



Naz Project London (NPL) exit report

Naz Project London (NPL) provides sexual health and HIV prevention and support services to culturally and linguistically distinct Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in London, and campaigns for effective sexual health policy and good practice.

Thanks to Impetus pro bono expert Stuart Mills for researching this report.

Introduction

NPL was the fifth organisation in which Impetus invested. The relationship lasted from March 2005 until September 2009. During that time, Impetus supported NPL - with an investment of £275,000 in strategic funding (provided by Impetus and co-investor partner Charities Aid Foundation), support to management and extensive specialist expertise valued at £347,000.

As a result of this investment, NPL was able to increase its income by an average of 14% a year, and grow the number of people helped living with HIV as well as youth volunteers and peer educators by an average of 31% a year. Equally important, NPL is now one of the very largest BME-led charities in the UK and in many ways can serve as an exemplar for other BME-led charities.

The objectives agreed at the beginning of the investment were to help NPL to become the largest and most effective BME health charity in the UK by:

- significantly increasing the scope of existing support and prevention services within existing target communities, prioritising young adults (20-30 years old)
- developing a specific teenage/school youth project to train and support BME teenage sexual health peer educators in London
- increasing the income base by 40%
- doubling the number of support users served and increasing prevention users by 50%
- creating a national policy voice on BME sexual health issues.

Background to NPL and the challenge

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS pose significant issues for BME communities because of language, cultural barriers and poor access to traditional health services

To help address these issues NPL provides sexual health and HIV prevention and support services to culturally and linguistically distinct BME communities in London, and campaigns for effective sexual health policy and good practice. NPL's approach centred on engaging people from the communities it served. In this way, NPL's team would be culturally sensitive to and linguistically capable of working with people in communities where sexual issues like homosexuality, pre/extra-marital sex and STIs were taboo subjects

NPL was established in 1991, initially supporting South Asian gay men with HIV/Aids at a time when they were shunned. From this initial community, NPL began to extend its support to other BME communities where it was challenging to address sexual health matters both openly and sensitively. By 2001, NPL encountered financial and operational problems. The Board recruited Bryan Teixeira as CEO in 2001. In his first two years, Bryan put NPL back on a stable basis. By 2004 NPL was beginning to look towards a growth phase that would allow it to extend its distinctive model more deeply within the communities it served and to reach new communities.

Developing the relationship between Impetus and NPL

As part of developing the Impetus model, in 2004 Impetus started working with Charities Aid Foundation's (CAF) Grant programme to look for opportunities to co-invest in a charity. CAF and Impetus agreed to work together on each step of the investment process. As part of the process, CAF and Impetus developed a shortlist of four charities to approach to apply for support. NPL was one of these charities. After NPL's submitting a written proposal, CAF and Impetus met with Bryan in December 2004 and agreed to pursue the application process actively.

Impetus initiated the due diligence process in March 2005, with a view to ensuring NPL had the capacity for growth, the desire to increase impact, and the willingness to engage in the venture philanthropy process.

According to Nat Sloane, the Investment Director for this investment:

"NPL was impressive and had a fascinating model for working with marginalised people within marginalised BME communities. In addition, it was unusual insofar as it was one of a handful of BME-led charities that had income in excess of £250,000."

The due diligence took place over three months. It included a major market and competitive analysis from OC&C Strategy Consultants, which confirmed that NPL was delivering a very distinctive and effective model bridging the issue of sexual health and minority ethnic communities. Coupled with the other aspects of due diligence that CAF and Impetus jointly conducted, Impetus approved the investment in July 2005. As part of the business plan objectives for NPL, several specific areas were identified as necessary elements in the successful scaling up of NPL:

1. strengthening the management team through recruiting a prevention manager and a fundraising executive
2. building on research into young people that NPL had previously done to broaden NPL's work through developing a teen peer advice programme
3. deepening the reach within the communities NPL was already developing, by at least one new BME community to serve over the coming four years
4. developing an effective implementation plan to sequence the key activities in light of the small senior team and the pressures on the CEO
5. moving to new premises.

Over the four year investment period, CAF invested £100,000 alongside Impetus' provision of £175,000. , It was also agreed that Impetus and CAF would provide specialist consultants to support NPL's growth process.

An overview of the NPL programme from 2005-2009

Year One focused on development of the NPL management team, the development of the implementation plan and a basic review of NPL's marketing material.

The funding enabled NPL to fill the Prevention Manager and fundraising executive posts. Impetus provided a pro bono expert, Jo Woods (Finance and Business Director, Audio & Music at the BBC) and a former consultant) to work with the NPL team to develop a detailed implementation plan. Impetus also provided a pro bono expert to review NPL's marketing material.

The recruiting process resulted in hiring two new people and Jo Woods' work enabled NPL to put in place a very clear implementation plan.

Year Two focused on developing a twin-tracked impact assessment, including balanced scorecard¹, and log-frame analysis work, a review of NPL's finance function and beginning the property search process. Sandy Christie, an Impetus pro bono expert, led on the balanced scorecard² work and Sally Monkton, a CAF consultant, handled the log-frame work

Consultants from the Ethical Property Fund (EPF) worked closely with NPL to re-configure NPL's existing office space to be suitable until new premises were obtained, and to specify NPL's needs for new space and start the search for new premises.

Jo Woods also conducted a diagnostic review of NPL's financial structures and processes to identify what changes to financial planning and controls would be necessary for NPL's planned growth.

