

# The Seeds of Social Change: An Introduction to the Impact of the Stephen Lloyd Awards



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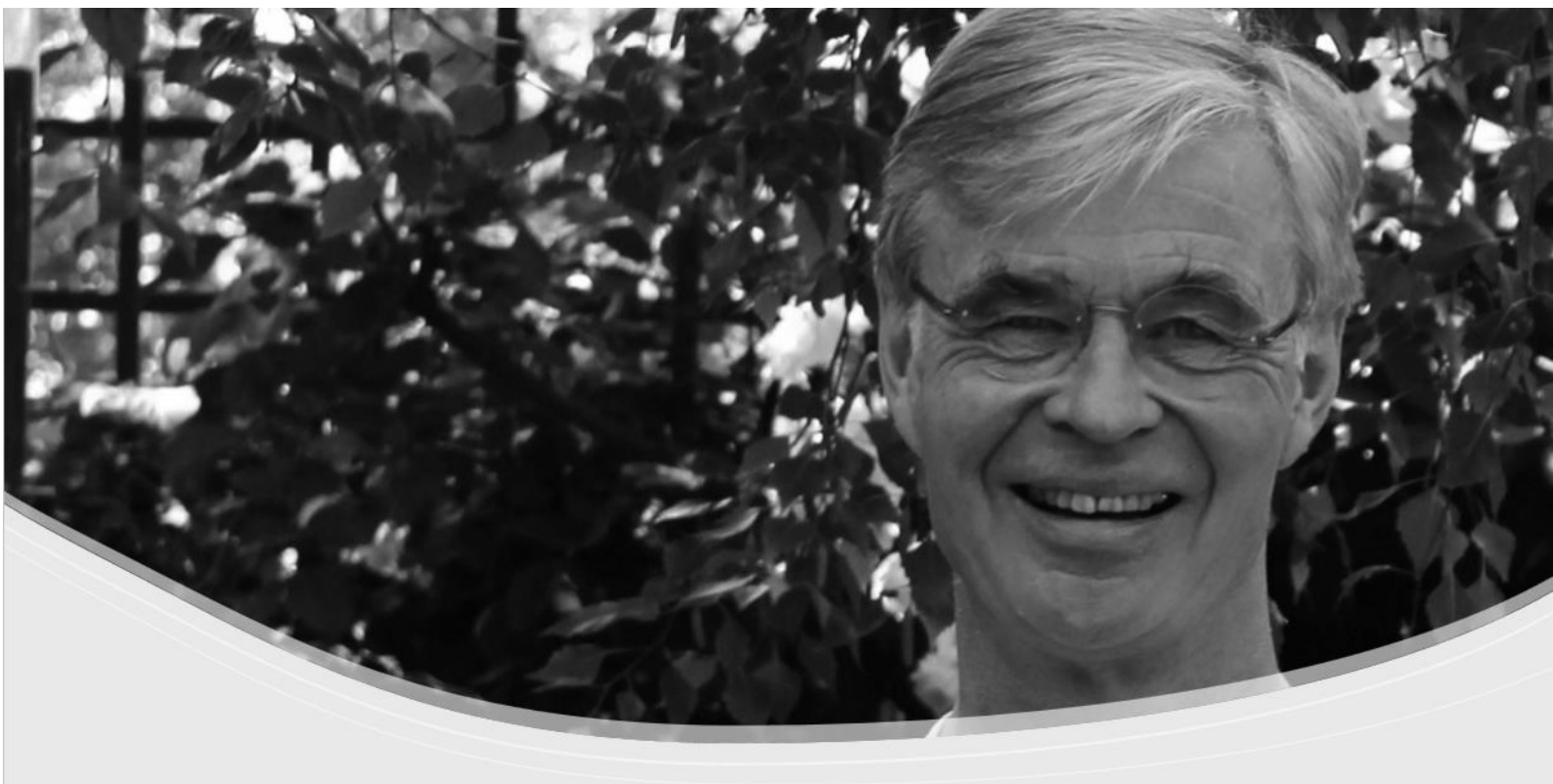
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**STEPHEN  
LLOYD  
AWARDS**



## About the Stephen Lloyd Awards

*The world is full of people wanting to help others...with brilliant ideas and ways of making change happen.  
Yet too many of these innovators lack support.*



Stephen was a former Senior Partner of Bates Wells Braithwaite and a much-loved veteran of the UK charity sector. Stimulated by the ideas and drive of Stephen's friends, colleagues and other connections from the charity and social enterprise sector, the Bates Wells Foundation established the Stephen Lloyd Awards Programme ("SLA" or "the Awards") in 2015 in honour of Stephen's remarkable career and commitment to the sector he loved.

