



Impact Report

2023



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Introduction

2023 was the second year of our strategy that focuses on:

- **Challenging the consequences of inequality**

Addressing the consequences of poverty and inequality.

- **Championing leaders to become more impactful**

Developing and strengthening our leadership programmes.

- **Connecting through networks, partnerships and collaboration**

To promote stronger collaboration and partnerships, across the Rank Network and beyond.

- **Christian faith.**

Convening conversations around the values, traditions and practices of the Christian faith.

In total during 2023 we distributed over £11m which includes commitments from prior years. The £11m comprises of £8.3m from Rank funds and £2.7m received from other funders. Our work is across the UK, broadly covered in the following grants programmes:

→ Community

£4.0M

17 Major New Grants (£1.3m), Cost of Living Grants (£1.44m), Place-based Programmes (£919k), RankNet activities (£73k), Pebbles (£308k)

→ Leadership

£4.3M

Including Time to Shine (£1.4m), Rank Aspire Programme (£377k), Start Here (£2.2m) and School Leadership Programme (£288k)

→ Enterprise

£1.2M

Including Profit for Good (£293k), Education Recovery Fund (£117k) and Repayable Grants (£815k)

→ Faith

£1.3M

CTVC (£1.3m)



Our response to the cost-of-living crisis

As a result of the social sector experiencing significantly increased pressures during 2022, in January 2023, we surveyed the Rank Network to understand the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on their work. More than 360 people told us about their experience of the cost-of-living crisis, which combines:

- **Increased demand**

57% of members told us that demand had increased 'more than ever before' or 'a large amount' in January 2023, rising from 52% in October 2022.

- **Increased costs**

24% of members told us running costs had increased 'more than ever' in January 2023.

- **A more challenging fundraising environment**

70% of respondents told us fundraising has become more challenging in January 2023.

In response, we designed two grant programmes and awarded funds to 130 Network members totalling almost £1.5m using a mutual trust-based model of grant-making. The grants programmes were designed in consultation with the Network and included:

- **smaller grants** for lower cost, necessary purchases such as volunteer expenses, fuel, food and equipment.
- **larger contributions** to those experiencing steep increases in utility bills, pressure on salaries, and replacing other funding to enable vital services to continue.



The trust-based approach – whereby Rank Network members only applied for funding that was critical to the continuation of services – meant the success rate was high, with a relatively quick turnaround in grants payments.

While the not-for-profit landscape remains challenging, recipients told us the grants provided "a sense of security" and helped to "cover shortfalls" in funding from other sources.

We continue to monitor the ongoing challenge many are facing, with a focus on:

- Rising costs coupled with increased demand.
- Competition for funding among charities.
- Reduced or scarcity of funding from statutory sources
- Covering core costs.
- Staff retention and sickness.



Due to the increasingly challenging investment environment, the Board decided to decrease our spend by £2.5m over the remaining two years of our strategy.

We continued to upgrade the **Salesforce database**, and our ability to make better use of this in future, and launched a new **mobile RankNet** platform that connects over 1,000 Network members. Both will help us harness the knowledge, passion and experience of our unique member-led Network.

Meanwhile **Garden Walk** has become as a central pillar of our giving: filling around 41% of our desk spaces creating a vibrant working space for the social sector, and providing a home – not just for us, but for our flourishing Network.

Strategy objectives and achievements

Rebranding

In early 2023 we embarked on a rebrand project that aimed to capture 70 years of Foundation heritage, the spirit of the Network, and Rank's purpose and priorities.



We established a steering group that included the voices and views of the trustees, staff team and representatives from the Network. Communications consultants and designers guided us through the process to create a refreshed brand. Our new brand focuses on the power of the Network, and our role as both convenor and collaborator.

Our thriving Network tackles inequality to improve life in the communities they cherish.

The new brand was launched at the annual conference, in October 2023 – and we will continue to build on sharing our purpose through the pillars of **community, leadership, enterprise and faith**.



Community

The Rank Foundation's broad, diverse and vibrant community encompasses the entrepreneurialism and leadership of our founder, Lord Rank. Our relational approach to philanthropy helps us understand the needs of the community and how best to support a thriving social sector.

The Foundation unites this community in two ways:

- **in person:** through Networking events, residential programmes, leadership talks and training events
- **online:** through its digital platform, RankNet

Where resources permit, we unite funding, social capital, knowledge and Networks in one place.

