

THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN SCOTLAND

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The voluntary sector in Scotland has substantial income - £2.4 billion, or 4% of Scotland's gross domestic product; it employs considerable numbers of people - 51,000, or 34,000 in full time equivalent posts, with an additional 700,000 hours per week of volunteer time. (Figures from SCVO (1997)); its work in health and social care, in housing, in education, for the environment, in the arts and in sports makes a real difference across Scotland's communities. But the necessary political salience to influence public policy has often eluded it, even when its contribution has mattered greatly to the changes taking place. So, in the fine tradition of the voluntary sector, it took matters into own hands, and set up a review of public policy options of its own.

Recommending policy options for Scotland's voluntary sector was the task which the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, the main umbrella body for the voluntary sector in Scotland, set the independent Commission on the Future of the Voluntary Sector in Scotland in November 1995. With a membership of 15, chosen by SCVO from the sector, from universities, from business, and four MPs (all volunteers apart from myself, working part-time) the commission spent the next 18 months collecting written and oral evidence from voluntary organisations, public bodies and indeed government itself. (The commission's membership is listed in the appendix.) It was chaired by Arnold Kemp, former editor of **The Herald** newspaper, and kept in close touch with a similar commission in England set up by the National Council

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for Voluntary Organisations. In March 1997, it published its report, **Head and Heart**.

Many of the matters it was to consider were essentially political. What kind of bargain should be struck between the state and voluntary organisations providing services under contract? What kinds of conditions should be placed on organisations in receipt of public funds? Do members of the public have the right to check up, simply and easily, on people and organisations collecting money in the street? Should fee-paying schools continue to enjoy charitable status? How far are these Scottish matters, deserving of Scottish solutions, or is there a case for greater harmonisation throughout the UK?

Nor are these only domestic matters. One report which I received whilst completing this work described the rocky reception which met an attempt, led by non-governmental organisation leaders in South Africa, to redraw the laws which govern the NGO sector there. Their proposals - for a new law to replace a wide array of old ones, and to establish a special department to take over the varied functions of individual offices - drew heated criticism from organisations concerned over their rights to privacy and freedom of speech (Lundberg 1997). In this case, their history of struggling against an oppressive state under apartheid made them particularly sensitive to the dangers of state control.

With the Scottish commission's wide-ranging membership including MPs from all four main Scottish parties, easy consensus on essentially political matters was not to be expected. This article describes the work of the commission, and gives a summary of the main recommendations, which after many hours of, at times, lively argument, were finally agreed. It describes how it chose to define the voluntary sector, and the main differences between the sector in Scotland and the rest of the UK. It lists some of its recommendations: on ways to achieve more secure funding; on strengthening the relationship between the sector and the state; on charity law reform; and on how the sector is organised. It ends by reviewing how the commission's recommendations have been received - both by government and by the sector itself: in recommending a review of how the sector is organised, it drew the kind of the criticism which met the sponsors of South Africa's draft bill.

UNDERSTANDING THE SECTOR IN SCOTLAND

The 'voluntary sector' embraces both the smallest community groups, and large service-providing charities with budgets running to millions of pounds: what they share is being managed by non-paid volunteers. But, to quote Perri

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6 (sic), there is 'no agreed, all-purpose, international definition' of a voluntary organisation, and the 'shifting frontiers between public, private, and voluntary sectors' has made finding a definition harder still. (6, Perri 1991, p.1)

The commission chose to use the 'narrow' voluntary sector definition which some researchers such as Perri 6 and Kendall and Knapp have developed. This enabled it to count in organisations which have a formal constitution (but not informal community groups which are very hard to trace); organisations which are independent (which enabled us to rule out non-departmental public bodies which are also charities, to take one example); organisations which do not distribute profits; and which, in that crucial distinguishing feature, are governed by non-paid volunteers.

Even within this narrow range, the diversity of size and purpose is impressive. It includes household names like the National Trust for Scotland, Citizens Advice Scotland, and Barnardos. It includes groups which are very locally based, such as mother and toddler groups. It includes groups set up to campaign. And, crucially, it includes organisations which carry out a number of functions - providing services; campaigning; user-empowerment - and which, through this diversity, have a distinctive edge. Some, but by no means all, are charities.

