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Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust (UK)¹

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PROFILE OF THE ORGANISATION

The Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust was set up by the parents of Stephen Lawrence, who was murdered in a racist attack and they were forced to pursue a long battle with law enforcement agencies to ensure that his murder was properly investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice.



The Trust aims to ensure that future generations of young people enjoy the opportunities that were denied to their son. Its mission is concerned with: “Supporting young people to transform their lives, overcoming disadvantage and discrimination and into ambitious careers as professionals”². The Trust is a high-profile charity employing a small number of people, located within the newly designed and built Stephen Lawrence Centre in London. The Trust has impacted positively on criminal justice and social policy, as well as on the lives and life chances of young people.³

¹ We wish to thank Thompson–Addo, Programme Manager and David Utley–Williams, BESECURE Researcher, Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust, for providing us useful information for this report.

² <http://www.stephenlawrence.org.uk/what-we-do/vision-of-the-trust>, accessed 10.11.2015.

³ <http://www.stephenlawrence.org.uk/who-we-are/history>, accessed 19.02. 2015.

Security topics

The Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust focuses on the career aspirations of ethnic minorities, and is concerned about the impact of security technologies in relation to deprived communities, vulnerable individuals and black and ethnic minorities—primarily in the London area. The Trust has hosted events on the criminal justice system where speeches have been made by leading UK MPs, including the Right Honourable Theresa May MP.⁴

The Trust was a partner on the BESECURE project, funded under the EU Framework Programme 7 (2012 – 2015). BESECURE stands for “Best practice Enhancers for Security in Urban Environments”. The project is listed on the Cordis database, reference number 285222. Within the EU security programme, research proposals were invited that aimed to improve urban security policy design across Europe by sharing best practices among professionals and collectively creating a deeper understanding of current challenges in urban security.

Process of engagement

A partner in BESECURE consortium invited the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust to participate, as a result of having worked previously with the Trust. The Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust is an attractive partner due to its high-profile, strong community links and high standing amongst UK policy-makers. The Trust felt that the proposed research project might benefit from its knowledge of local communities in deprived areas and security concerns amongst ethnic minorities.

BESECURE was coordinated by the Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research (TNO)—a leading organisation with regard to EU funded security projects. The project aimed to support local policymakers in the creation, enhancement and implementation of security policies in urban zones.⁵

⁴ <http://www.stephenlawrence.org.uk/news/theresa-may-mp-keynote-speaker-criminal-justice-lecture-2015>.

⁵ <http://www.besecure-project.eu/>.

Results of engagement

BESECURE examined security in eight urban regions: Belfast (UK), The Hague (NL), Freiburg (GER), London Tower Hamlets (UK), London Lewisham (UK), Naples (IT), Reggio di Calabria (IT) and Poznan (PL). The Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust focused on London Lewisham, working with local policymakers, organisations and communities to understand their environment. The Trust examined a variety of urban security issues including antisocial behaviour, burglary and youth violence. Tower Hamlets and Lewisham in London were described as suffering from persistent youth crime and deprivation.⁶

The project created a comprehensive set of indicators for urban security, using factors such as social makeup, economic state and crime numbers. Three interactive platforms were developed, described by the project as; an Inspirational Platform, a Policy Support Platform and a Urban Data Platform. The Platform included indicators for urban security from deprived areas of London, including factors like social makeup and economic state. The Trust gave feedback on the project's technological outputs and helped evaluate the usefulness of the technological solution.

Impact of engagement

Successful CSO engagement: The Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust welcomed the opportunity to engage with research on a European level and felt that consortium partners worked in a constructive and collaborative manner to consider local security issues across different EU contexts.

Influence on quality of research and outputs: The Trust provided a unique perspective on security in a deprived area of London, enabling the consortium to gain knowledge and insight into local problems—in the words of the Trust, understand how things are “on the ground”. The project was also able to benefit from the Trust's links with key stakeholder groups, including police and community organisations.

The Trust recognises the value of working at a European level, but, of course, they must ensure that they have the full resources to be able to do so in order that their actual work at the local level is not impacted negatively.

⁶ <http://www.besecure-project.eu/project/project-information>.

Lesson learned

This example reveals the benefits of including a CSO like the Stephen Lawrence Trust within a project consortium. The authors anticipate that urban security is of concern and interest to a large number of CSOs. However, many CSOs are committed to improving urban security and wellbeing for the local community—rather than at a European level. CSOs with limited resources may be reluctant to focus effort on wider EU problems, if this comes at the expense of delivering local services. The Stephen Lawrence Trust advises other CSOs to ensure that sufficient grant is allocated to staff costs, as undertaking research and participating in project activities can be more time consuming than one might anticipate.

In the authors' experience, local and regional organisations are primarily concerned about urban security issues such as crime and anti-social behaviour, which may be addressed through a variety of means—not necessarily via technology. Indeed, technologies often raise ethical and human rights concerns that make them unattractive to CSOs. The focus on technological solutions to urban security might be a barrier to CSO participation.

This Policy Brief is based on the research conducted under SecurePART Task 5.1 - Matching CSOs to security research topics". A full version of the results can be found in the deliverable report "D5.1 - Plan for rules of participation of CSOs" – and may be downloaded from the SecurePART website (www.securepart.eu).

THE SECUREPART PROJECT

Is funded under the EU FP7 Security Theme addressing the issue of broadening societal participation in security research. The SecurePART project aims at enhancing the influence of civil society in formulating, monitoring, and implementing current and future EU security research.