Here's how our community projects performed during 2023.

Garden Walk coworking space

The creation of the coworking space in Garden Walk, Shoreditch, has enabled us to welcome social sector organisations to share space, knowledge and support in a safe and vibrant environment. Garden Walk is part of our strategy to transform the Rank network from good to great.



During spring 2023, we worked with external legal and health and safety consultants to create compliant coworking space policies and terms and conditions. We introduced a new booking system and created pricing and membership packages with the social sector in mind.

We welcomed our first tenants in summer 2023. In the autumn, we were joined by four more charities.

We provided meeting space throughout the year to both the Rank Prize Fund and social sector members as part of our giving, collaborative work and programme delivery.

In January 2024, we welcomed an additional two charities.

Garden Walk is going from strength to strength and new collaborative partnerships are being formed among the charities who work there.

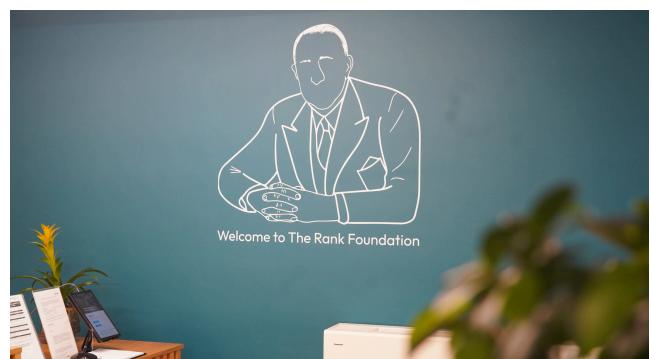


*Tenants of Garden Walk coworking space.

Our goals for Garden Walk

In February 2024, we reached our occupancy target of 65%. We aim to exceed this target for 2024, and have offers planned to attract new tenants – particular on Mondays and Fridays, which tend to be quiet due to hybrid working.

Positive feedback from a recent user survey highlighted the need for more meeting room space/phone booths and events on site. We've developed a programme of events to address this, and will also create more meeting space during 2024.



RankNet digital hub

In 2022 the Board of Trustees approved a bold new strategy for RankNet with a clear mission: to transform RankNet from good to great. The members' digital hub was created in 2006 with modest resources and a hunch it could act as a catalyst for connection and collaboration.

The digital hub was completely rebuilt during 2023 by platform developers, Hivebrite. A freelance digital consultant supported the technical aspects of the build, and we worked with members of the RankNet community around design, features and accessibility.

The new RankNet digital hub app was launched in June 2023. We anticipated a resulting drop in users of around 40% as members were required to reactivate their membership on the new digital hub. We dropped just 20%, and around 950 members reactivated. We also welcomed new members from the Northern Ireland Start Here programme, meaning memberships are now level with 2022 figures. Encouragingly, the rate of reactivation demonstrates a much higher level of engagement than expected.

Usage data

→ Membership	1,098
→ Average monthly users	489 (November to January)
→ Average monthly visits	5,000 (November to January)

App downloads

→ iOS	233
→ Android	93
→ Total	326

Most popular pages

→ Home	15,000 views
→ Connect	808
→ Profile	783
→ Search	734
→ Groups	699

What people are saying

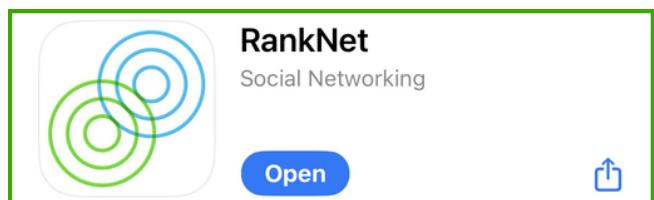
“A place to celebrate and reflect on learning which generates further discussion and can lead to sharing good practice and further learning.”

“Connection across the third sector. Through RankNet I was able to connect with another charity in Northern Ireland and through the bursary was able to arrange a visit to learn and share practice.”

“The app makes it easy to keep track of what's happening and being said by members.”

“It's easy to access, I can find the information I need, and I can easily follow up on things that interest me. The new app is good for being able to access info and keep up to date.”

“It's a community for the community.”



Our goals for RankNet digital hub

We will continue to build engagement during 2024 through the development of a theory of change and RankNet engagement strategy. We will add a mentoring section to the app, enabling experienced leaders to volunteer their time mentoring emerging sector leaders. RankNet members will be key to the success of the innovation.

