



What Money Can Buy

Can innovation be delivered via cheque?

Robbi Williams

Julia Farr MS McLeod Benevolent Fund

What is innovation?

1. The act of introducing something new
2. Something newly introduced

Thefreedictionary.com

But this doesn't necessarily mean the new thing is always a good thing



Why might we attempt to buy innovation?

- Because it isn't currently there
- To help break unhelpful patterns
- To evolve through creativity
- To learn something new



JULIA FARR GROUP

- **Julia Farr Association**



- **Julia Farr Housing Association**



- **Julia Farr MS McLeod
Benevolent Fund**



Our grant-giving roles

- Julia Farr Association
 - Awarding of smaller grants (in the \$100s) to individuals for something that feels personally important
- Julia Farr MS McLeod Benevolent Fund
 - Awarding of larger grants (in the \$1000s) to individuals or agencies to assist people with certain types of disability



The values that drive our work

1. People having personal authority in their lives
2. People living lives of active citizenship in their communities
3. People accessing capacity-building opportunities in support of 1 and 2



Our approach to innovation

- Something that feels new to the intended beneficiaries and which has the potential to deliver benefit in terms of our driving values



Can you buy innovation?

- Not necessarily
- Money can help buy choices and can fund an idea, but it doesn't necessarily result in innovation



Example 1 – Julia Farr MS McLeod Benevolent Fund

- We have funds available
- We offer regular opportunities for people to apply for grants for the exercise of good ideas in support of our driving values
- We don't always distribute all of our available funds
- The grants so awarded don't always result in innovation



Example 2 Individualised Funding

- This is a methodology in growing use, that allocates public funds direct to the intended beneficiary to decide how best to use the funds
- Plenty of research to suggest that this is a powerful methodology resulting in very positive changes in people's lives
- But it doesn't necessarily result in *innovation* in all instances



**Money by itself does not
reliably buy innovation**



**Every one of us has experienced
this in our daily lives with the
purchases we have made**



**So if money is available for
innovation, what are the other
necessary ingredients that can
help something new,
something innovative, to
happen**



3 things (among others)

- Having a clear aspirational idea about what you want to happen
- Accessing information that is helpful – *supported information*
- Building a posse



Having a clear idea about what you want

- At JFM
 - We make ourselves available to applicants to talk through their idea *before* they apply, and how it might be shaped to have the best chances of success
 - This includes the applicant thinking about how their idea will deliver on the values of personal authority, active citizenship, and capacity-building
 - We structured our assessment process to evaluate applications across a range of values, such as potency, sustainability, leadership etc



Having a clear idea about what you want

- In best practice Individualised Funding
 - Resources are made available to people to imagine the life they wish for themselves, including ‘unlearning’ from the experiences of disadvantage and service reciprocity



Accessing information that is helpful – *supported information*

- At JFM
 - We offer detailed guidance on how to apply
 - We signal the types of information that will assist the completeness and coherency of the application
 - We give detailed feedback on outcomes of applications



Accessing information that is helpful – *supported information*

- In best practice Individualised Funding
 - Availability of relevant, easy-to-understand information about:
 - The assets within the person
 - The assets within the person's community
 - The possibilities within the person
 - The possibilities within the person's community

Building a posse – more brains, more hearts

- At JFM
 - We encourage applicants to think about who might collaborate, to assist the success of the idea
 - We encourage applicants to link with others who might be undertaking similar endeavours elsewhere
 - We use a panel of external assessors to build a deeper perspective of the merits of an application
 - We make sure we're well-informed



Building a posse – more brain, more heart

- In best practice Individualised Funding
 - Focusing the efforts of people currently in a person's network
 - Intentionally building a person's network



Innovations (New Stuff) funded by JFM

- Online resources for sibling support
- Circles
- Active Support
- PLANnet
- Youth Mentorship
- In Control Australia
- Supported decision-making
- Research
 - Staying out of aged-care institutions
 - Alternatives to restrictive practice
 - Personal equipment
 - Best practice Social Landlord



In summary, how we stacked the odds in favour of innovation

- We adopted values that we believe in deeply
- We introduced these values, and a range of related criteria, to our assessment process
- We made ourselves available to applicants to talk about the connection between their idea and our values
- We brought in more brains and hearts to help us understand
- We see unsuccessful applications as but one step in our relationship with the applicant

In conclusion

- Money can buy innovation, but you need other essential ingredients, most importantly a deeply felt value base
- Without money, innovation is a lot harder, but never impossible. Taking a lateral perspective on 'material resources' can help, especially in terms of the assets that already exist within community





www.juliafarr.org.au