Rebuilding Heritage

HERITAGE FUND

Creative United

CLORE LEADERSHIP

The Heritage Alliance

Chartered Institute of Fundraising

MediaTrust

Future Needs

Sharing our reflections on how to develop the sector's resilience

Introduction

Rebuilding Heritage was a UK-wide support programme designed to help heritage organisations navigate the challenges presented by COVID 19. It was coordinated by **the Heritage Alliance,** funded by the **National Lottery Heritage Fund** and delivered in partnership with the **Chartered Institute of Fundraising, Clore Leadership, Creative United,** and **Media Trust,** with support from additional providers.

'Future Needs' shares our reflections on continuing challenges for the sector and how these could be addressed.

Building a more resilient sector

Resilience is a complex quality drawing together the knowledge, skills and capacity to manage threats and challenges, and the ability to respond to new opportunities.

Rebuilding Heritage helped many heritage organisations to increase their resilience throughout the pandemic and has **learnt a lot about their ongoing needs.**

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> "The resilience needs of the heritage sector are significant and largely pre-dated the pandemic, although the past 18 months have exacerbated some of the pressures on individuals and organisations in the sector. Going forward, there is a need to develop awareness and attitudes as well as skillsets, which has implications for how future support is promoted and structured."
>
> **Rebuilding Heritage Evaluation, December 2021, Dr Melita Armitage & Dr Claire Antrobus.**

Challenges

Application and evaluation data show four key common areas of long-term challenge for organisations from across the heritage sector.

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> **"There is a whole relevant community of peers who share the same challenges and opportunities.** This open spectrum helps offer anonymity whilst creating a new, unexpected group of friends."
>
> **Round 5 (Jul-Aug) participant evaluation – leadership training**

Challenge:
Foundations

Support in the creation of robust plans and processes underpinning organisational activity

Challenge:
Governance & Leadership

Longer-term support for trustees and boards to ensure effective governance

Challenge:
Bridging to Innovation

Support for individuals and organisations as they transition to new or different ways of working

Challenge:
Capacity

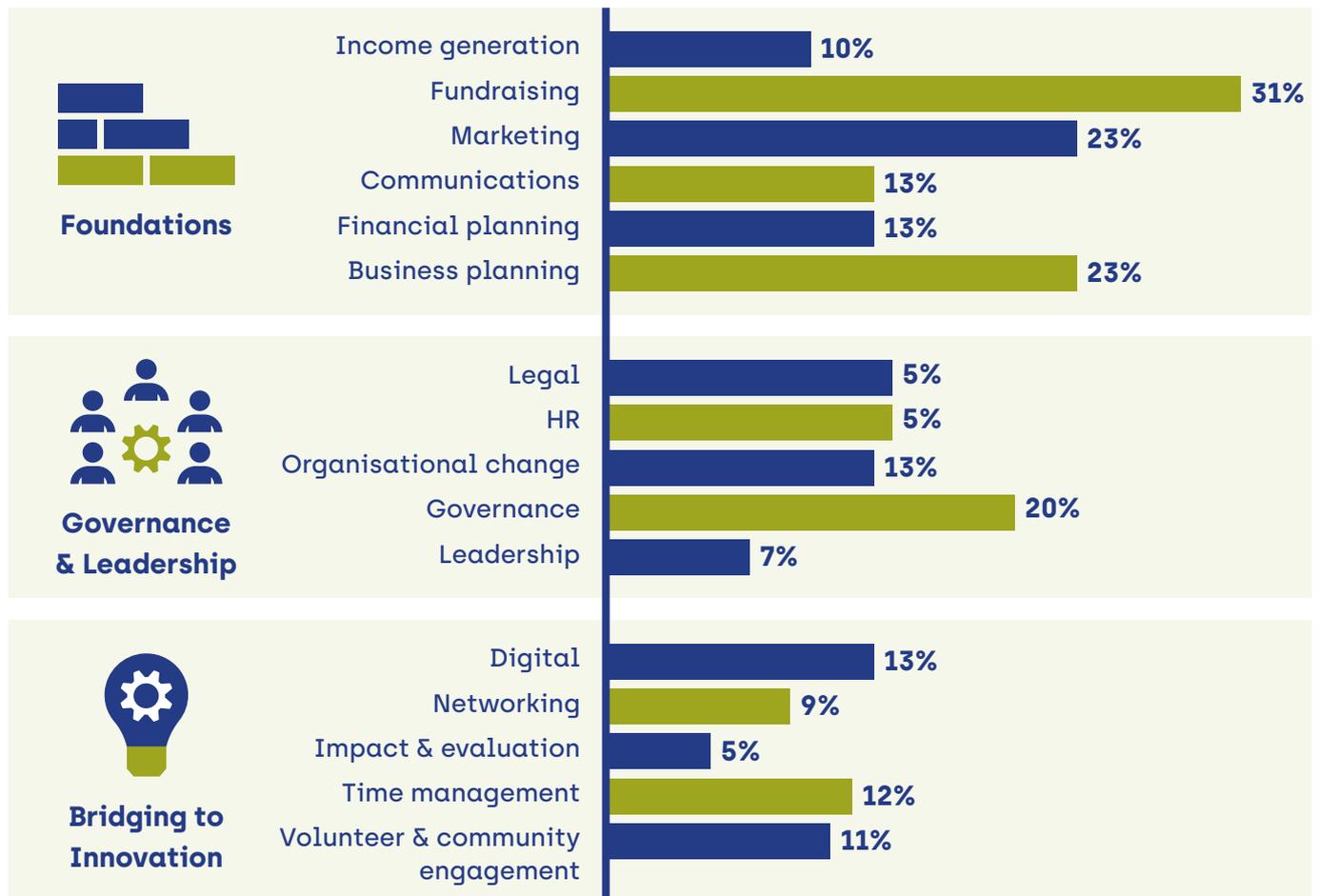**The ability and resource to use new knowledge and skills to operate as resilient organisations**