It is estimated that there are considerably more than 20,000 voluntary organisations in Scotland. The vast majority of voluntary organisations are very small: 66% have an income of less than £25,000. Most of the wealth in the sector is held by a few large organisations with an income of over £2 million. (Figures from SCVO's Charities Register in Scotland database.)

Using the narrow voluntary sector definition, some 27% of voluntary organisations are in culture and recreation; 22% in social care and development; 24% in education and research; 9% in religious activities; and 5% in health care.

The Scottish sector differs from the sector in England in a number of ways. Relationships with local authorities have had a special importance in Scotland, and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, working with SCVO, has developed a statement of principles for working with voluntary organisations. These relationships were disrupted by local government reorganisation, and many organisations told the commission of the serious financial and organisational difficulties which reorganisation was causing them.

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Secondly, charities in Scotland, and especially larger charities, receive a higher proportion of their funding from the public sector than the UK average. The comparable figures, from the latest Office for National Statistics survey, show that general charities in the UK received 28% of their income from government - a figure that included both contracts and grants - compared with 53% in Scotland. General charities in Scotland sold more goods and services to central government and local government than the UK average too. (See SCVO 1996.) This difference is a product of the higher proportion of voluntary organisations and charities in Scotland in the social care field.

This is connected to its third difference: its relationship to central government. Scottish Office support is delivered through the Voluntary Issues Unit in the Social Work Services Group. Most direct government funding to the sector comes largely through grants under Section 10 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. This means, in practice, that most grant assistance is focused on social welfare, and it restricts funding opportunities for organisations which are not in the social welfare field. This differs from England where the sector is supported by a generic department, which is shortly to be moved by the new Labour Government back to the Home Office from the Department of National Heritage.

Fourthly, charity law bears on the sector in unequal ways. Scottish charities operate under hybrid legal rules. Their legal status - and their campaigning rights - are determined by English law. The rulings of the Charity Commission for England and Wales are taken as guidance by the Inland Revenue in Scotland, which grants charitable status to Scottish organisations. There is no comparable body to the Charity Commission in Scotland, leaving Scottish charities without a source of authoritative legal guidance and advice. Nor is there a proper up-to-date register of Scottish charities, accessible to the public. (The charity commission register, in contrast, was due to be made available via the Internet from the autumn of 1997.)

Fifthly, there are the familiar 'poor relation' issues on matters of funding and influence for Scottish organisations: less money for research (there is still no book on the voluntary sector in Scotland); a lower proportion of funding from UK trusts; and less influence on government policy at Westminster, to name three key areas.

There are also some pressing issues of social concern, shared by voluntary organisations throughout Britain, but which, following devolution, could be tackled differently in the different nations of the UK. The one which was

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brought to the commission's attention most often was the financing and delivery of statutory services - exactly the kind of area where voluntary organisations are being called on to step into the breach, but where their views and expertise have not enjoyed centre stage.

The commission's report was written before the election of the Labour Government, and the yes-yes vote in the referendum for a Scottish parliament. It chose, in the uncertain climate in which it was writing, to devise recommendations which could be delivered whatever constitutional arrangements were in place. Its recommendations on charity regulation, for example, could be legislated for either by a Westminster parliament or by a Scottish one. This position seemed the most logical one to take: despite opinion poll findings, no-one wished to take a change of government, or the setting up of a Scottish parliament, for granted. It also made it easier for the commission to agree matters, since its membership included supporters and opponents of constitutional change, with varying degrees of confidence in a Labour Government's ability to deliver.

THE COMMISSION'S PROCESS OF CONSULTATION AND DEBATE

The challenges which the Scottish sector was facing were not necessarily apparent to the commission as it embarked on its inquiry. They became clear through the evidence it received, through research reports which were published over the time it was meeting, and through the individual experts who gave it invaluable help.

The commission collected information and views through distributing a background paper and questionnaire to voluntary organisations. It sent a separate questionnaire to black and ethnic minority organisations and a slightly different list of questions to public bodies.

A number of groups and individuals gave evidence in person and consultation meetings were set up across Scotland, including a meeting organised by the voluntary child-care sector; a seminar of researchers; and two meetings with representatives and black and ethnic minority groups. Funding from the Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland enabled it to commission a special public opinion poll.