Rank Leaders Action Group (RLAG)

The Foundation is supported by **RLAG** – a planning group consisting of 16 to 20 Rank Network social sector leaders, Rank staff, executives and trustees. Elected members represent Rank's wide geographical and thematic focus.

The group meets quarterly to share knowledge, build connections and exercise leadership through active participation. Members are on a three-year rotation, and we advertised for new representatives in 2023. We received 27 applications for five places, which demonstrated a good level of interest and engagement from the Network.

The group met four times in 2023 and played an important part in the planning and delivery of both our annual conference and development of the RankNet digital hub. The group also attended a meeting hosted at the Welsh Senedd, which gave members a chance to attend First Minister's Questions. The RankNet Leaders Action Group continues to be a source of support, expertise, challenge and inspiration to the Rank executives.



Rank Fellowship

2023 saw several changes in the **Fellowship**. Lindsey Clay stood down as chair after seven years in post. Lindsey was central to many initiatives, including:

- 2018's 15th anniversary celebrations
- The development of events such as Learning Through Leadership, Fellowship Futures and Welcome to the Fellowship
- The instigation of class reunions on Zoom
- The development of regular newsletters
- Re-structuring the Fellows Leadership Team

Several of these initiatives continued during 2023. Rose Fitzpatrick – Foundation Trustee and member of the Fellows Leadership Team – gave an excellent presentation on leadership in the police force, while several online class reunions enabled Fellows from the first decade of the 21st century to re-establish their links with the Foundation.

In December, with a new Chair, the new Fellows Leadership Team began its focus on **inspiration**, **community** and **support**. The launch of a new pilot mentoring scheme was a significant innovation in the latter category. This popular scheme formalises the support that's previously been offered to Fellows on an ad hoc basis – and initial feedback from both mentors and mentees has been positive.



***Louisa Searle, Chair of the Fellowship**



The Rank Foundation annual conference

The 2023 Rank Foundation annual conference took place at the Queens Hotel in Leeds, with a focus on **The Power of the Collective**.

The conference – which was largely delivered by Network members – brought to life passions, interests and concerns relating to poverty, lived experience, imposter syndrome, leadership, enterprise and place.

We heard from inspirational keynote speakers, Liz Weaver, from Canada's Tamarack Institute, and Dame Julia Cleverdon, both of whom spoke passionately about the need for collective effort to combat poverty.



***Dame Julia Cleverdon, Keynote Speaker**

2023's conference attracted 290 in-person delegates and 65 online attendees – 99% of which rated the event as 'good' to 'excellent'. All aspects of the conference scored highly – including the seminars, speakers and Networking opportunities.

Our goals for the Rank Foundation annual conference

A seminar focused on faith was requested for 2024, along with more time to enjoy the Networking and marketspace.

What people are saying

"A fantastic, inspiring, purposeful conference set in a lovely venue. I returned home full of enthusiasm and inspiration to continue trying to make a positive difference in my community. Perfect!"

"One of the best conferences I've attended. Very interesting and inspiring how Rank Foundation is proactive and gets fully involved in communities, rather than just reactively 'writing cheques'."

Training and events

In addition to the conference, we organised eight learning events for Rank Network members in 2023. Themes and topics suggested by Network members included:

- Creating fast and free video content (25 places)
- Writing successful funding bids (22 places)
- Building a career on strengths (25 places)
- Improving your job prospects (25 places)
- Developing an online media strategy (50 places)
- Developing more self-awareness (25 places)
- Marketing in the charity sector (30 places)
- Tamarack Institute: Turf, trust and collaboration (40 places)

Building on the suicide prevention training delivered in 2022 – and in response to requests for more training on mental health and wellbeing – we offered an in-person Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) course for Network members.

What people are saying

"A really thought-provoking session. I'll be putting learnings into practice immediately."

Turf, Trust and Collaboration

"This session was incredibly helpful. I will be putting the methods learnt into action and spending more time thinking about my prep and practising scenarios."

Improving your Job Prospects

"Thank you for this session – it has given me a lot to think about. Really informative and helpful when planning content."

Developing an Online Media Strategy



Our goals for training and events

More in-person events are planned for 2024, with MHFA and suicide prevention as central themes.

