other areas of voluntary sector activity, limited work has been done to define standards or provide support for ongoing professional development amongst campaigners. Many individuals form campaigns in response to a pressing personal or community concern and come with no background in the activity or prior apprenticeship. Research undertaken by the Scarman Trust found that there is a lack of affordable support and advice on campaigning skills and that most provision is in London and the Southeast of England. The Trust found that a key issue was not only the availability of training but also its content and character. Senior campaigners consulted as part of the Trust's research felt that generic skills around how to plan and evaluate a campaign were not widely understood within the voluntary sector. They felt that without knowledge of how to plan this activity campaigners risked using inappropriate or counter-productive tactics for their chosen issue.

A survey conducted jointly by People and Planet and The Sheila McKechnie Foundation in 2006 found that 35% of small voluntary organisations agreed with the statement 'we don't have the skills to campaign'. Research produced by AS Biss & Co Public Affairs in 2005 gauged parliamentarians impressions about the quality of lobbying that they experienced at a constituency level. Many respondents said that they had encountered campaigners in their constituencies who wasted time on efforts that were unlikely to generate the impact that they wanted. Recent years have also seen a series of changes in the political and policy process that campaigners need to understand if they are to continue to exercise influence on policy development. Some of the most significant examples of political and legislative changes include devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, Freedom of Information legislation and the application of the Human Rights Act.

Even within vested organisations where individuals have paid roles as campaigners, support has been limited. The majority of campaigners working in small voluntary organisations work alone and are relatively isolated from their peers.

The Sheila McKechnie Foundation was formed to respond to the needs of both paid campaigners and those who are campaigning at a grassroots level working on a purely voluntary basis. The Foundation established an awards programme as part of a wider strategy to promote the wider availability of campaigning skills. The awards provide bespoke support for selected campaigners working in a series of fields of social action. The awards provide skills development and advice that campaigners need to further their particular causes. Winners receive a support programme consisting of different components that are designed to expand their skills base.
In 2006, the Foundation made awards across six key fields of social action:

- Consumer Action
- Conflict Resolution
- Economic Justice
- Health & Social Care
- Social Inclusion
- Transport

This report looks at each of the six winners and examines how they benefited from their participation in the award scheme. The evaluation of the support programme was conducted by drawing upon three sources of evidence - evaluation scores, interview material and other supporting evidence.

Each of the winners were interviewed at length by the evaluator about the impact of the programme. Winners were asked to judge their progress against the key evaluation criteria. At the outset of the programme, winners gave ‘baseline’ scores for the evaluation criteria. During the interviews, winners were also asked to give their final scores against these criteria. Winners were also asked to provide evidence of areas where they reported progress against the criteria as a result of the support programme.

**Visions & Values**

**Why we exist:**
To empower people to change the world. A strong society needs campaigners: people who question, challenge injustice, hold people in power accountable and fight for social change.

**What we do:**
Develop the next generation of campaigners
Bring together campaigners and influencers for mutual support and shared learning
Champion the right to campaign

**What we believe:**
Equality and fair play - where opportunities are available for everyone
Speaking out - helping people to get their voices heard
Inspiring change - ambition, passion and creativity are critical to successful campaigns
2. The winners and their campaigns

The Winners of the 2006 Awards comprised individuals drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds and involved in Campaigns at differing stages of development.

**Consumer Action**
Jackie Schneider - Merton Parents for Better Food in Schools

Jackie is a teacher and lives in Merton, South London with her three children. Jackie is campaigning to persuade her local council, and ultimately all local authorities, to provide healthy school meals. She wanted to ensure that parents, health professionals and governors were all involved in decisions about school meal provision. Most of her initial successes has been in primary schools. Jackie’s campaign focused on the collection of evidence in relation to food diaries, photographs and governors visits, to develop a strong case for use in council meetings.

When Jackie began her campaign, Merton Council insisted that their school meals were of an acceptable standard. However following demonstrations, increased national media coverage and local lobbying, the authority accepted that the provision of school meals needed to improve and they agreed to put in place a new policy to deliver change.

The challenge for the Foundation was to help Jackie develop her campaign even further so that she could build on her major policy ‘breakthrough’.

**Conflict Resolution**
Linda Ramsden - ICHAD UK

Linda grew up in the United States and moved to England thirty years ago. She is married with three children and lives in Surrey. Linda is Chair of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD UK), which was formed in 2004. ICAHD UK not only lobby the UK Government in support of a viable Palestinian state, but also raise funds to support the rebuilding of Palestinian homes after they have been demolished by the Israeli military.

Linda has sought to build a coalition to support her campaign goals with large organisations like Amnesty International, Christian Aid and War on Want. ICAHD UK’s mission is two-pronged: to help mobilise civil society against the Israeli occupation and to target decision makers.