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> "While a worldwide catastrophe, I do also see COVID as a catalyst to change in a positive forward-thinking way rather than revert to 'what we used to do.'"

Knowledge and Skills

The Rebuilding Heritage end-of-project evaluation asked **'what skills and expertise do you lack that would enable your organisation to become more resilient?'**

Responses can be grouped as follows:

Foundations

Category	Percent
Income generation	10%
Fundraising	31%
Marketing	23%
Communications	13%
Financial planning	13%
Business planning	23%

Governance & Leadership

Category	Percent
Legal	5%
HR	5%
Organisational change	13%
Governance	20%
Leadership	7%

Bridging to Innovation

Category	Percent
Digital	13%
Networking	9%
Impact & evaluation	5%
Time management	12%
Volunteer & community engagement	11%

Skills areas lacking for resilience

(Source: external evaluation survey, Dr Claire Antrobus & Dr Melita Armitage
108 respondents, multiple responses possible)

Foundations

There is still the need to develop in the core areas of support provided by the Rebuilding Heritage programme.

Common needs:

- Business planning skills
- Communications
- Marketing
- Fundamentals of financial management
- Fundraising expertise
- Income generation

For example:

"Confidence, time management, evaluation, better fundraising skills"

"Marketing, business planning, fundraising, digital innovation"

"Communication is an area we desperately need to improve on."

Governance & Leadership

Survey responses showed a sector still in flux with governance issues brought into focus by the pandemic and many organisations now looking to make changes.

Common governance issues:

- Lack of formal structures or terms
- Limited range of expertise including HR and legal
- Ineffective planning and decision-making processes
- Limited succession planning
- Need to incorporate EDI practices

For example:

"Strong leadership and clear messaging, forward planning, future focussed, flexibility, need to become less cautious"

"An understanding of risk and risk management to effectively communicate priorities at a corporate level and receive the resources required."

Bridging to Innovation

The challenges of the pandemic have also highlighted opportunities. Many organisations are looking at how they can work differently in the future and incorporate new skills, new technology, or new networks and relationships.

Development needs to support innovation:

- Digital skills & new media (especially marketing and communications)
- Hybrid teams and new ways of working
- Time management and prioritisation
- Community and volunteer engagement
- Building local networks and partnerships
- Collecting and using data for evaluation and impact

For example:

"Digital and IT, entrepreneurial and commercial income generation, volunteer management, community engagement"

"Broader base of trustees to bring new and different skills and enthusiasm."

"More digital skills are needed through communications, day-to-day use of IT, engaging visitors with digital content"

Capacity

A cross-cutting challenge is limited capacity. Even when organisations are aware of their own shortcomings and vulnerabilities, the ability to address known needs is often limited by:

A Lack Of Funds To Support The Implementation Of Change

"We could be more resilient with more funding expertise and funding to support us getting outside management consultancy to help us review the organisation business plan"

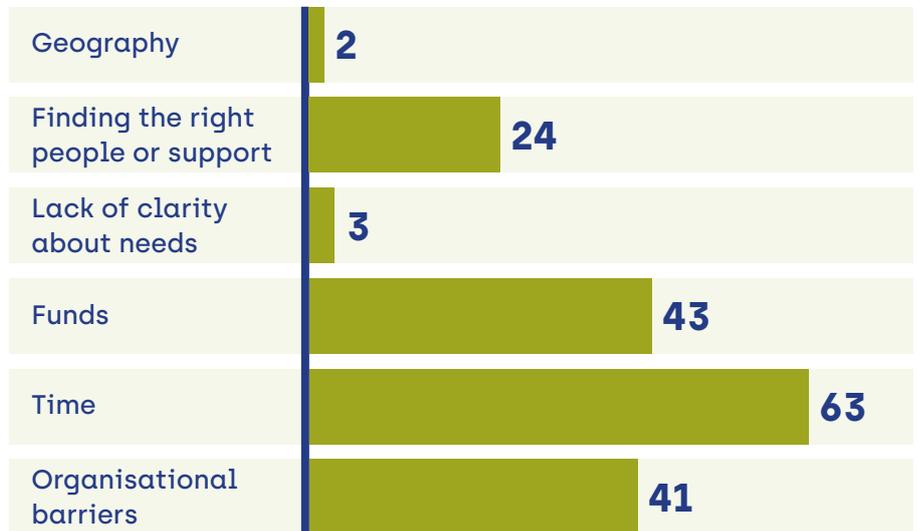### Difficulty Identifying And Accessing Resources And People