The Awards support novel, early-stage ideas that address social and environmental challenges at a systemic level. Recognising the dearth in early-stage funding, these are essentially 'big ideas' that might not, or cannot, reach the mainstream channels for support or funding. The Awards have been committed to identifying and nurturing transformative ideas that challenge conventional approaches to systemic challenges.

Stephen enjoyed challenging the boundaries of what was possible, and this approach is very much reflected in the values of the SLA. One of the distinguishing features of the Awards is the openness to supporting ideas in many forms and the willingness to back an idea on one sheet of paper and not to require initial success before support is provided

Now 10 years on with a large network of enthusiastic, knowledgeable and convivial supporters and alumni, the SLA has developed its own identity whilst remaining true to the legacy and inspiration of Stephen Lloyd.

In the last 10 years there have been:

- 873 applicants
- 87 finalists
- 23 winners of which 21 are still active
- £490,000 awarded to winning projects
- £183,500 awarded to finalists

In 2024 the Trustees of the Bates Wells Foundation commissioned an evaluation of the Awards to assess how effectively they support early-stage change innovators through funding and access to professional advice and support.

This report summarises the key findings of the evaluation, including an assessment of the SLA programme model and application process, the effectiveness of the partner network and outlines the theory of change.

A full copy of the research report is available at: <https://www.stephenlloydawards.org/about/>

## The SLA Programme Model

### The SLA Application Process

The Awards are open to a diverse range of applicants, from single individuals with big ideas to grassroots community projects and more structured organisational programmes. The common thread is that they are all early-stage ideas, hard to fund by conventional means, and which challenge what is thought possible. This inclusivity ensures all innovative ideas for positive social change are valued and considered. However, it also requires a carefully designed application process and a diverse, dedicated team of assessors, which is outlined in the diagram below.



#### APPLICATION STAGE

- Applications open to start-up entrepreneurs and existing projects
- Applicants complete a straightforward form consisting of 4 key questions
- Each application is reviewed by 5 members of a diverse pool of scorers
- Scores are moderated to ensure consistency and fairness

#### INTERVIEW STAGE

- 20 applicants are selected for panel interviews based on application scores
- Preparation call between applicant & SLA program manager
- Panel interviews conducted online (members have diverse backgrounds and expertise)
- Panel Chair reads from a script designed to put the interviewee at ease

#### DEVELOPMENT STAGE

- 10 applicants shortlisted for finales event
- Each finalist receives an initial grant of £2500 to use as needed
- Finalists attend presentation training with professional coaches
- Finalists further develop idea/project with supporter feedback and advice

#### FINALES

- Hosted in-person at Bates Wells office
- Attended by members of the SLA supporter network
- Finalists pitch their ideas in a marketplace event in a bid to win supporter votes
- Q&A sessions put finalists into direct contact with SLA network members
- Supporters place their votes and the winner is announced

The application process stands out for its clarity, inclusivity, and accessibility. It effectively balances the need for detailed information with an approachable format supported by a diverse panel of assessors to ensure fairness and incorporate a wide range of experience. The Awards night provides a platform for shortlisted applicants to showcase their projects and connect with members of the SLA supporter network. The “marketplace” design requires applicants to pitch their ideas, use influencing skills, and demonstrate their entrepreneurial abilities.

The SLAs have fostered a caring and compassionate environment that offers emotional support, validation and professional growth opportunities. This holistic approach has significantly boosted the confidence and morale of award recipients, helping to mitigate feelings of isolation often experienced by social entrepreneurs.

The community spirit of these awards reflects many of the best funding practices championed by the Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR), a respected industry body for the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors. Recognising the power imbalances inherent in the funding process, the SLAs model promotes open, flexible, trust-based and transparent practices. It builds a culture of mutual trust and respect, values the applicant's time and expertise, and approaches risk in a realistic manner.

## The SLA Supporter Network

Emerging social entrepreneurs and early-stage projects need more than just financial resources to survive and thrive. They also require capacity-building support, technical assistance, growth opportunities, and the backing of a strong allies. The SLAs recognise that a key challenge for innovative, early-stage organisations is the cost of accessing professional advice.