Linda, like Shane and Alison, had taken on a campaign with ambitious objectives on a voluntary basis. She also had to consider whether she needed to make organisational changes to ICAHD UK that would strengthen its ability to pursue its founding objectives: The Foundation set out to help her in tackling these issues.
**Economic Justice**  
Shane Lunga - Zimbabwe Futures

Shane, a Zimbabwean scientist, works in the UK civil service. He co-founded Zimbabwe Futures, an NGO focused on lobbying the British Government to provide the support package necessary to rebuild Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe Futures argues that donor governments must begin to prepare now for the reconstruction of Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe Futures key focus is to lobby decision makers on policies that will encourage skilled Zimbabweans to return home and help tackle the country’s economic collapse, AIDS epidemic and revive the agricultural industry.

Shane had no prior involvement in campaigning before Zimbabwe Futures and therefore stood to gain from support that would develop his understanding of campaign tactics. He was also campaigning on a sensitive international issue. The Foundation’s support for Shane focused on helping him widen support for the organisation’s aims, amongst the Zimbabwean exile community and decision makers. Like many campaigners supported by the Foundation, Shane is running his campaigning on a purely voluntary basis outside working hours.

**Health and Social Care**  
Emily Robinson - BLISS

Emily was the first full time Campaigns Officer at BLISS, the premature baby charity. Her campaign objective is to secure government support for a policy where babies have the same level of intensive care nursing as children and adults. BLISS’s campaign argues that baby mortality rates increase when units are at full capacity and therefore there is a lack of nursing support to ‘go round’.

BLISS states that only 2% of neonatal units can provide one-to-one nursing in intensive care for babies. Emily is campaigning for the resources to recruit the extra nurses needed to provide one-to-one care. In 2006, the campaign made progress when BLISS was invited to join the Department of Health group reviewing the Government’s infant mortality target.

Emily came to the programme with a higher level of skills than many of the other winners, in part, because she was a full time ‘career campaigner’. Emily’s role at BLISS was her first appointment within the voluntary sector and the programme was therefore an opportunity for her to develop her understanding of how to launch campaigns in this environment. Emily also needed support to make further progress towards the attainment of BLISS’s campaign goals on the quality of neo-natal care.
Kierra Box - Hands Up

Kierra is an Oxford University student, who grew up in north-west London. In 2003, she co-founded Hands Up for Peace, a youth peace movement opposed to the Iraq War. Kierra asked her friends and other young people to send card cut-outs of their own hands with the name, age and argument against the war. She used internet promotion to secure 3,000 hands which were displayed on the day war broke out.

Kierra is now involved in the Department of Health Sexual Advisory Group as youth representative and the Young People Now Foundation. She has broadened her campaign to promote ways of securing young peoples involvement in policy development. Kierra has also developed her website to highlight policy developments that impact on young people and it provides an important resource for youth involvement. She has appeared on BBC Radio’s Any Questions and has written articles for the national press.

Despite her high profile Kierra was someone who was still at the beginning of her campaigning career and unsurprisingly had yet to accumulate a wide range of skills when she won the award. At the beginning of the support programme Kierra acknowledged that the goals of her youth involvement campaign needed greater definition and that she needed more allies: the Foundation set out to help her address these issues.

Transport

Alison Miller - S.A.F.E Justice Foundation

Alison works as a hairdresser in Wakefield, West Yorkshire. Her son, Matthew, was killed in a road accident in Spain seven years ago. Due to legal and administrative complications within Spain, Alison was unable to bring a prosecution against the parties involved in her son’s death. She subsequently organised a campaign to persuade Foreign Office and consular services to provide information for British nationals abroad about the procedures they need to follow if they are affected by a road traffic accident.

At the beginning of the support programme Alison was struggling to manage the demands of the campaign alongside her family and work commitments. Since Alison had limited support from volunteers, the Foundation set out to help her clarify her campaign strategy and take steps to make the campaign more sustainable.

For a complete review of each award winner’s individual scores, please see the Appendix on page 29.
3. The support programme - how the Foundation was able to support the award winners.

In order to assist the 2006 Award Winners in moving forward with their campaigns, the Foundation provided each winner with a programme of support, tailored to their individual needs. The package of support included:

- One-to-one coaching from the Scarman Trust
- Coaching from Foundation staff around specific issues
- Coaching on media and parliamentary tactics from AS Biss
- Mentoring from an experienced campaigner
- Shadowing a senior decision maker
- A residential skills weekend seminar
- Access to funding for eligible winners via UnLtd

3.1. Initial assessment

The first task was to establish what each winner required by way of support. The Foundation commissioned coaches from the Scarman Trust to carry out in depth initial assessments with the winners.