The commission collected evidence from government and public bodies also. It met the Inland Revenue, the Scottish Office, and the Charity Commission. It had informal meetings with the Accounts Commission and the Scottish

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Charities Office. Cosla convened a meeting of local government voluntary sector liaison officers, and invited us to debate their work with the voluntary sector.

The Scottish Office was helpful - we met with civil servants more than once - and they certainly took the commission seriously. (What they said was constrained by civil servants' reluctance to pass judgement on government policy.) One department - the Scottish Charities Office - was unfriendly, perhaps expecting that the commission would recommend its abolition. (It did not.)

Some issues dominated in the written and oral evidence which the commission received. Funding issues (which took up at least a quarter of the commission's written evidence); care in the community; relationships with the state, both at the level of the Scottish Office and local government; the need for better charity regulation: all were widely viewed as being in need of better public policy and government support.

The commission also kept in close touch with its sister commission in England, and did reinforce a number of its key recommendations. (It had the advantage that the English commission published first.) But the two reports stand alone, with the Scottish report focusing more on relationships with government, which is a more important funder, and on social welfare, which dominates in the work of the Scottish sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON FUNDING

Insecurity of funding, underfunding, funding that is too short-term, and difficulties in attracting core funding all featured strongly in the evidence the commission received. Campaigning and advocacy work were singled out as being particularly difficult to fund, and the commission concluded that a diverse range of different funders, supported by better central guidance on good funding practice, offered organisations the best chance of a secure and independent future.

The commission made 12 recommendations on funding in all. These included a recommendation that funders should pay special attention to meeting organisations' core costs; a call for the National Lottery Charities Board to be de-centralised and opened up for greater scrutiny; and support for on-going research into the funding of Scotland's voluntary sector, including research into new sources of finance.

THE SECTOR AND THE STATE

The rise of the voluntary sector, especially in the social care field, reflects the shift from public providers to voluntary and private ones. But this growth is not without its problems: many voluntary organisations told the commission that they felt that they were being pushed too far, and they expressed an incipient resentment about the bargain that funders of services were striking with them many times. There was concern, too, that the sector's growing dependence on contracts could rob it of its qualities of responsiveness, independence and innovation.

Care in the community provided a striking illustration of this. Many organisations described their fear that the terms on which contracts were being offered were potentially damaging to voluntary organisations. This damage could happen on a number of fronts: funding limited to narrowly defined service provision could cost them their ability to combine a number of complementary roles, and standardised service provision could work against individual organisations' varied, and often pioneering, approaches to meeting needs. The end result, in their view, would be poorer and less flexible services.

At local government level, the commission suggested a number of measures which, pursued by councils in partnership with voluntary organisations, would help to achieve a fair bargain between those who pay for services and those who provide them. These were, firstly, length of contract, where the commission recommended, in perhaps its most important funding recommendation, that for services where there is a long-term need, three year rolling funding, annually reviewable, should be the general rule. It argued that the real costs of supply should be acknowledged. It suggested that 'quality' measures, agreed between purchasers and providers, should be included in the necessary measures of 'value for money'. It urged councils to look more broadly at how they grant aid the sector, and to draw up local funding policies in consultation with local umbrella agencies. It emphasised the need for better intelligence on the impact of contracting, and called for national monitoring to be put in place.

Reform is needed if the sector is to 'punch its weight' with central government. The commission concluded that there was a need in the Scottish Office for a larger and more active generic unit which could support the sector in all its diversity, working with the support of liaison officers in the different Scottish Office departments. It recommended a generic grant also,

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open to organisations across the spectrum of voluntary sector fields of activity.

CHARITY LAW AND REGULATION

Whether - and indeed how - charity law should be changed occupied many hours of the commission's time. Both the contents of the law, and the way that it is applied, concerned it here.

Under current law, charitable activity must fit under one of the four heads of charity: relief of poverty; advancement of education; advancement of religion; and other purposes beneficial to the community, with sports and recreation in the interests of social welfare as modern additions. Under these heads, bodies like fee-paying schools, universities and hospital trusts have enjoyed the tax benefits of charitable status. In SCVO's view, the criteria should be changed so that only those organisations working for the general public benefit, or for people suffering from a disadvantage, should qualify. Fee-paying schools would no longer be eligible: and neither should they, according to 94% of people in the commission's opinion survey. But this was a matter on which the commission, with its particular membership, agreed to differ, and whilst it decided to back the 'public benefit' criterion, it stopped short of defining who this should exclude.