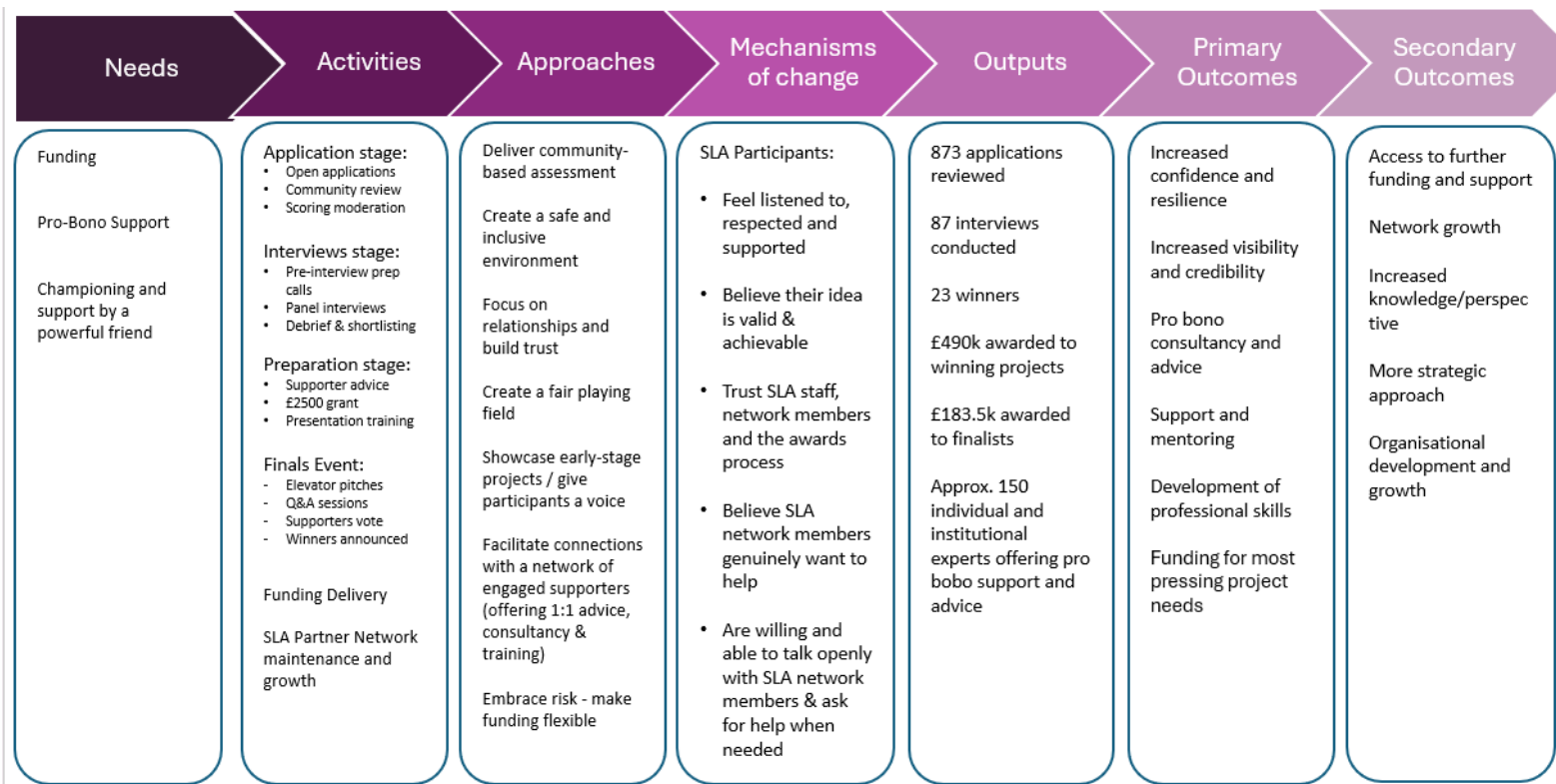
To address this, the SLAs bring together a network of experts who provide practical, free support to all finalist candidates. The programme has fostered a vibrant community of change-makers, offering recipients unparalleled access to a network of over 100 experts who provide pro bono support in the form of legal, financial and strategic advice, as well as mentorship. This support is flexible and can be utilised as needed, aligning with the organisation's timeline and requirements instead of imposing a fixed schedule. The ability to access this support at any stage of development further enhances its value.

This network has provided invaluable support beyond the initial funding, contributing significantly to the growth and sustainability of grantees' projects. Network members are involved at every stage of the programme, from reviewing and scoring initial applications to participating in the vote to select the winners on the Awards night.



# Theory of Change: How the SLA Delivers Impact

The Theory of Change diagram below brings together all aspects of the SLA programme model and ethos to explain how the SLA enables and empowers innovative, early-stage projects and to deliver sustainable social and environmental impact.



## KEY FINDINGS - Evaluation of the Impact of the Stephen Lloyd Awards

Key themes were identified that illustrate the SLA's strengths in fostering innovation and community while highlighting areas for improvement.

These are:



### SLA CULTURE & GRANT PROCESS

The SLA's programme model is designed to be both accessible and rigorous, balancing the need for sufficient information for decision-making with an inclusive, low-burden application experience. This approach creates a supportive and transparent environment for applicants, fostering a strong sense of community and trust among participants. Efforts to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusivity (DEI) are ongoing, with improvements in the diversity of assessors and a commitment to continuously refining practices.