The assessments enabled the Foundation to:

- Review the campaign objectives
- Examine the campaign strategy
- Assess the campaign’s assets and available opportunities
- Examine the award winner’s strengths as a campaigner
- Identify how the support programme could be tailored to meet the award winner’s needs

The assessment was also used to identify a number of key areas that each award winner would benefit from particular help in: these were known as the focus for support.

For example, Kierra Box’s focus for support was to help her narrow her campaign objectives and develop Hands Up’s campaign strategy. Linda Ramsden’s focus was on developing lobbying techniques and organisational development.

3.2. One to one coaching

Through the Scarman Trust, the Foundation arranged for each winner to receive up to nine coaching sessions over a six month period from April 2006. The role of the coach was to provide the winner with a sounding board and guidance in relation to developing and strengthening their campaign.

In matching winners with ‘tutors’ the individual’s background, prior knowledge and interests were taken into account and wherever possible this was the same person who had carried out the initial assessment.
In a number of cases, the winners felt that their coach made a particularly important contribution to their development.

Linda Ramsden summed up her coach's contribution: “Carol helped me see the wood for the trees and turned me around.”

Alison Miller from S.A.F.E Justice Foundation said of her coach:

“My coach was my guiding influence. He did a brilliant job in building up my confidence and in motivating me. I really needed him for a whole year, it was terrible only to have him for nine sessions. Of all the things that were offered to me it was the coaching that was the most valuable - without it I would have been lost.”

### 3.3. Coaching on specific issues from Foundation staff and experts

In a number of instances, a need for coaching on specific issues was identified and the Foundation drafted in their own staff to provide these:

**Kierra Box - Hands Up:** Three sessions with Claire McMaster and Matthew Sowemimo looking at; priorities within her campaign objectives, stakeholder mapping and building alliances.

**Alison Miller - S.A.F.E Justice Foundation:** One session with Matthew Sowemimo developing a media strategy for the S.A.F.E Justice Foundation.

**Linda Ramsden - ICAHD UK:** Two sessions with Matthew Sowemimo on developing a parliamentary strategy. Presentation on governance to ICAHD UK Board by Claire McMaster and Mark Higham.

**Emily Robinson - Bliss:** One coaching session from Matthew Sowemimo on legal tactics/judicial review.

**Jackie Schneider - Merton Parents For Better Food In Schools:** A coaching session on the Freedom of Information Act from Ingrid Gubbay, Principal Campaigns Lawyer at Which?.

### 3.4. Coaching on media & parliamentary tactics from A.S. Biss Public Affairs

It was felt that in order for the campaigners to maximise their impact, they should have a good grasp of tactics for dealing with the media and engaging with the parliamentary process.

This was provided by AS Biss & Co’s Managing Director and one of his senior colleagues who met winners individually to discuss their campaigns and provide advice and guidance. In the case of Linda Ramsden, she was helped to look at
options for securing political and parliamentary support for ICAHD UK and at the possibility of putting forward a motion to a future Labour Party Conference about the demolition of buildings in Palestine.

### 3.5. Mentoring

Winners were offered an opportunity to be mentored by an experienced campaigner within their own field, in order to provide them with additional insights around how to take their campaign forward.

Emily Robinson was new to working in the voluntary sector and was mentored by Nick Stace from Which?. Nick was able to brief her on the sector and to draw on the Which’s vast experience of campaigning.

### 3.6. Shadowing

Shadowing opportunities were also provided so that winners could gain a greater insight into the environment within which key decision makers operate. Shane Lunga shadowed Hilary Benn MP and Emily Robinson shadowed Caroline Flint MP.

### 3.7. Residential skills weekend

The Foundation laid on a residential skills weekend which brought together all award winners and runners up so that they could learn from each other’s experiences and insights.

The residential was led by the Director of Communications at one of the UK’s largest campaigning charities and focused on:

- campaign planning
- stakeholder mapping
- creating alliances
- building coalitions in government

Participants were also given the opportunity to develop their own action plans and attend a fundraising surgery run by Foundation staff.

“Having got back from the residential weekend I was ready to change the world!”

- Jackie Schneider
3.8. UnLtd

Finally, the Foundation partnered with UnLtd, a charity that supports social entrepreneurship, to arrange funding of up to £5,000 for winners who were eligible. With guidance from UnLtd these funds have been used to strengthen the individual campaigns by funding websites, IT, publicity and running costs.