² The Balance Scorecard helps set goals that give appropriate weight to financial and non-financial measures. It does this by starting with the vision and strategy that drives the business. From this, it identifies the drivers of success for that vision, and then develops targets that measure progress towards that success.

Jo commented: "If a charity goes through the Impetus due diligence process, its finances are going to be fine for what it currently does. But they need to look forward and think about what they will need as they grow - what things they should look at now, to be prepared for that growth? Those are the types of issues we looked at in this second project I did for them."

Year Three involved refining the impact assessment work, rethinking the approach to fundraising, developing a clearer pitch for NPL and unexpectedly dealing with some changes within the senior team. On the impact work, it became increasingly clear that the balanced scorecard and log-frame analysis needed to be integrated so that a well-structured approach on impact measurement ran from the reporting to stakeholders and the Board at a macro level right through to working on individual projects on a micro level. Impetus introduced Claire Hartnell, a consultant from Eden McCallum, to help develop the impact framework to be able to move towards this integrated approach.

Claire Hartnell commented on the management team:

"The openness of Bryan's team to try something new was really excellent, especially when comparing to some of the more institutionalised charities I've worked with in the past."

On the fundraising side, work emerged on two key fronts. Victoria Anderson from CAF worked with Bryan to rethink the approach to fundraising to target bigger, more strategic funders. Ditlev Schwanenflugel, an Impetus expert also from Eden MacCallum, worked with Bryan to develop a sharper pitch to funders and other stakeholders as part of this positioning work.

Ditlev described the process:

"The Impetus Investment Directors met with me and provided some background about the people and challenges they were facing. Then I went out and met the chief exec, Bryan, and we just talked about what he wanted to do with his organisation and the broad aspects of his strategy. After a couple of hours, I went away and created a framework for a plan - I wrote the main headings and subheadings, and then began to populate them. I worked with Bryan to make sure we had the right information. I created some simple graphs, and he put in the text. There was a clear structure and story line, there were some compelling facts, decent graphics and a strong call to action."

Major challenges emerged on the senior management front as the fundraising executive resigned and recruiting a capable replacement proved difficult. In addition, NPL decided to replace the Prevention Service Manager, which temporarily created a significant gap within the senior team.

This period proved to be a stressful but important turning point for NPL. On the fundraising side, NPL turned its approach to fundraising 'on its head', departing from the model of hiring a dedicated member of staff. Instead, having worked with Victoria Anderson on this area, Bryan shifted to an approach where he and his senior team would take charge of major funding applications and buy in bid-writing and presentation expertise as and when needed. On the Prevention Manager side, NPL recruited a new Prevention Service Manager who has proved to be a very effective hire. Additionally, Bryan coached and developed the NPL office manager so that he took over the role of Operations Manager for NPL. Finally, Nat worked

with Bryan to ensure that he had agreement from his Board to extend his role beyond NPL both for the benefit of NPL and Bryan's motivation.

On the premise move front, EPF developed a shortlist of properties, a preferred site in Hammersmith was agreed and with the help of pro bono legal support from Impetus, NPL initiated negotiations with its prospective landlord.

Year Four centred on completing the office move, pursuing some important marketing & branding work, solidifying some key changes at the Board level and kicking off a programme to identify an internal candidate for deputy CEO.

After some protracted negotiations, NPL made its move into the new Hammersmith offices in July 2009 with great support from EPF and a timely intervention from an Impetus trustee to open channels with the landlord. The move represented a major milestone in NPL's history.

Marketing and branding work, led by leading communications and branding agency Base One, is giving the charity a fresh and compelling look.

NPL has made a smooth transition to a new Chair and is working very methodically to develop its Prevention and Support Managers as part of building the senior team's capabilities and potentially as part of its succession planning process.

Conclusion

When asked what his overall impression of NPL's time with Impetus was like, Bryan Teixeira said:

"Intense, exciting, but ultimately about growth for me and the organisation. Now NPL has broken into the next tier of charities and so has a stronger policy voice than before and we will further broaden our impact."

Reflecting on NPL's progress over the four years, it has advanced on several fronts:

1. Its income nearly doubled over the period, despite NPL operating in a tough and unfashionable area.
2. NPL developed new initiatives such as the teen peer educator and community volunteer programmes, as part of its goal to extend its reach to younger members of BME communities. NPL also developed work with a new community (Afro-Caribbean men). NPL has more than trebled the number of people it helps in an active, direct way.
3. After initial challenges and disappointments, NPL has built a senior team that is performing at a much higher level than was the case in 2005. NPL can now contemplate with greater confidence a time when the current CEO moves on. This is real progress when one considers how deeply dependent the organisation was on its CEO to lead and deliver so many areas back in 2005.
4. It has made key transitions in terms of moving to new premises and bringing in a new Chair, which occurred smoothly and effectively.

In more intangible matters, NPL has become a leader in its field by: developing much more innovative and effective ways to track impact; becoming a 'go-to' thought leader in London and in the UK on sexual health and community matters; operating as an important partner to several PCTs within London; serving as a role model for other BME-led charities in its discipline, professionalism and success despite, or maybe even because of, the various challenges it faced in the past four years.

The main objectives of the Impetus/NPL programme have been met.

This was a successful investment, which accelerated the growth and increased the impact of NPL in its provision of key services in sexual health for BME communities.

The results from 2004-2009

	Year prior to Impetus investment 2004/05	Latest year end draft 2008/09
Income (in £ millions)	£0.51	£0.86
HIV support group numbers	250	636
Community volunteers trained	n/a	73
Teen peer educators trained	n/a	29

All figures as of NPL's 2008/09 year end.

