

Appendix 11:

# Redesigning Community Fund Application process through anti- racism practice

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This briefing is for policy-makers, funders, and those working in public institutions, who seek to commit to transforming how systems work with people in communities through the funding of consultation and engagement processes.

This briefing explains the development of a transformative process of funding application trialled within a dedicated anti-racism community engagement fund September–October 2024.

### Background to this fund

[The anti racism community engagement fund](#) provides community groups and organisations with funds to create a focused engagement/or a series of engagements about the future [Anti Racism Observatory for Scotland](#) (AROS).

It is essential that community expertise is gathered, not only about how people understand systemic racism in their lives but also how to use that knowledge to build how they want this new organisation to work for them. Attempts to address systemic racialised inequity have not managed to address the inequality. Evidence suggests that many outcomes have worsened ([see CRER report](#)).

This application process has been developed with the [Design Advisory Group](#), [Impact Funding Partners](#) (IFP) and the Scottish Government on behalf of the future AROS. IFP are leaders in this field and have more than 40 years of expertise on the administration of community funds.

Currently 41 organisations, from grassroots community-led to larger and more established groups have been successful in this process. The fund closed on 11th October. Every organisation that met the core criteria and/or engaged with the process of revision received funding.

Events are ongoing all across Scotland, through October until 16th November, 2024. A rapid report on the events and an overview of the conversations, principles, hopes, collective visions, and ideas will be shared in December 2024.

It is anticipated that future AROS will develop detailed analysis to support its future processes of community engagement.

This briefing should be read alongside a forthcoming costing document that will provide detailed financial frameworks and considerations for implementing similar engagement processes.

*“For IFP, our success lay in truly understanding the unique needs of an anti-racism community engagement fund. By working hand-in-hand with the Design Advisory Group, we adapted our processes and empowered our outreach workers to provide personalised support. This enabled meaningful conversations with applicants, transforming the traditional assessment process into a collaborative journey of trust and dialogue.”*

### This fund:

1. represents and demonstrates a new approach to funding within social justice work, where lived expertise is valued and costed appropriately.
2. enables people adversely impacted by systemic racism to build a deeper understanding of the future AROS
3. explores through focused community conversations how people think the future AROS could work for them and how they could work with future AROS.

### Disrupting usual systemic processes

- Valuing community knowledge as equal to institutional knowledge, encouraging genuine co-creation and paid participation at a rate similar to those with formal qualifications
- Recognising that understanding how systemic racism impacts people’s lives requires complex, nuanced expertise
- Agile support building from a we will support you, rather than a one size fits all approach

*“This fund showed us a different way of working was possible, instead of instant rejection we got real conversations and support to strengthen our ideas. It felt good to be truly heard rather than just assessed.”*

### Reimagining resource sharing

- Building a model that does not risk creating competition for funding between marginalised people, groups or organisations
- Organisations and groups evaluated on their own merits, not ranked against each other
- Creating solidarity, confidence, and trust whereby there is potential to foster an environment where organisations and groups can focus on their communities’ perspectives and knowledge without fear of losing out to others

## Enabling responsive funding frameworks

- Two dedicated community outreach workers were recruited specifically to support applicants through the process (and will also support the events and post-event reporting)
- Applications were independently evaluated by IFP who have extensive expertise. IFP also sought and welcomed anti racism expertise within their evaluation process
- If applications were eligible but didn't fully meet the criteria, outreach workers provided targeted support for revisions
- Support focused on refinement rather than replacement which, for example, recognised that the funding available for lived expertise was often unexpected but once explained and trusted, was welcomed as an indication of “doing things differently”
- Organisations and groups weren't asked to start over, just to enhance, explain or develop specific aspects of their applications
- Multi-channel (phone call, video calls, emails) accessibility ensured organisations could engage in ways and at times that worked best for them
- It was anticipated that English would often not be the primary language of communication. The outreach workers facilitated and recognised linguistic diversity

“To be able to ... build trust with groups and encourage them and be a sounding board where they can actually be honest about where they're at. They don't need to pretend that they know exactly how this is going to work, or exactly what they're doing that you're there to help them work with their community”

Funding is from the Scottish Government, to support community engaged co production during this interim development phase whilst a host organisation for future AROS is sought. It is anticipated that the outcome from public procurement of a host organisation for future AROS will be announced early 2025.