Both Kierra Box and Shane Lunga were able to secure assistance, with the help of their grants, to develop their websites – www.handsupfor.org and www.zimbabwefutures.com, while Jackie Schneider ran a Strategy Day for her committee, had publicity leaflets printed about the campaign and was able to undertake a survey.
4. The outcomes for the winners

This section examines the extent to which the Foundation’s support programme assisted the winners in:

- Clarifying their campaign objectives
- Developing their campaign strategy
- Improving their understanding of the context within which their campaign operates
- Developing their knowledge of campaign tactics
- Developing better external relations
- Increasing their external impact
- Making their campaign/organisation more sustainable

4.1. Clarity of campaign objectives & the development of campaign strategy

The Foundation set out to help the winners clarify their objectives with a view to identifying and prioritising which would be most likely to contribute to their campaign’s success.

At the outset, all winners were asked to score themselves on the clarity of their objectives. Three winners gave themselves 8 and above, while the other three ranged from 5 to 6.5. This gave an average score of 7.5, which increased to 8.8 by the end of the programme, with everyone scoring themselves 8 or above.

The winners who were least clear about their objectives at the outset, found their coaches played a key role in helping to clarify them. Kierra Box looked to her coach to help her prioritise things and put them into a workable timescale. Her self-assessment of the clarity of her campaign objectives moved from 5 to 8.5 by the end of the programme.

Similarly, Shane Lunga felt that his coach played a key role. “Talking to my coach led me to re-appraise what I was doing and as a result I was able to adopt a more focused approach.” By the end of the programme, he felt able to score himself 8 for clarity of objectives, having started out at 6.5.

Alison Miller felt the same about her coach and by the end of the programme was able to say: “now I know exactly what I want to achieve.” Her score rose from 6.5 at the outset to 9 at the end of the programme.

Jackie Schneider also worked with her coach on clarifying her objectives, but used a Strategy Day for the campaign’s management committee to achieve this. Jackie and her coach planned the day and used money from the grant she received from UnLtd to pay for a professional facilitator:
As a result of the Strategy Day the campaign moved from being an emergent organisation with short term goals to one with a longer term objectives, capable of working in partnership with the local authority, rather than just being in opposition.

Without the Sheila McKechnie experience, it would have remained as a parochial initiative to get food improved and not a major campaign. It would have been largely reactive and wouldn’t have embraced the vision.”

Jackie’s assessment of her score for clarity of objectives rose from 8 to 9.

The programme also set out to help winners in developing their campaign strategies. Once again, they were asked to undertake an assessment of how good they felt their strategies to be at the outset and at the end of the programme. The average score at the outset was 5.5 and this rose to 8 by the end of the programme.

Alison Miller was aware that her campaign strategy needed developing and with help from her coach she worked out a more sophisticated strategy for campaigning for improvements to the way in which the victims of road traffic accidents taking place abroad, were dealt with:

“My coach helped me analyse how best to tackle the issues involved and I realised that there were actually two sets of objectives relating to what happens abroad and in the UK, requiring two different strategies. In the UK, it was a question of improving the training given to foreign office staff and therefore I needed to get to the people organising the training. Abroad, it was a question of improving how information was relayed back to the UK.”

At the outset, Alison gave herself a score of 3, but by the end of the programme this had increased to 8.

Kierra Box also received a lot of help from her coach, and as a result, her assessment of her campaign strategy rose from 4 to 9 by the end of the programme. For Kierra, it was a question of how to build support for her campaign:

“I was unclear about how best to get other people involved, but working with my coach helped me to look systematically at various key issues: how to develop a network, how to engage with supporters and how to go about setting up a steering group.”
Shane Lunga was another winner who turned to his coach for help:

“Even within my support group there were many differing opinions about how to proceed and therefore I needed to be clear about who it was and which government departments I needed to target with a view to securing their support for bringing about economic and political revival in Zimbabwe. As a result I identified several government departments, including the Foreign Office and DfID, private sector players and financial institutions.”

Shane’s assessment of his strategy rose from 5 at the outset to 7.
Summary of winners’ scores

**Clarity of campaign aims and objectives**

- **Before**: Kierra Box 9, Shane Lunga 9, Alison Miller 7, Linda Ramsden 9, Emily Robinson 8, Jackie Schneider 6
- **After**: Kierra Box 8, Shane Lunga 8, Alison Miller 9, Linda Ramsden 10, Emily Robinson 9, Jackie Schneider 7

**Development of strategy**

- **Before**: Kierra Box 9, Shane Lunga 7, Alison Miller 7, Linda Ramsden 8, Emily Robinson 8, Jackie Schneider 8
- **After**: Kierra Box 9, Shane Lunga 9, Alison Miller 7, Linda Ramsden 10, Emily Robinson 9, Jackie Schneider 9
4.2. Understanding of the context within which their campaigns operate

“I wouldn’t have seen myself as a ‘campaigner’ prior to going through the programme. It really raised my game and made me connect to all sorts of other issues: obesity, the food industry, children’s rights etc.”