Pushing Boundaries

In 2023 we opened applications for **Pushing Boundaries** – a new leadership programme designed for emerging leaders working in social sector organisations, who want to build their skills, confidence and leadership acumen.

Rank Foundation agreed to fund both the pilot programme and background support, with Network members taking the lead on design and delivery. We shortlisted 10 Rank Network members from 33 applications, and the programme launched in January 2024.

Bursary support for Rank Network members

RankNet members can apply for up to £1,000 of bursary funding to support their professional development. In 2023 we approved 77 out of 89 grant applications with an average request of £471. Applications related to skills-based training ranging from leadership development and counselling to coaching, fundraising and finance skills.

Plymouth place-based programme

Now in the fifth year of funding, our **Plymouth place-based programme** continues to go from strength to strength. With a focus on combating loneliness and social isolation, the Plymouth Network includes around 50 organisations, and provides the foundation for the participatory grant making (PGM) programme.



The first 13 two-year projects launched in March 2022. Recognising the programme's significant contribution to keeping beneficiaries healthy, Livewell Southwest – the City's integrated health and social care provider – added £500,000 to Rank's £1M investment. This additional funding enabled the creation of another 13 two-year projects, which have driven 400,000+ individual attendances at activities.

What people are saying

“Volunteering for PDREC (Plymouth Devon Race Equality Council) has had a huge, positive, impact on my mental health and wellbeing. Instead of feeling lost, I now feel motivated to learn new skills and knowledge.”

“It has helped me come to terms with not having a wife; not staying in, and meeting people who have been in the same situation. It really has helped me a lot. It has been amazing as it has helped me help other people.”

Repayable grants programme



The well-established repayable grants programme continues to support local social enterprises and community businesses in Plymouth, giving them the confidence to seek and repay investment as part of building sustainable futures in changing and challenging times.

As well as supporting individual recipients, the scheme has established a revolving fund aimed at ensuring an ongoing legacy for Rank's investment beyond 2025. So far, around £380,000 has been granted to five organisations, from an initial funding pot of £220K.

What people are saying

“The repayable grant was incredibly important in leveraging other investment for the project.”

Trevi

“The trust we've been shown is very important. This repayable grant encourages us to keep developing our social enterprise model.”

Pollenize CIC

Leadership

The second of Rank's four pillars – and central to our strategy – is leadership. Our approach includes identifying leaders in community and voluntary organisations and supporting them through core and project funding, as well as creating and delivering leadership programmes, funded by Rank and other partners.

In 2023 we delivered four leadership programmes:

- **Start Here (Northern Ireland)**
- **Time to Shine**
- **Rank Aspire Programme (RAP)**
- **School Leadership Programme**

Start Here (Northern Ireland)

The **Start Here** programme moved into its second year in March 2023 and is already having a positive impact. The three-year leadership and skills programme is funded by the Department for Communities NI and delivered by the Rank team for the VCSE and sports sectors.

In 2022, we recruited a programme manager and trained freelance facilitators to support the delivery of the programme across Northern Ireland. The programme is now investing in over 100 new jobs to support capacity building within the sector.



In 2023, we delivered six in-person programmes for post-holders during May and October. Each was attended by around 25 post-holders, and covered issues such as speaking with confidence, leadership styles, growth mindset and Networking.

Attendees also had the chance to attend six action learning set sessions throughout the year, where they met with a smaller cohort of post-holders to explore leadership and learning opportunities.

We formally welcomed all Start Here managers to the Rank Network through manager Networking sessions and field executive project visits, and commissioned an evaluation partner – Rose Regeneration – that will build an evidence base around the programme's short, medium and long-term impact. Finally, we were delighted to welcome 19 members of the Start Here programme to our 2023 annual conference in Leeds.

What people are saying

“Having previously spent time in custody, I was amazed at the opportunity given to me to work for my organisation with thanks to The Rank Foundation. I love my job so much and feel really grateful for this opportunity!”

“I really enjoyed connecting with others and came away with some good friendships. It has enabled me to re-train – something not possible after Covid due to finances and lack of opportunities. I wouldn't be where I am today without the support and opportunity I received through the Start Here programme. The workshops, action learning sets and residential helped me grow in confidence, gave opportunities to Network with others and develop my skillsets.”

“I really enjoyed my journey with the Start Here programme, especially as I recently moved to Belfast. The programme helped me set roots within a new city, as well as giving me with the chance to Network with the third sector across Northern Ireland. It helped my confidence and enhanced my knowledge and understanding of the communities, which is crucial in a divided city. Start Here gave me a direction and a strong foundation from which to fly.”

