

Tailoring for Success

Why is **LISTENING** such an important part of tailoring good programme design?

When Access was first established in 2015, we designed our initial investment and capacity building programmes. We were able to benefit from the learning generated by programmes which preceded ours, but as time has gone on we have realised that the key to effective programme design is to listen to charities and social enterprises, and to align incentives around their needs.



This alignment of incentives can create multiple benefits:



Places power where it belongs: The Reach Fund seeks to align the interests of the charity or social enterprise, their prospective investor, and the support provider and in so doing give agency to the charity to shape their own support journey. In 2019 Grantees were asked “To what extent did you experience this control throughout the process?” Out of a scale from 1-5, the respondents scored 4.3.

In addition, the Local Access process evaluation found that the less directive/ prescriptive approach meant 90% of respondents felt empowered to shape their proposals around local needs & priorities.



Improves outcomes: Based on feedback from our one year pilot, in 2020 we worked to redesign our flagship Enterprise Development Programme to offer a more flexible and bespoke approach based around the individual needs of the organisations being supported.



Creates broader benefits: By building a blended finance programme based on the sector’s needs, the Growth Fund has enabled a systemic shift in how capital can flow to more deprived communities. This isn’t what we were solving for, but highlights the unique role blended finance can play in rebalancing the economy.



How can others build on these principles?

Listen to charities and social and social enterprises, and seek to understand they systems in which they are operating in order to design programmes that empower charities and social enterprises by aligning incentives and driving better value for money. You’ll be surprised by the benefits.