- Jackie Schneider

The programme also aimed to develop the winners understanding of the context they were campaigning in, especially the environment in which the people they are targeting operate. Campaigners need to consider the factors that will influence their target decision makers and gain knowledge about the wider decision making process.

Self assessment scores for understanding the context ranged from 3 to 9 at the outset, with everyone moving to 6 or above by the end. The average score at the outset was 5.8 and by the end was 7.9.

Having previously worked for a lobbying company Emily Robinson already had a good understanding of the political landscape, but she knew far less about the voluntary sector and especially organisations led by users and volunteers, something which was very important in the context of her neo-natal campaign at BLISS. Her mentor was of great help in this respect:

“The support programme was very helpful because I needed to understand how to build-up a network of grass roots supporters and a coalition of support from among other organisations. My mentor, Nick Stace, was particularly good at providing insights into the voluntary sector.”

Emily’s score moved from 7 to 9.

As someone not previously involved with campaigning, but who had been drawn into it by a personal tragedy, Alison Miller had a big task on her hands to make sense of the context in which she was campaigning:

“At the outset I thought I understood the environment in which I was trying to bring about change, but the more I learned about things, the more complicated I realised they were. However, thanks to my coach and from talking to other people involved in the campaign I eventually gained a better understanding of what I was up against.”

By the end of the programme, Alison felt that her understanding had increased from 3 to 6.
In contrast, Kierra Box had been drawn into her campaign while at University by the war in Iraq. Having decided to broaden the campaign to embrace a wider youth agenda she also found herself needing to understand a wide ranging and varied context:

Kierra felt that Matthew Sowemimo and Tom Beale’s help in mapping allies and targets enabled her to identify and understand the key people for her to approach.

Kierra felt that her understanding had increased from 5 to 7.5 by the end of the programme.

Shane Lunga also faced difficulties in getting to grips with the environment in which he was trying to campaign:

“This is an area in which I know I need to increase my understanding. I’m still struggling to get to grips with what drives DfID - I think I understand about 50% and I’m also realising how difficult it is to deal with the Foreign Office. Added to that, I’ve also become more aware of how important it is to be really focused, because all the time I’m competing with other overseas causes for everyone’s attention.”

Shane felt that by the end of the programme his understanding had increased from 4 to 7.
Summary of winners’ scores

Understanding of campaign context

- Kierra Box
- Shane Lunga
- Alison Miller
- Linda Ramsden
- Emily Robinson
- Jackie Schneider

Context Before
Context after
4.3. Knowledge of campaign tactics

“I have worked with about 15 different school councils specifically on how to collect evidence, problem solve and make a case for their ideas. I have helped them build coalitions and present solutions. I would never have done this without The Foundation.”

- Jackie Schneider

The programme also aimed to improve the winners’ knowledge of tactics, which meant improving each winner’s ability to; use the media, legislation and other tools in order to lobby/campaign effectively. This is a key area because some campaigns stick on one tactic, when to be effective they need to deploy diverse approaches. This is also an area where there is scope for innovation given the advent of initiatives like freedom of information.

Tactics was the area where the winners felt least confident at the outset and not surprisingly, the average score at the outset was only 5. However, by the end, this had increased to 8.5.

Linda Ramsden felt that thanks to the programme she had become more analytical about how to achieve her campaign objectives. This was because of the help she received from her coach and the two specialist coaching sessions on developing a parliamentary strategy from Matthew Sowemimo at the Foundation. As a result, she decided to focus on: influencing decision makers, raising awareness among civil society and sourcing ICAHD members.

“Previously I had been very re-active, but the programme led me to be much more systematic about identifying the key decision makers and planning how to tackle them. It also made me look more carefully at mobilising sympathisers by various means, such as getting them to lobby their MPs, or to go on the ICAHD study tours (200 people have done this to date). Finally, in March 2007 ICAHD is started organising training for its members to help them become more effective campaigners. This includes; how to lobby/achieve change and public speaking.”

Linda’s self assessment score moved up from 7 to 10.

Jackie Schneider found that the support programme afforded a variety of opportunities to develop her understanding around tactics:

“The residential weekend seminar provided an excellent opportunity to meet-up with other campaigners and to hear from experienced campaigners about planning and tactics. In addition to this, the session provided by AS Biss on dealing with the media and legislation was very helpful, as was the specialist training on the Freedom of Information Act from Which?. In addition to all this, there were also opportunities to talk to Foundation staff over the phone or at events.”
Jackie’s score progressed from 6.5 to 8 by the end of the programme.