The commission was also concerned with the way the law is applied in Scotland. As Arnold Kemp, the chair of the commission, has argued in a recent article in **NGO Finance**, Scots law on charity worked in the past through Scots law on trusts. It was income tax which altered this. English charitable law was applied to the interpretation of taxation statutes in Scotland, and the four heads of charity were applied in determining whether a body should enjoy charitable status and the tax reliefs that went with it.

Current arrangements are the result of a curious hybrid enshrined in Part 1 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act of 1990. Under this act, the regulatory functions carried out by the Charity Commission in England and Wales were distributed between the Lord Advocate (through the newly created Scottish Charities Office); the Court of Session; the Scottish Office; the Inland Revenue; and the Scottish Charities Nominee. None of these bodies is able to provide compliance support comparable to that provided by the Charity Commission, and there is a significant deficit in the legal and technical support available to Scottish charities.

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Scotland also lacks a comprehensive, easily accessible register of charities - something which was universally condemned, not least because it makes it very difficult for members of the public to check up on the credentials of, for example, people collecting money in the street.

In trying to seek remedies on these legal matters, the commission faced the complicating picture of whether, and how far, a Scottish parliament might be able to legislate to change charity law in Scotland. It concluded that it would have the power to improve regulation, but not to change the criteria for the award of charitable status, since that, ultimately, hinges on taxation law, one of the Westminster parliament's reserved powers. And in the end, it agreed that the best solution lay in the harmonisation and simplification of the law throughout the UK, with regulation and support devolved to Scottish agencies and delivered locally.

The commission's recommendations on charity law sought to harmonise the statutory framework affecting the legal status, taxation and accountancy obligations of charities and the liabilities of their trustees. It called for the creation of a new office, that of Scottish Charity Registrar, which would keep an up-to-date and publicly accessible register of bodies enjoying charitable status. The registrar would give advice on legal matters and offer compliance support. It proposed that a Scottish Charity Review Tribunal should be set up to enable organisations to appeal, without recourse to the civil courts, against decisions on eligibility for charitable status. It argued that the Scottish Charities Office should retain an unambiguous role as prosecuting and investigation authority under the Lord Advocate and answerable to the courts. Whilst it saw providing technical, legal and compliance support as the responsibility of the Registrar, it also called on the government to better resource the sector so that it could give more general and indeed more local support and advice.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW THE SECTOR IS ORGANISED

The commission's most controversial recommendations concerned how the sector is organised. A variety of bodies support the sector, and they are divided between SCVO and local Councils of Voluntary Service which support and represent voluntary organisations, and Volunteer Development Scotland and local volunteer bureaux, which promote and support volunteering. There are also several specialist intermediary organisations which support aspects of the work of the sector, and provide specialist advice to government.

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Many members of the commission 'found the relationship between SCVO/CVS and VDS/volunteer bureaux confused and illogical', to quote from page 35 of its report. It argued that the framework of representative bodies should be made more effective: organisations on both sides of what many thought was an illogical divide were in receipt of state funding and were, to some extent in competition.

Perhaps this division is also political at heart. Volunteering, in a traditional break down of political party policy, is arguably more in tune with Conservative beliefs; hence with a change of government, those organisations which are specially funded to promote volunteering are perhaps fearful of cut-backs ahead. Certainly the recommendation for a review provoked an outcry amongst those organisations on the 'volunteering' side of the divide.

The commission also made a number of recommendations designed to standardise the level of support which organisations supporting voluntary organisations receive. It argued for a strengthened network of Councils of Voluntary Service, with adequate funding from local authorities. (Currently, rural and semi-rural CVS are funded by the Scottish Office and urban CVS are funded by their local authorities. Many CVS told of the limitations which current funding levels have imposed on them.)

HOW HAVE VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AND GOVERNMENT RESPONDED TO THE REPORT?

In preparation for a 'signing off' conference in September 1997, the commission invited organisations to respond in writing to the recommendations which it made. Around 35 did, several following quite extensive consultation.

These responses praised the commission for highlighting a very wide range of issues and for the clear and positive way it presented its findings. The report showed, to quote the British Association of Social Workers, that the sector is prepared to be 'healthily self-assessing and forward looking in a way that the public and private sectors are not'.

