

City Bridge Trust – Monitoring Visit Report

Organisation: Pesticide Action Network UK	Grant ref: 9744 (Ciaran Rafferty)	Programme area: London's Environment
Amount, date and purpose of grant: 18/02/2010: £52,500 over three years (£17,000; £17,500; £18,000) for the salary costs of a part-time Volunteer Co-ordinator to support London volunteers, work with parks managers who want assistance with reducing the use of pesticides. The grant in years 2 and 3 conditional upon the balance of funds being raised from other sources.		
Visiting Grants Officer: Tim Wilson accompanied by Alderman Alison Gowman	Date of meeting: 25 March 2013	
Met with: Keith Tyrell (Director) and Nick Mole (Policy Officer and Volunteer Coordinator)		
<p>1. Introduction to the organisation: Pesticide Action Network (PAN) works to promote alternatives to chemical pest control, to reduce pesticide dependence, and to eliminate the use of pesticides that are environmentally harmful. Established in 1982, PAN is part of a global network of 600 organisations working towards similar aims. In the UK, PAN publishes guidance for decision-makers and other interested parties on the use of pesticides and promotes policy change.</p> <p>PAN's work with global partners includes supporting farmers to move towards organic methods, encouraging better labelling by supermarkets and certification bodies, and monitoring the impact of pesticides on health.</p> <p>The charity has a small staff team and has weathered some difficult times recently, with three grants accounting for over 70% of its income ending in the same year. However, and following a review of activities, PAN concentrates on work that it believes is likely to be most influential, and actively seeks partners who can help disseminate their messages to a wider audience.</p>		
<p>2. The project funded:</p> <p>Whilst 95% of pesticide use in the UK is agricultural, the majority of human pesticide exposure comes from their use in parks and other urban green spaces. In 2009 the EU Directive on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides included provision to restrict their use in public parks. PAN identified this directive as an opportunity to focus on the use of pesticides in London's green spaces.</p> <p>City Bridge Trust awarded a three year grant of £52,000 in February 2010. PAN drew down first instalment in January 2011, and funds are provided towards 2.5 days per week of the pesticide-free parks project Volunteer Coordinator, working with a network of volunteers towards the aim of pesticide-free green spaces. The second and third years of the award were conditional on PAN raising other funding, which it did from the Chapman Trust.</p> <p>The original post-holder left PAN in March 2011, and the work has been delivered by Nick Mole (who is also the charity's Policy Officer) since then.</p>		
<p>3. Work delivered to date:</p> <p>In the first year of grant, the majority of work went into developing materials for volunteers to use when campaigning for pesticide-free local green spaces. PAN identified and contacted over 600 friends of parks groups across London, working to engage them with the campaign. PAN took advantage of growing interest in bee-keeping and bee numbers to highlight the importance of biodiverse green spaces in urban areas in order to promote pesticide-free parks. PAN found it harder to engage</p>		

with parks managers, as these people were often dealing with reduced budgets and time to discuss new projects. The charity sought to remedy this by creating an online resource for park managers to advertise their needs, and volunteers to identify their willingness to provide support.

In the second year of grant the website for parks managers and the public was made live, and the toolkit made available for download. The post-holder built relationships with several larger partners including Sustain and Friends of the Earth in order to push for measures outlawing pesticide use in urban spaces. The charity was invited to give evidence to the Environment Audit Committee in 2012, and was able to make good progress with two London boroughs interested in rolling out a pesticide-free approach to their parks management.

4. Difference made:

Whilst the first year of work was preparatory, the relationships PAN built and the materials it developed started to generate change in the second year of grant. PAN has been able to foster particularly good contacts four London Boroughs and hopes that one will shortly declare itself pesticide free. PAN hopes this will provide impetus for others to do likewise.

The charity has enjoyed much greater interest in its work than originally expected because of the widespread media coverage of bee-keeping. PAN has used this well, and tailored its materials to connect its pesticide work to relevant bee issues.

The website has been developed to allow groups to post their own materials, and PAN has designed it to be self-sustaining if no further funding is secured. It is worth noting that the work has been delivered during an especially turbulent financial time for PAN.

5. Grants Administration:

Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2011 correctly identify City Bridge Trust funding. 2012 accounts are not yet available. The first monitoring report was submitted in December 2011 and rated "satisfactory" as the project had made a slower than expected start, reflecting the difficulties experienced by PAN in that year. The second monitoring report was submitted in October 2012 and showed improvement, being rated "good". The Grant Officer noted that work was progressing well and enjoyed good levels of engagement. A final report is expected in October 2013.

During the visit PAN shared a copy of the financial records kept for the project which show the way funds are tracked for staff time and appears satisfactory. A form P11 had been requested in advance but was not supplied during the meeting. It is expected to follow shortly by email and will be placed on file.

6. Concluding comments:

PAN is a small organisation, but clearly well respected for its reasoned, scientific approach to pesticide use. It appears counter-intuitive that PAN might focus efforts on pesticide use in urban areas when the majority of pesticide use is rural. However, the charity has identified a way of engaging the broader public by focusing on parks and green spaces which is where there is most human contact with pesticide.

The first year of work focused on materials and contacts, but there is evidence that, through thoughtful partnership working, the charity has reached a much larger audience than it would otherwise have been able to by itself.

It may be challenging for PAN to sustain an active website after this grant unless replacement funding is secured. Although the URL has been registered for the future, public participation on the website may wane without a central coordinator.