Kierra Box also found the residential and the specialist coaching very helpful in developing her campaign tactics:

“The presentations at the residential about planning a campaign, mapping stakeholders and building alliances were very helpful and the event gave me a chance to do a lot of thinking about how to take Hands Up forward. I also found the tactics coaching sessions from Claire and Matthew, at which we did a lot of mapping and analysis, very useful and very positive.”

Kierra’s score moved from 5 at the outset to 8 at the end.

Alison Miller had a lot of help on improving her campaign tactics from her coach:

“What I’ve learnt during the programme is that it’s not just what you know but who you know that helps to get results - you’ve got to know the right people to contact. I feel that my tactical strength now lies in a combination of knowing who it is that I need to contact, combined with my willingness to be persistent in trying to contact them. I feel that I’m now constantly on the phone, hassling key people and pursuing them - and that’s what I find gets results.”

Alison assessed her own tactical ability at just 1 at the outset, but by the end of the programme scored herself 8.

Shane Lunga’s tactics prior to winning the award had revolved around networking and lobbying and the programme gave him an opportunity to develop these further through coming into contact with Jon Snow and Lord Richard Best. “For me the insights I gained around networking and lobbying were very valuable and were one of the most useful things to come out of the programme”. Shane’s score moved up from 4.5 at the outset to 8 at the end of the programme.
Summary of winners scores

Knowledge and use of tactics

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Tactics Before</th>
<th>Tactics After</th>
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<td>Kierra Box</td>
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<td>Shane Lunga</td>
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<td>Jackie Schneider</td>
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4.4. Developing external relationships & increasing external impact

All the winners had enjoyed a significant degree of success in terms of developing external relations and achieving external impact prior to the award. The programme aimed to build on this by helping the award winners in identifying:

- new allies who could help in taking the campaign forward
- key players with whom it would be advantageous to build up relationships
- ways of securing better publicity/media coverage

The overriding feeling among the winners was that, simply by being a winner put them in a privileged position which gave them access to a very wide range people and elevated them to a level which made securing media coverage and publicity much easier. As Shane Lunga put it: “Just being an award winner gave me a special status which led to the campaign receiving publicity.”

Like Shane, Jackie Schneider felt that winning the award gave her a ‘status’ which she hadn't previously enjoyed which immediately helped when it came to developing both existing and new relationships:

“If made it easier to deal with the local authority, I got foot in the door with the Children’s Minister, which I’d not been able to achieve in the past, and I even made contact with Ed Milliband at the Award Ceremony. My new status as an award winner also saved me a lot of time, because it became easier and less time consuming to make contact with people and to get a response. I was also helped by Jonathan Lomax from AS Biss & Co who helped me to better understand politicians and how to approach them.”

Linda Ramsden also found winning the award opened doors. She was invited to Amnesty International’s international media event, she was mentored by Jon Snow and she met up with Terry Waite, whom she hopes to keep in touch with, on three occasions: “I feel that being introduced as a recipient of a Sheila McKechnie Award does a great deal for my credibility and raises ICAHD’s profile.”

In Alison Miller’s case, what helped her most in developing her external relationships were the new insights that she obtained through the programme:

“To begin with I thought it was a question of getting to Ministers, but my coach helped me to understand how things work and how decisions are actually made. As a result, I realised that if I wanted to influence the way that the foreign office operated it would be more productive to target the people responsible for organising their training programmes, since that’s where staff on the ground learn about what they can do and how to proceed.”

The extent to which winners’ were able to increase their campaign’s external impact as a result of skills developed through the programme, in what was only a matter of months, depended on a variety of factors: these related to the nature of the campaign, it’s organisation and the winner’s personal circumstances. In this connection, it needs to be borne in mind that out of the six winners, four were busy.
earning a living, one was a student and one a professional campaigner. It is also important to recognise that the vast majority of campaigns that seek policy change take several years before they attain their objective. Therefore, the progress that award winners could realistically expect to make over six months had to be limited.

Emily Robinson was the professional campaigner among the six and therefore benefited from working in a well resourced setting. She was able to point to a number of successes for her campaign: the National Audit Office had undertaken to start an audit of neo-natal care, the Department of Health had launched a cot finding bureau and the Greater London Authority had produced a report dealing with neo-natal care which endorsed the campaigns main objectives.

Jackie Schneider’s campaign had already had extensive coverage in the national tabloid press, but because of the programme, she had been able to meet up with the Children’s Commissioner and flag up a proposal for a national audit of high school lunch facilities, which she intends to follow-up having secured an expression of support from him. At a local level she had been able to steer the campaign from being a new organisation trying to put over its views, to one which the local authority took seriously and was prepared to work with around their agenda.