"How to better engage Trustees and how to find new ones"

A Lack Of Capacity To Make Use Of New Skills And Knowledge

"We have the skills but not enough staff to be able to implement anything properly due to lack of funding and staff shortages through illness and staff leaving and not being replaced - current staff struggling to cope with their workloads"

"Time to make the changes internally rather than always being external facing"

Our evaluators asked: **what gets in the way of your being able to access skills and expertise?** Responses have been grouped into six categories.

Category	Responses
Geography	2
Finding the right people or support	24
Lack of clarity about needs	3
Funds	43
Time	63
Organisational barriers	41

(Source: external evaluation survey, Dr Claire Antrobus & Dr Melita Armitage; Data shows number of responses.)

Geography - highlighted by organisations in rural locations

Funds - the cost of support or the lack of money to access skills & expertise is mentioned repeatedly

Finding the right people or support - difficulty in finding the skills and expertise that will address issues applies to finding the right staff, trustees and volunteers as well as external consultants or sources of advice

Lack of clarity about needs - a lesser problem but a persistent theme that some people don't know where to start, or what sources of support will help them to address the challenges they face

Time - lack of people (staff and volunteers), people with limited time to devote to resilience activities (particularly acute for organisations highly reliant on volunteers)

Organisational barriers - operational structures, lack of leadership, resistance to change, an unwillingness to prioritise resilience activities were amongst the issues highlighted by respondents

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"Alongside ongoing need in the areas already covered - business, strategic and financial planning and management, leadership, EDI and income generation - future support is needed in terms of governance, recruitment and retention of volunteers, innovation and risk, creating change and influencing, community engagement, understanding impact. Shifts in attitude, or mindset, as well as skillset, emerged as critical if the sector is to create the change required to involve a wider range of people in heritage."

**Rebuilding Heritage evaluation, December 2021,
Dr Melita Armitage & Dr Claire Antrobus.**

Delivering Future Support

Rebuilding Heritage provided support through short-term interventions between November 2020 and October 2021.

The heritage sector is still responding to the impact of COVID-19 and adapting its ways of working. We've listened to the sector's needs throughout the pandemic - what's needed and how it can most helpfully be provided.

Here are our suggestions for a future Rebuilding Heritage to help organisations **to emerge from the pandemic stronger and more resilient.**

Getting The Word Out

Information overload and navigating the crowded digital realm - Keep messages about the support available and who is eligible clear, and maintain simple communication channels.

Overlap between similar programmes and membership organisations - Support is available from multiple sources; it's important that each should differentiate but not isolate from other complementary sector support programmes.

Lack of capacity to engage non-digital audiences - Expand offer to include printed media and face-to-face support.

Strengthen relationships with organisations outside of England - Rebuilding Heritage was a cross-UK programme but there is an ongoing need to build relationships with support organisations and participants outside of England to increase uptake of the available support.

Getting The Right Support To The Right Participants

Rapid digital learning curve - The sector's digital skills have developed profoundly over the last year but it's still clear that there are big differences in knowledge-levels and resources. Work with Heritage Digital to signpost training in core digital skills.

Low familiarity with support services and formats - Streamline application process based on feedback, offer intro-sessions explaining different elements of support prior to applications opening.

Review assessment process - Work with consultants and trainers to introduce a new process for matching needs to support, taking into account organisational self-assessment and expert industry knowledge.

Address lack of organisational capacity to engage with the programme - Offer flexible timing of support to fit around organisations' staffing and time constraints. Take polls to find out when most people are able to attend a group session - offer remedial resources for those who can't.

Low prioritisation and lack of commitment - Better express the benefits of the programme, share inspiring case studies, offer incentives, build peer support networks that encourage mutual participation.

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"The bespoke nature of the 'By Application' support (1-2-1 support and group training) enabled the programme to meet the needs of a sector that is highly diverse, differently experienced and differently challenged by the Pandemic. Rebuilding Heritage met organisations where they were."

**Rebuilding Heritage evaluation, December 2021,
Dr Melita Armitage & Dr Claire Antrobus.**

Rebuilding Heritage set out to support and strengthen heritage organisations over the course of the COVID 19 pandemic. Although the programme was developed as a response to COVID 19, its achievements and discoveries have import far beyond the original context of the pandemic. The skills built and knowledge transferred have contributed towards increased resilience within the sector, buttressing it against future crises; similarly, lessons learned from the internal workings of the programme will help inform ways of perpetuating this effective model of learning.

Rebuilding Heritage

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**To find all Rebuilding Heritage resources,
please visit: www.rebuildingheritage.org.uk/resources**

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project's developments: https://bit.ly/3NaykFi**