A number of omissions were highlighted: the report was seen by some as being more focused on the needs of larger, more formal organisations at the expense of smaller, less formal ones; it was criticised for not containing more on the role of intermediary bodies; limited coverage of the relationship between the voluntary, statutory and private sectors was seen as a weakness.

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The absence of a rural dimension was seen as a particular gap. But many recommendations did find favour, especially those on funding, on relationships with the Scottish Office and on charity law and regulation.

The Scottish Office responded at length. With a preface from Donald Dewar restating the government's commitment to work in partnership with the sector, it contained much detail on how the Scottish Office works with the sector, but little that was new. On charity law, it was delaying a response until research it is funding on the effectiveness of current law is published in late 1998. Its key response was a commitment to draw up a compact between the government and the sector - an agreement to 'set out the respective roles and responsibilities of the government and voluntary organisations in respect to each other'.

Funding

Voluntary organisations support most of the commission's recommendations on funding. Those on trusts; for three year rolling funding; for funders to meet core costs; for alternative sources of funding; and for an exploratory study into new sources of finance and a possible charity bank: were all singled out. So was the commission's recommendation for more research - especially into monitoring how the sector is funded.

The funding recommendations drew different responses from funders themselves. They described the difficulties they faced in meeting the three year funding: several Local Enterprise Companies explained that it is far from straightforward for them to do this as they are funded on an annual basis themselves.

The Scottish Office, whilst acknowledging the funding difficulties which the sector faces, wrote that it aimed to provide greater stability through its own procedures. But it also welcomed Cosla's positive response. Cosla wrote that it hoped in future to be able to offer financial planning arrangements covering three years: 'the principle here would be to safeguard the core activity of organisations on a long term basis while allowing service levels (and funding) to be altered on the basis of changing need'.

How the sector is organised

The commission's recommendations on how the sector is organised generated most response. Whilst some replies have praised the commission for broaching controversial issues, it is clear that **Head and Heart** also provoked some anger, particularly from organisations which promote volunteering.

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Organisations, especially those representing volunteering, argued that the commission had short-changed volunteering, and had not given enough prominence to the volunteering in its own right. Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) spoke here about the volunteering sector which, in their definition, includes people who do voluntary work, organisations in the voluntary, community, public and private sectors which involve or depend on volunteers, and organisations which promote and support the development of volunteering.

Nonetheless, the recommendation for a review of how the sector is organised did find support. SCVO and VDS expressed their willingness to take part in any review, with SCVO arguing that its terms of reference would need to be agreed with VDS, and VDS arguing that it should be broad in scope, since VDS's constituency includes public and business sector agencies.

The Scottish Office responded by urging existing bodies to work together, and defended its support of specialist agencies to promote volunteering.

Relationships with government

Head and Heart's recommendations for government aimed to raise the breadth and quality of support which the sector receives. Its key recommendation, that there should be a generic unit within the Scottish Office, was widely supported by voluntary organisations. The Scottish Office however defended the status quo.

The commission made a number of recommendations on voluntary organisations providing services for government, especially in the area of care in the community. These, such as a call for urgent monitoring, were generally supported. Cosla agreed that it should produce guidance on contracting; and it went on to argue that it would find a joint approach on defining value for money helpful. Cosla wrote: 'We believe that value for money should not ignore the contribution of voluntary organisations to policy development, advocacy, innovation and internal monitoring. The views of service users are also central to the determination and evaluation of VFM'.

Local government

Several voluntary organisations supported all **Head and Heart's** recommendations on local government. Here, as with responses to the commission's recommendations for central government, emphasis was placed on the need for local authorities to respect the independence and campaigning role of voluntary organisations. But Falkirk Council introduced a

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qualification here. It argued that 'independence and campaigning roles should be respected, but only so long as contractual and other obligations to a funding authority are not compromised'.

Cosla wrote about the importance of the relationship between voluntary organisations and local authorities, and committed itself to produce guidance for councils to help formalise their relationship with the sector.

Relationships with Local Enterprise Companies

Several LECs commented on **Head and Heart**'s recommendations for public bodies. In addition to drawing attention to their difficulty in awarding three year funding (see above) they argued that they have been able to work with the sector, despite different objectives. Nonetheless, there was one rider: 'It is important to recognise', to quote one response, 'that LECs are purchasing a service and not directly supporting the activities of the voluntary sector'.