For Linda Ramsden and Shane Lunga progress has been slower, but it has to be borne in mind that their campaigns address complex international issues and by definition are going to be a long haul. Linda feels that having restructured the ICHAD UK with the help of the Foundation she will now be in a better position to devote more time to raising the campaign’s profile. Shane is busy holding down a fulltime job but still feels that: “The campaign has moved forward in fits and starts, but the award programme has given Zimbabwe Futures a reputation and status it hadn’t enjoyed before.”

4.5. Understanding how to make a campaign sustainable

The final area which the programme addressed was ‘sustainability’. The aim here was to help winners understand better: how it might be possible to improve the way in which their campaign is organised in order to put it on a firmer footing, and how to secure the resources necessary in order to finance the campaign.

At the point at which Linda Ramsden won her award, she was both chair of ICHAD and lead employee, even though she was unpaid:

“This was causing a number of problems since there was confusion among the Board about governance and executive responsibility and I was finding myself becoming tied down by day-to-day issues, at the expense of being able to focus on strategy and finances.”

Following Linda’s initial assessment where this issue became apparent, Claire McMaster and Mark Higham made a special presentation to ICAHD UK’s Board’ focusing on governance and executive responsibilities. This helped Linda in as much as it enabled her colleagues to properly understand the difficulties she was facing. As a result, Linda has been able to tackle the issue of roles and responsibilities and start work on registering the organisation as a company limited by guarantee.
Coincidentally some funding has become available from a philanthropist which will allow her to appoint a part time administrator:

“\textit{The programme has turned me around. I wouldn’t be sitting here without the help I received: I was so overwhelmed, without an infrastructure and with no way of knowing how to grow the organisation.}”

Sustainability was also a major challenge for Alison Miller’s campaign S.A.F.E Justice. Having succeeded in obtaining registration as a charity, it was more to with how the campaign was going to be funded than how it was run:

“The grant from UnLtd was very helpful and made it possible to cover various running costs, but we need a longer term source of income. We’re looking into applying to the Big Lottery, but this is perhaps a long shot and so we’re also looking at ways of generating income by running training courses.”

Kierra Box faced a somewhat different challenge, having started a campaign around a specific event (the war in Iraq), but then wanted to develop it as a more generic campaign ‘resource’ for young people. As a student involved in final year exams she has yet to implement what she has learnt, but via her website she’s been able to develop a network of people wanting to be involved and from this, she intends to develop the steering group:

“My involvement in the programme has given me the impetus to try and make my project more long term and sustainable, so I’m no longer seeing it primarily as my project and more as a structure or resource which I could pass on to other people.”
5. Overall impact of the programme on the winners

The Foundation established its award winner support programme principally to increase the campaigning skills of the six award winners and it has clearly succeeded in this objective. The winners have broadened their skills, gained a greater insight into the institutions they are seeking to target and have developed an understanding of how to plan a campaign: something that will be of relevance to any future work they may undertake as campaigners.

More specifically, the programme was successful in helping winners to develop a broader knowledge of campaigning tactics, such as an understanding of the freedom of information law, and also in helping them to develop skills in key areas such as building alliances and legal tactics, both of which are central to modern high impact campaigning.

“It was great to feel like part of a campaigning ‘community’ and to be exposed to the different ways in which other people were going about things. It also made me feel like I had something to ‘live up to’, rather than thinking that nobody would notice if I failed - so it made me more motivated to push ahead when it seemed like I had hit a dead end.”

- Kierra Box

The programme was also successful in helping the winners to clarify their campaign objectives. This applied to both Kierra Box and Alison Miller, while Jackie Schneider and Shane Lunga, with the help of their coaches, were able to re-evaluate their objectives as they developed a greater understanding of the institutions they were seeking to influence.

“The programme has made me grow as a person - it has made me realise that what I was looking at was only the small picture. I now realise the true size of the task, where to go and how to get what is needed.”

- Alison Miller

Another core Foundation objective was to help campaigners understand how to develop their campaign strategy. As a result of both the individual coaching and the residential skills weekend, winners developed an understanding of how to plan an effective campaign and how to transfer these lessons to their individual policy areas. This was the area where the programme had its greatest impact, relative to the baseline position of the six winners at the outset, and where those who were least advanced made the most progress.

In the short six month period during which the support programme ran, the Foundation was able to help winners generate greater external impact. This was largely achieved by assisting them in developing contacts with parliamentarians and decision makers and by enhancing their understanding of decision making processes.
“It’s done a lot for my confidence and I’m much better equipped for talking to decision makers and other potential supporters.”
- Shane Lunga

Finally, the support programme was successful at helping winners in tackling the difficult issue of sustainability. Four winners received grants from UnLtd and help was given in improving governance, as in the case of Linda Ramsden, and in understanding various aspects of fundraising:

“The Sheila McKechnie Foundation award was a real godsend. I’d known success but I couldn’t sustain it, because physically I didn’t have enough hours in the day. In order to keep going I had to try and sort out the organisation itself. The Programme provided access to people of profile and others with skills and experience who have helped me to grow my knowledge of campaigning.”