Time to Shine leadership programme

Time to Shine (T2S) is a flagship leadership programme with two aims:

- Building expertise and capacity within the social sector
- Attracting and retaining talent – particularly those who are underemployed.

The programme funds purposeful full-time roles within the sector (paid at real living wage) and invests in leadership development.

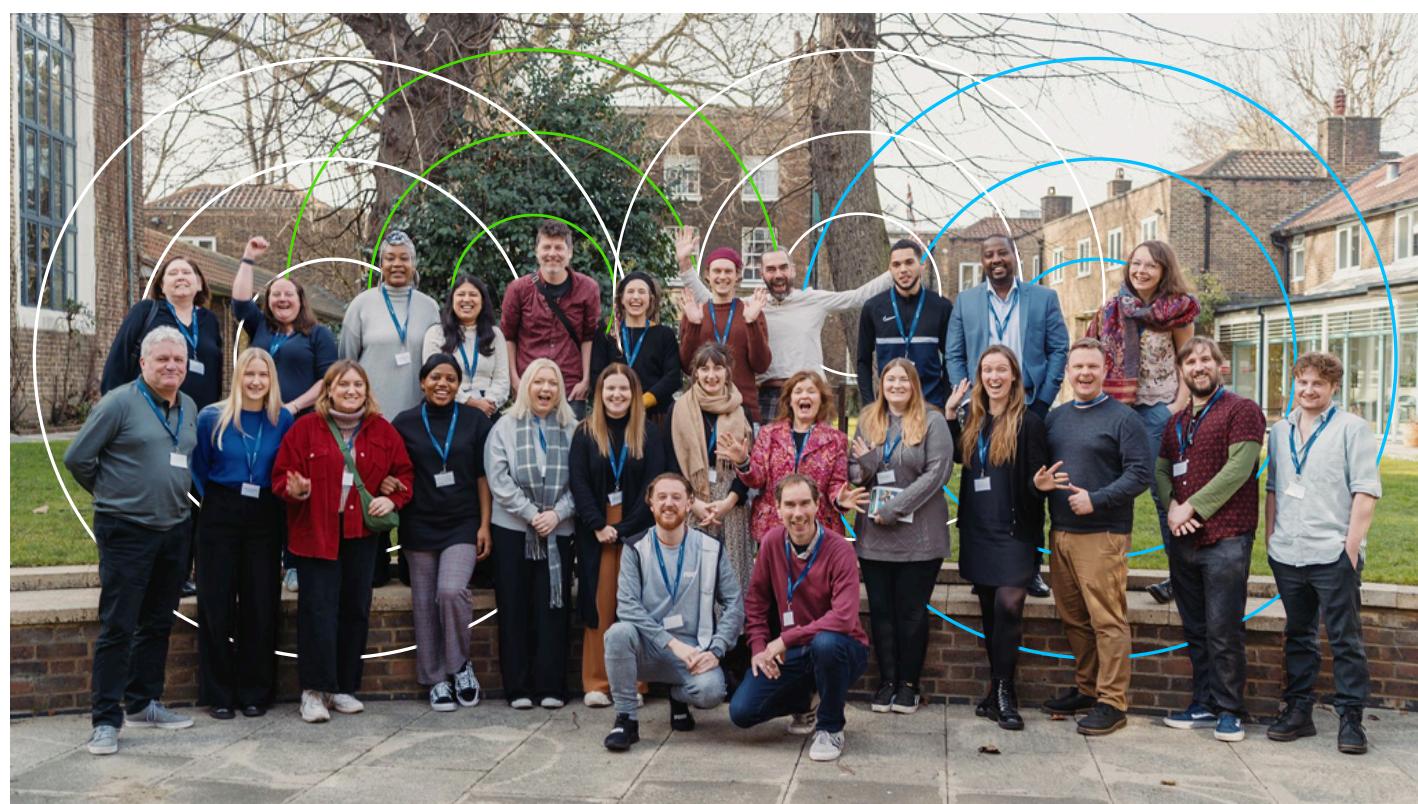
Time to Shine works with charities and social enterprises to identify a clear organisational need. The charity can then apply for a grant to employ a full-time Time to Shine leader for 12 months. The T2S leader also participates in a leadership programme delivered by the Rank Foundation that connects them with Time to Shine peers across the UK. The T2S leadership programme includes conferences, action learning sets and learning and development opportunities, with a strong focus on personal development and building organisational capacity and capability.