### CONTRIBUTION TO GRANTEE SUCCESS

The SLA's flexible, trust-based funding model empowers recipients by providing unrestricted grants that enable them to use funds as they see fit, contributing to organisational growth and sustainability. Awardees benefit greatly from access to a robust network of pro bono experts offering tailored support in legal, financial, and strategic areas, enhancing their projects' credibility and visibility. Additionally, the Awards offer crucial intangible benefits, such as emotional support and professional development, which help participants build confidence, refine skills, and expand their networks, often leading to further funding and opportunities.

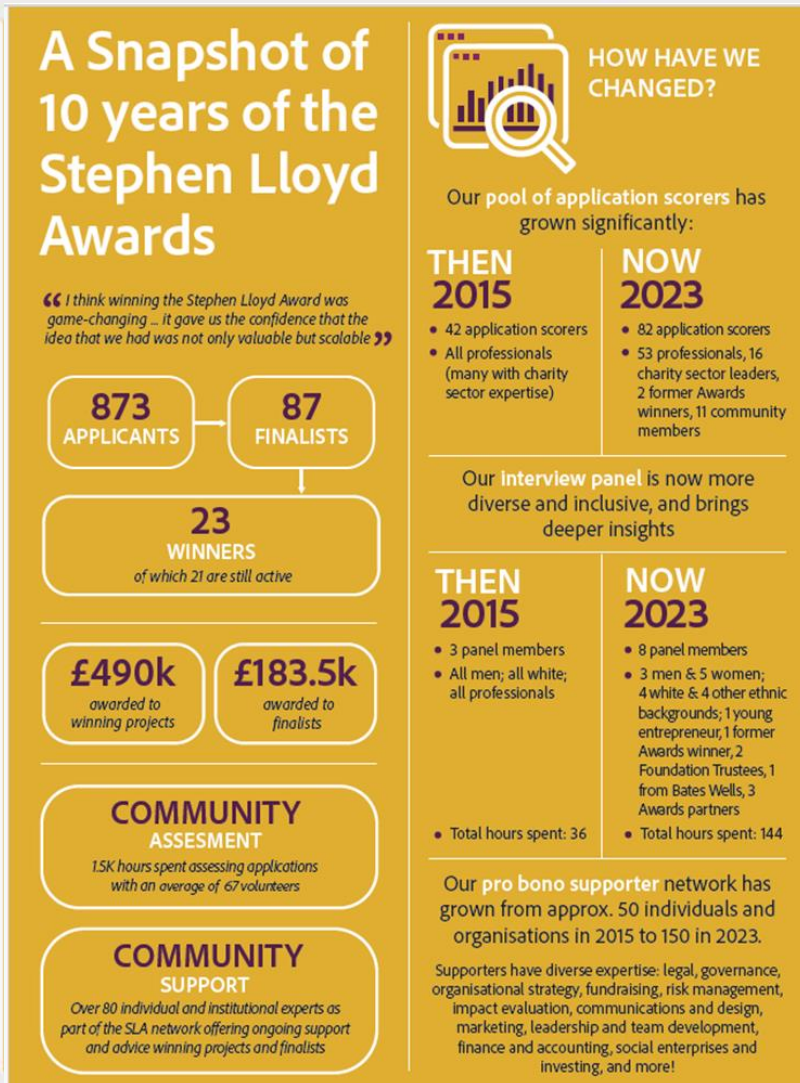


## Further Information

The evaluation of the SLAs' impact concluded that the Awards have carved out a unique and meaningful niche in the philanthropic landscape by embracing flexibility, trust, community, and continuous learning. Analysis of the survey results and interviews—detailed in the full evaluation [report](#)—demonstrated the significant value of the SLA. By building on these strengths and addressing the identified areas for improvement, the SLAs can further enhance their support for early-stage social innovators and inspire other funders to adopt more inclusive and adaptive funding models. The SLAs are committed to expanding their network of supporters and partners. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Mona Rahman at [info@stephenlloydawards.org](mailto:info@stephenlloydawards.org)

## Decade of Impact, in a Snapshot

An Impact Snapshot summary was presented to 2024 Awards Evening guests as an infographic handout, illustrating the impact of the Awards over a decade. It offers an overview of the key statistics, themes and patterns emerging from the interviews conducted with the cohort of finalists and winners. Read the Impact Snapshot [here](#). The full evaluation report can be found at - <https://www.stephenlloydawards.org/about/>



## Celebrating Ten Years of Changemakers – A Short Film

To mark the Award's tenth year in 2024, a short 5-minute film was produced looking back on the journeys of Award winners over a decade, and the impact of the relationships formed from the wider Awards supporting network. The film features Award winners [Go-Forward Youth](#), [Street Storage](#) and [Real Ice](#). Special thanks to [Media Trust](#) for producing and Toby Bull for directing the film, Kevin Amponsah and Philip Kirkpatrick for their contributions to the film, and to Bates Wells for financing the film. The film can be viewed [here](#).