All the winners were asked to score their overall progress at the end of the programme and the results bore out the above analysis. Two winners felt that their overall progress merited a score of 10 out of 10, two others felt it was 8.5 and 8, while the remaining two scored their progress as 7.5: making an average score of 8.7.

The winners found themselves taking part in events, of one sort or another, which would never have come their way, had they not won the award. These included:

- An appearance on Question Time for Keirra Box
- Shadowing opportunities with Government Ministers: Shane Lunga shadowed Hilary Benn and Emily Robinson shadowed Caroline Flint
- Mentoring with Jon Snow for Linda Ramsden and Shane Lunga
- A meeting with Peers for Shane Lunga at the House of Lords to raise issues about Zimbabwe
- Shadowing with the Children’s Commissioner for England for Jackie Schneider
- A master class with Claire Short
- Meetings with Terry Waite for Linda Ramsden

“Winning the award is the best thing that’s happened to me, although it’s made me poorer because I keep turning teaching work down in order to carry out more campaigning!”
- Jackie Schneider
6. The value of the Foundation’s work

In working with its first generation of award winners the Foundation has clearly demonstrated the value of a bespoke programme of support, geared towards advancing the campaigning skills of individuals in a way that will both further their current campaigns and equip them for longer term work within this field.

The Foundation has also demonstrated its ability to cater for a diverse group of campaigners, ranging from those campaigning in their spare time like Alison Miller, Linda Ramsden and Shane Lunga, to individuals like Emily Robinson who are starting out on a professional career in campaigning. This is particularly important since so many organisations within the voluntary sector start out as the brain child of driven individuals working their own time, but sometimes fail, or do not fulfil their potential, for lack of support in their early stages.

“I think it will be important in the future as the Sheila McKechnie Foundation goes forward that it continues to provide support for paid campaigners at the beginning of their careers. I think there is a sufficient gap of training, support and advice which the Foundation has clearly filled.”

- Emily Robinson

In addition, the Foundation has given a lead to the voluntary sector as a whole by highlighting both the need and benefits of investing in strengthening the quality and impact of campaigning. As the sector which specialises in championing issues and providing services which are not being dealt with properly, this entirely makes sense. Furthermore, at a time when many voluntary sector organisations are moving closer to government, as they become more involved in public service delivery, this is perhaps a timely development.

Finally, it’s important to recognise that this is a unique programme which leads the way and which therefore is well worth expanding in future years.

In conclusion, the value of the Programme and Foundation’s work is perhaps best summed up in the words of the award winners:

“It made me feel more focused, supported and driven to try and achieve something.”

- Kierra Box

“The Foundation’s overall impact was, re-energise me by providing a sense of direction and ongoing support.”

- Shane Lunga
“It’s given me a clearer view of where I need to go. Previously I didn’t have this and as a result it was hard to get motivated.”

- Alison Miller

“It’s given me tremendous confidence and energy. It has helped me to enlarge the scope of my work and to dream bigger dreams!”

- Linda Ramsden

“The programme opened doors and there was a definite cache in being a Sheila McKechnie Foundation Winner. I found it really inspiring to meet so many people involved in campaigning...the best thing, by a mile, was what it did for me in terms of my motivation.”

- Emily Robinson

“Overall the programme of support was incredibly energising and motivating I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunities for meeting other people. I could hardly believe that I was able to meet and talk with people I would have never otherwise come across.”

- Jackie Schneider

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Appendix - the complete scores of each winner

Kierra Box - Support Programme Progress

- Clarity of campaign aims and objectives
- Development of strategy
- Knowledge and use of tactics
- Understanding campaign context

Areas of Evaluation

Before

After

Shane Lunga - Support Programme Progress

- Clarity of campaign aims and objectives
- Development of strategy
- Knowledge and use of tactics
- Understanding campaign context

Areas of evaluation

Before

After
### Areas of Evaluation

- **Clarity of campaign aims and objectives**
- **Development of strategy**
- **Knowledge and use of tactics**
- **Understanding campaign context**

### Alison Miller - Support Programme Support

- **Before**
- **After**

### Linda Ramsden - Support Programme Progress

- **Before**
- **After**
Clarity of campaign aims and objectives
Development of strategy
Knowledge and use of tactics
Understanding campaign context

Areas of Evaluation

Before
After

Clarity of campaign aims and objectives
Development of strategy
Knowledge and use of tactics
Understanding campaign context

Areas of Evaluation

Before
After