In 2023, we welcomed 56 leaders and organisations onto the programme. While data from our 2023 participants will take time to collate and review, we already know that 71% have secured – or are looking to secure – employment within the social sector. Of these, 43% retained employment at their host organisation.

What people are saying

“This journey has been a confidence booster, amplifying my skills significantly. As a result, I've proudly secured a permanent position at my organisation. This experience has not only honed my expertise but also provided a solid foundation for my ongoing professional journey with a new and exciting opportunity.”

“Finding employment as an autistic person is notoriously challenging. I was incredibly grateful to be offered this unique opportunity with T2S. It helped catapult me into purposeful and meaningful employment, where I gained amazing experience, independence and a sense of personal responsibility.”



Rank Aspire programme

The **Rank Aspire** programme (RAP) increases young people's social mobility by supporting access to training and employment opportunities in the social sector and beyond – with a long-term aim of increasing the potential for future employment and success.

The programme offers young leaders – aged 18 to 25 – a 12-month, living wage work placement on a Rank Foundation project, plus a training bursary of £1,200. The Rank team meets with the leaders three times a year on residential-based programmes.

Rank partner organisations are key to the success of the RAP programme's ambitions. By creating the conditions for growth through perceived setbacks, knocks and systemic failures, the host organisations and managers are equally invested in the young person's progression. Many of the young people who've taken part in RAP have gone on to paid work opportunities or full-time education.

Wage progression is one of the toughest barriers for young people to overcome. True social mobility requires longer-term solutions. This is not an internship, providing focused work experience for those with qualifications and clear ambitions. This is a chance for disadvantaged young people to begin to level the playing field. However much we invest in them, they will need to pedal hard to compete with those with the privilege of education, family support, health and permanence.

In 2023 we welcomed 15 new RAP leaders to the programme across the UK. Five of these are based in Scotland and are co-funded by Catalyst for Impact – a partnership that enables us to pilot a second year of funding at 50% if the host organisation can provide match funding.

Three Dundee-based leaders completed the programme in 2023 – two of whom were retained by their organisations as part of the second year pilot, while the third continues to be supported through his participation on a full-time college course.

We will evaluate the impact of two years of RAP funding in 2024/25 to give us a benchmark from which we can explore future opportunities.

What people are saying

"Through being involved with Rank I've taken more of a leadership role within my youth centre. I've facilitated my own groups such as young men's mental health, leadership, cross community and more. I've also become a leader on the Romania project where I was involved in facilitating weekly group sessions on subjects such as disability awareness, homeless awareness, personal development and leadership."

RAP leader

"The programme is a fantastic opportunity. The residencies and events are a great way to meet other young leaders and to grow your confidence to travel to new places independently. You learn so much from being embedded in an organisation for a whole year with a guaranteed salary."

The programme provides huge growth for participants. The support offered by the Rank team – especially on the residencies – helps RAP leaders grow in confidence as well as skills. The potential we saw in our young leader before this programme has been uncapped and we're excited to retain her post into the new year."

RAP Manager



School Leadership Programme

During 2023, the [School Leadership Award](#) programme supported 67 sixth formers from independent, state maintained, academy and free schools across the UK.

September 2023 saw 24 new students (the class of 2023) replace the smaller class of 2021 (18 students).

Of the 60 schools now taking part in School Leadership Programme, 40% are from outside the independent sector (including most of the 13 schools that joined the scheme this year) addressing an historical imbalance from the era of supporting independent schools only.

Our students from the independent sector are all recipients of means-tested bursary funding (the majority at a high level) while most of their state school peers are eligible for free school meals or pupil premium funding. We continue to value the rich diversity of schools within the scheme, which allows fruitful collaboration across the sectors.

2023 saw the implementation of several planned innovations and changes.



Community Action Placements (CAP)

[Community Action Placements](#) enable award holders working with Foundation charities and groups to find placements for students each year, rather than expecting them to find their own placements in year 13.

