

## **Thomas Paine Initiative**

### **Promoting respect for human rights**

#### **Call for proposals: improving the impact of communications in addressing public attitudes towards human rights**

**November 12<sup>th</sup> 2012**

#### **1. Call for proposals**

The Thomas Paine Initiative (TPI) is seeking initial proposals from organisations interested in applying for funding to develop and implement activities to improve the impact of communications in addressing public attitudes towards human rights.

This call summarises the challenge that TPI wishes to address, sets out some of the activities we believe are necessary to do so and the application process.

#### **2. The Thomas Paine Initiative**

TPI is a collaborative fund<sup>1</sup> which aims to:

- Promote in the UK the fundamental values that underlie the European Convention on Human Rights
- Increase public support for and awareness of human rights
- Support research considering the potential options for changes in UK human rights legislation and regulation
- Support an increase in overall funding for human rights work in the UK

TPI will make grants to these ends via a series of calls for proposals.

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<sup>1</sup> TPI is collaboration between Atlantic Philanthropies, Barrow Cadbury, David and Elaine Potter Foundation, Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Trust, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Oak Foundation, Open Society Foundation and Unbound Philanthropy. It is administered by Global Dialogue, a Charity registered in England and Wales (Charity no: 1122052)

### **3. The Challenge this call seeks to address**

A negative climate regarding human rights, coupled with the historical inadequacy of resources available for strategic communications, has frustrated attempts by human rights advocates and others to promote a better understanding of the true scope of the obligations and liberties deriving from domestic and international human rights law. Public discourse is now placing not only the quality and scope of the UK's human rights legal protections and international reputation in jeopardy, it also appears to be undermining the willingness of some NGOs and regulatory bodies to employ human rights explicitly in their activities, fearful that such framing will damage rather than enhance the hearing given to particular issues, despite the very real threats to human rights faced by the constituencies they serve.

Significant sections of the population in different parts of the UK possess negative attitudes to human rights and human rights laws.<sup>2</sup> Where these attitudes are held they are often enmeshed with negative attitudes relating to other themes such as immigration, Europe, crime and welfare. In the wider population, even where attitudes are more positive, human rights are commonly seen as having gone 'too far' with strong associations between human rights, 'undeserving' minorities and 'abuse of the system'. A significant number simply view human rights law as having little relevance to their lives. Domestic media coverage of human rights, which significantly influences public opinion, is often negative and frequently inaccurate.

Despite this challenging situation, evidence suggests that significant segments of the population either possess strong positive attitudes towards human rights or have yet to form strong views in either direction.

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<sup>2</sup> Various published and unpublished public polling

#### 4. Call for proposals

TPI wishes to support an initiative or initiatives which aim specifically to identify, reach and demonstrably affect more supportive attitudes towards human rights among those audiences in the United Kingdom that have yet to form a strong opinion towards human rights.

TPI does not wish to prescribe how such a task might be approached and encourages and welcomes innovative proposals. Nevertheless, we wish to be confident that grants made under this funding stream will individually or collectively ensure that the following dimensions of the challenge as we see it are or have been addressed and will seek assurances that those applying for funding have the requisite understanding and competencies to address them:

**Audience insight** – a clear understanding of what target audiences feel and think about human rights and current human rights stories and issues; the narrative, frames and messages which are likely to engender more supportive feelings about human rights; who and what these audiences will listen to and how to reach them

**Narrative, frames and message development** – the on-going development and testing of value-based narratives, frames and messages aimed at fostering supportive attitudes towards human rights

**Engaging alternative advocates and trusted spokespeople** – channelling tested narratives, frames and messages via trusted, if sometimes atypical, spokespeople to ensure they reach intended audiences and are listened to

**Coordination & capacity building** – building the capacity of key NGO's to communicate human rights related stories and helping to facilitate the coordination of communications across key civil society and other actors to ensure consistency and quality of narratives, frames and messages

**Reaching audiences through traditional and social media** – establishing productive relationships with editors and journalists in the print and broadcast media; securing case studies; constructing press releases and ‘selling in’ stories; employing social media and use of viral campaign techniques

**Harnessing opportunities to effectively communicating the message:** using upcoming legal cases, reports and political developments to position key messages and provide or assist others in providing timely responses to events and stories in the media

## 5. **Who should apply?**

We are interested in hearing from established organisations which either have or wish to build capabilities and raise their game with respect to any or all of the above dimensions of strategic communications regarding human rights.

We are particularly keen to support partnership applications, especially where such partnerships clearly address gaps in expertise and knowledge, enhance coordination, bring on board new advocates, increase reach and the overall probability of impact. This includes partnerships within the voluntary and community sector and between the VCS and specialised communications agencies.

All activity funded by TPI will be required to measure impact and evaluate effectiveness and share learning and outputs with others, including NGO’s, public bodies and funders.

We will consider match funding other donors who are not presently part of TPI or public bodies where legally and technically feasible.

We will not through this call fund the following:

- Start-up organisations

- Projects which do not address the challenge set out in this call
- Projects of a wholly local nature with no wider policy relevance

## 6. Duration of grants

Grants will support activities over a period of up to two years (2013-14)

## 7. Size of grants

TPI proposes to allocate a total of £300,000 towards this call, depending on the quality of proposals received. We anticipate funding a number of proposals and therefore welcome and encourage proposals with budgets of various sizes.

## 8. Application process & timetable (precise dates will be confirmed in due course)

<b>Stage one</b>	Initial proposals	To be submitted by 12 <sup>th</sup> December 2012
<b>Stage two</b>	Invitation to submit a full application	January 2012
<b>Stage three</b>	Full application	February 2013
<b>Stage Four</b>	Grant(s) awarded	March 2013

## 9. Initial proposals

Referencing back to the focus of this call for proposals as set out above, you should submit an initial proposal of no more than 1200 words:

- Briefly explain why you believe public opinion towards human rights to be negative and what you consider to be the successes, gaps or weaknesses of previous efforts to address public attitudes towards human rights

- The impact you intend to have and how this will be measured and demonstrated
- The approach and activities that are proposed to achieve this impact & why you believe these will be successful. Please include reference to any learning or methodologies you propose to employ
- The skills, knowledge and experience of individuals and organisations that will be committed to the funded activity and why they are suitable. Please also advise here whether you intend to commission work from third parties and if so describe the support which will be commissioned.
- Any challenges foreseen and how they will be addressed

Please also attach a headline budget, itemising key expenditure (this is in addition to your 1200 word proposal)

Initial proposals should be emailed to Neil Crowther, Director of the Thomas Paine Initiative by midday on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2012  
[neil@global-dialogue.eu](mailto:neil@global-dialogue.eu)

If you would like to discuss your ideas in advance of submitting a proposal, please do not hesitate to get in touch.