Charity law and regulation

The commission's recommendations on charity law were overwhelmingly supported. Most organisations gave their support to the regulatory proposals. Its call for a new legal definition of charity based on the concept of public benefit was supported also, although SCVO argued that the commission's proposal here did not go far enough. In its view, such a redefinition would need to clarify the eligibility of credit unions, self-help groups, fee paying schools and hospitals.

The commission's recommendations on advice and guidance - which so many organisations, in their original evidence, commented was seriously lacking - were broadly supported also.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

A number of other reports have been published and reviews launched which have some bearing on what the commission proposed. These reports include the **Second Report of the Scottish Affairs Committee: The Implementation of Community Care in Scotland**. This report suggests a wide-ranging review of resources for community care, including a particular recommendation for a formal government review of the funding difficulties of voluntary organisations, to ensure a 'more stable, long-term financial environment which will permit the voluntary sector cost-effectively to make their distinctive contributions to community care'. (Scottish Affairs Committee 1997, p.xlii.)

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A recent report of the National Audit Office on the Charity Commission (1997) reveals that, even with the force of stronger laws and a dedicated body to gather them, only 61% of charities have sent in accounts - a finding which indicates that the commission's proposed Scottish register may have more difficulties than it envisaged. This report also notes that Companies House has a 95% success rate in receiving accounts on time. (There is a body of opinion in Scotland that Companies House, and not a new Registrar, should be given the task of collecting charities accounts here.)

The Charity Commission has also launched the first-ever systematic review of its register of charities in order to produce guidelines on what types of work charities should be undertaking. Quick answers are not expected: the review is expected to last years, longer indeed than the Scottish Office research into the operation of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1990 which is due to be completed in late 1998.

Finally, there are the new government's policies and proposals for the sector. Labour's immediate plans include welfare to work which, under current proposals, includes the option of six months work in a voluntary organisation for young people who have been unemployed for more than six weeks. (For voluntary organisations, which are likely to receive a fee of £3,200 per six-month placement, welfare to work offers the chance to significantly boost their income.)

The government has also announced a comprehensive review of the tax system as it affects charities in order to seek to consider how to make their tax treatment both more simple and more fair. And, as we have seen, discussions are underway for a 'compact' between the sector and government - whether separately for Scotland or jointly for the whole of the UK - a 'memorandum of understanding' to quote the English Commission on the Future of the Voluntary Sector which proposed this, and which would spell out the nature of the partnership between government and the voluntary sector.

In fact, the Scottish commission did not propose a compact: instead, as we have seen, it proposed new structures to try to ensure that the sector 'punched its weight' and was fully consulted by the Scottish Office as it drew up and implemented new policies. And perhaps this serves to illustrate that any commission is working with a changing environment, where the solutions favoured may not be those it proposes, even if the problems - in this case the low political salience of the sector - are broadly understood.

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Helping to highlight and build a consensus around the problems which need to be addressed is part of the work of any commission, and I think that, whatever tangible public policy outcomes may eventually follow, the commission did succeed in this. Of course, some organisations were critical that it did not highlight their particular concerns. One chapter in the report highlights the experiences and needs of black and ethnic minority organisations. Other parts of the sector told the commission that they felt short-changed for not being given similar attention. But perhaps that should be taken as a sign of success: better that, than a feeling of relief that their part of the sector had not been subjected to the commission's critical gaze. Perhaps too it should be pleased if, like the attempt to draft a bill for all non-governmental organisations in South Africa, it succeeds in generating timely public debate on the future of a sector which touches everyone's lives.

APPENDIX

The commission's members were: Arnold Kemp in the chair; John Anderson of the Wise Group; Ann Clark of the Highland Community Care Forum; Andrew Cubie of Fyfe Ireland; Martyn Evans of Citizens Advice Scotland; John Fairley of Robert Gordon University; Barbara Kelly of Rural Forum; Cathy McCormack of Easthall Residents Association; Des McNulty of City of Glasgow Council; Andrew Muirhead of the Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland; Dorothy Neoh of NCH Action for Children San Jai Chinese Project; and four MPs: Margaret Ewing; Phil Gallie; Archy Kirkwood and Rachel Squire. Stephen Maxwell attended for SCVO, and I worked as the commission's Secretary/researcher.

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