This success of CAP relies on the support of Network members, including:

- Greenhill YMCA in Newcastle, County Down
- Essex Boys and Girls Club through their summer camps at Maes-y-Lade, South Wales
- The Hexham Youth initiative
- LOROS in Leicester
- People and Work in the Rhondda Valley
- Ykids in Bootle

Able2B, Norwich

One of two new placements, Norwich-based, provided an excellent opportunity for four members of the group who were interested in medical studies – at least one of whom credits her time at Able2B as playing a major part in her subsequent successful UCAS application.



Dundee Place-Based Programme

The second placement, [Dundee place-based programme](#) supported five members of the class of 2021 who had expressed an interest in studying medicine. They spent a week in student accommodation at Abertay University, while working with charities that are part of Rank's place-based work in the city.

The week gave participants the chance to develop their leadership skills – as well as giving them an insight into life at university before they moved into higher education.

The team also found non-residential placements for students for whom a residential stay was impossible. For example, the placement with the Gloucestershire Community Rail Group, which saw another potential medical student working on a project based on social prescribing around rail travel.



Rank Foundation leadership event

In September 2023, we replaced our one-day leadership event with a two-day meeting – providing a greater opportunity to focus on our leadership and more time for students to get to know one another.

The leadership event, held in London was opened by one of the Rank trustees, who talked about his part in establishing his charity. The talk proved to be the perfect inspiration for the event's theme: creating a social enterprise.

Students then worked in small groups to design a social enterprise of their own, exploring the challenges they might face and how best to overcome them.

A session on presentation skills helped with preparation for the final task, in which students delivered their proposals to a panel of judges in a Dragons' Den format. We also had time to squeeze in a session on the moral choices of leadership.

What people are saying

Students appreciated the event, as summed up by this feedback:

“It was great as it allowed us to properly explore the activity while bonding with others.”

Further work on leadership took place in our half-termly online meetings, which provide space for our varied cohort to share their ideas and experiences.

The class of 2023 are themselves innovators: they're the first group to benefit from the change that sees our financial support take the form of a maintenance grant to support their studies, rather than a contribution to school or university fees.

We will hold meetings with award holders and their parents during summer term 2024 to explain the nature of the grant and how it might be spent.

What people are saying

Early response from students has been very positive:

“This will help me so much at university.”

“A great pressure has been lifted. I couldn't appreciate it enough. My mum will sure be pleased as well.”



Enterprise

Enterprise is the third driver of opportunity for the Rank Network. We identify enterprise projects and support them through our major grants programme. We also create and deliver enterprise programmes such as [Profit for Good](#) and the [Education Recovery Fund](#).

Profit for Good

Profit for Good launched in June 2019 with the aim of increasing enterprise within the social sector. The programme exists to support established charities and social purpose projects that rely on grant funding to make a difference.

Each participating project has access to a three-year grant (a mix of pure grant and matched trading in years two and three, designed to incentivise earned income and to a maximum of £22.5K), a place on a digital accelerator programme delivered by the Social Enterprise Academy and a place on a Rank Action Learning Set.



We received almost 50 applications in 2023 for 10 funded places. The programme launched in February, with an in-person event delivered over two days. The cohort covers a wide geographical area, including the Scottish Highlands and islands, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Cohort feedback led us to create a digital session designed to connect the 2022 and 2023 cohorts, which led to a regular community of practice being established. The Facilitator met with the community four times during 2023, providing a space for cohort members to reflect on their journey and to share insights and ideas.

The 2022 cohort delivered a popular learning and impact seminar at the 2023 annual conference.

What people are saying

“The impact of the Profit for Good funding can be measured through both our financial growth and increased educational reach (534 young people) – both allowing us to work towards our aims of eradicating period poverty and removing stigma and judgement when exploring periods, our bodies and sexual health.”

“During the pandemic we revisited and planned a new approach. With the help of the Rank Foundation and the Social Enterprise Academy training programme we've been able to fully realise our strategic vision and undertake a complete remodel of the service provided to beneficiaries establishing a viable social enterprise model.”

Educational Recovery Fund

The Educational Recovery Fund continued to support projects designed to address educational inequality during 2023.

For the next three consecutive years, one of our grants made will support the delivery of summer science research placements for ten year 12 students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

A similar time frame applies to our second grant support which will allow six UK schools to develop the ‘cradle to career’ model of wrap-around educational provision – from birth to 18 and beyond.

Finally, a third grant was made in support of its Broadening Educational Pathways programme, which supports care-experienced children by placing them into independent day and boarding schools.

Our grant will support eight students (four in two consecutive years) throughout secondary school. Evidence clearly shows educational outcomes for care-experienced children are much worse than those of their peers, and we are delighted to be supporting a programme designed to address this.

Faith

The fourth of Rank's strategic aims is **faith**.

Rank's founder was a committed Methodist and today we aim to convene conversations about faith in all its forms. Across TV, Audio and Digital, Rank's subsidiary **CTVC** promotes the principles, history, education, and practice of the Christian faith from a perspective of all faiths and none.

In a media landscape where there is a decline in public broadcaster investment in religion, CTVC's output and audience is increasing across multiple platforms. In 2023, they were able to keep faith and its impact visible to literally millions of people in the UK and beyond.



CTVC 2023 faith output in numbers:

- 41 Christian themed programmes LIVE in 2023
- 48 World faiths, moral and ethical themed programmes LIVE in 2023
- 99 further Christian, world faiths, moral and ethical programmes in production

Encouraging conversations about religion

Much of CTVC's output encourages multi-faith conversation – more important than ever against the backdrop of 2023's international unrest. In April, season five of **Pilgrimage** premiered on BBC, and once again celebrated inter-faith stories. In the first seven days, Pilgrimage: The Road Through Portugal gained audience figures of 3.7million in the UK and was praised by the Daily Telegraph:

“Between them, the group...represent an impressive range of ages, abilities, ethnicities and faith groups. Initially, they seem a not-especially philosophical bunch but, as Abdul rashid points out, that's the whole point of pilgrimage, to give themselves the time and space to encourage reflection.”

Songs of Praise

In 2023, CTVC won the contract to deliver Songs of Praise, the BBC's flagship, weekly Christian programme. Producing 52 episodes a year, the series visits Christian communities and churches of all sizes across the UK and shares remarkable faith stories that would otherwise go unheard.

CTVC broadcast their first episode in September, and over the first 4-months of programming, average weekly audience figures were between 0.8 and 1.3million. Feedback for the episodes proved the programme is providing huge comfort to the many watching from their homes, as expressed by audience members on Points of View:

“In these difficult times with everyone struggling day to day, and with the conflicts around the world, Songs of Praise is such an incredibly uplifting programme.” (Ingrid, viewer, Milton Keynes)

“On the news during this time, it has been so full of suffering, death and grief. Songs of Praise has gently reminded us that there is still beauty and love. Thank you so much for bringing joy and peace into our lives.” (Daphne, viewer, Huntingdonshire)



Looking ahead

As we approach the mid-point of our current strategy, we look to build on the progress we made during 2023 – particularly around the Network and the desire to build long-term meaningful partnerships.

Our support of **Place Matters** – a scheme designed to deliver systems change in places across the UK – has already united a strong Network of funders and providers intent on delivering strategic change: this will be achieved as part of a focused, collaborative effort. This remains a work in progress.

We've also brought together potential funders for a new place-based programme in Sunderland, connected to wider, regional opportunities aimed at building on the 'bow wave' of significant economic investments – not least the intent to build the largest media and film making studio facilities outside of Hollywood.

We're looking to work collaboratively with at least six major funders, with the aim of using Rank's knowledge and expertise as the 'force multiplier', leveraging long-term support to alleviate poverty and create opportunity.

Elsewhere, we have been successful forging local collaborations, from the Rhondda Valley in South Wales to Blackpool and the Fylde Coast. Led by one of Rank's associates, we have recently secured £400K to work with the long-term unemployed in Blackpool, connecting five organisations, working collaboratively to address one of many deep-seated social issues in the town. We will share this experience across the Network, as we look to improve our capacity to 'learn' and spread the knowledge of our successes (and failures) more effectively both with our partners and Network members.

Despite the challenge of managing reducing budgets at a time of significant and growing social need (and where the resilience of our Network members is tested more than ever) we recognise the role of both **enterprise** and **leadership** as the drivers that will help us deliver meaningful change.

We will continue to use these pillars to shape creative and innovative ways to deliver our mission. Doing so will test both the executive and the board, as we sound the rallying cry to those who will help us build stronger, co-invested collaborations. Our recent work on **brand and communications** prepared us well for this task.

Finally, we now have a home that's better suited to a 'relational foundation' that practises what it preaches, and which recognises that the value we bring is more than money alone. **Garden Walk** has become the vibrant, social working space we all envisaged, befitting Rank's reputation as a funder that convenes and connects people and programmes across the UK.





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