

The Nuffield Foundation Newsletter

Summer 2007

Issue

6

The changing patterns of wealth

Both the inequality of the UK personal wealth distribution and the scale of wealth relative to incomes have increased in the last two decades. At the same time policy changes have meant that individuals must now draw on their assets or take out longer term loans to meet the cost of higher education, housing or care in old age.

Taxation of personal wealth, for example through council and inheritance taxes, has been the subject of heated debate. But such debates tend to focus on issues affecting annual income, whereas asset levels may have a much more significant effect on people's lives. A recent Open Door grant to a team at the London School of Economics, led by Professor John Hills, is funding an integrated study looking at wealth and assets affecting the main body of the population and how these influence life chances.

The team plan a comprehensive analysis of key trends and how these affect policy areas normally considered in isolation. Is it realistic for example to expect people to pay back student loans while saving more for pensions? Special attention will be paid to inheritance



“Asset levels affect people’s capacity to cope with shocks in their lives, to provide for income in retirement, to pay for care in old age, to buy houses located well for job opportunities or within catchment areas of popular state schools, to help children or grandchildren with costs of university education or get onto the property ladder”

and other asset transfers, and how these impact on younger adults. They will also investigate policy options related to wealth, including the government’s tentative moves to asset-based welfare initiatives such as Child Trust Funds.

This research complements that of another current initiative funded by Nuffield Foundation. The Mirlees

Review brings together international experts and younger researchers to identify the characteristics of a good tax system for any open developed economy in the 21st century.

It aims to assess the extent to which the UK tax system conforms to these ideals, and to recommend how it might realistically be reformed in that direction. [www](#)

Welcome to the Nuffield Foundation Newsletter which highlights our current areas of grant making and focuses on the outcomes of the projects we fund.

Further details on all the stories marked with this icon [www](#) can be found on our website.

The Newsletter is published three times a year and you can obtain further copies or ask to be put on the mailing list by contacting the Foundation. If you have any comments on the Newsletter we would be delighted to hear from you.

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www.nuffieldfoundation.org

The
Nuffield
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Going Global



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Topical grants

As part of its support for the development of research and professional capacity in the social sciences, Nuffield's Social Science Small Grants scheme offers research expenses to new researchers and funds significant policy related research. Awards are given for research projects across the social science spectrum. Some recently-completed ones on topical issues include:

- How UK tax-transfer policy encourages or discourages partnership formation
- The impact of 9/11 on press reporting of Muslims in the US and the UK
- Measuring the economic impact of the smoking ban in Scotland
- Why has political trust declined in Britain?



For many UK foundations, funding work in developing countries presents a dilemma. The potential benefits are great but funding internationally may appear difficult at the operational level, particularly if funding on a smaller scale.

Nuffield, together with the Baring Foundation and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation commissioned a study, *Going Global – a review of international development funding by UK trusts and foundations*, to look specifically at foundations whose international funding, like their own, is less than £1 million per annum. By learning

more about the wider funding context to which foundations contribute and about the methods that are being used, they hope to improve their own international grants programmes and to gather information that would be helpful to others either already or considering funding on a similar scale.

With other organisations in Europe and in US, including Government aid agencies, sharing this interest in the issue of foundation funding for international development, there are opportunities for discussions

and possible co-operation at the international level. At the same time, the role of the newer foundations in funding international work and the increase in organisations and individuals exploring new methods for philanthropy are changing the context in which the funders in this study operate. Although these issues go beyond the scope of the present study, the commissioning group believe that further investigation would be timely and productive and intends to progress this agenda in the near future. [www](#)

Elizabeth Nuffield FE Grants

Student funding in further education has recently suffered serious cutbacks, and Level 3 courses, such as Access courses, have been amongst those hardest hit. Following a successful pilot project last year, the ENEF will commit £246,000 in 2007/8 to help women studying at Level 3 who, faced with unforeseen financial hardship, may be prevented from successfully completing their course.

The money will enable fifteen Colleges of Further Education across the country to award Elizabeth Nuffield FE Grants of up to £1,000 to students meeting the Fund's criteria. The scheme will initially be guided by ENEF's newly appointed FE Co-ordinator, Ann West. Ann will also advise ENEF on the rapidly changing FE landscape and thereby help form the Fund's future policy. [www](#)



John Birdsall

Recent, Relevant and Engaging...

The Director of the Nuffield Design & Technology Project, Dr David Barlex, gave the International Luncheon Keynote Lecture at the recent International Technology Association (ITEA) annual conference in San Antonio, Texas. The ITEA is the American equivalent of the Design & Technology Association in England and members include teachers, teachers in training, teacher trainers, educational suppliers and researchers into education.

Under the title "Recent, Relevant and Engaging: Technology Education Research to Inform Classroom Practice", David described the work of the Nuffield Foundation and the Nuffield Curriculum Centre. He spoke of the difficulties encountered in engaging teachers in training with relevant educational research and gave a brief summary of such research by 20 researchers from seven different countries. This research is being distilled into a book to be produced jointly by The Nuffield Design & Technology



Project and The Technology Enhancement Programme. The intention is to distribute the publication to all qualifying design & technology teachers in England for the next three years. [www](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org)

Design & Technology for the next generation - A collection of provocative pieces, written by experts in their field, to stimulate reflection and curriculum innovation

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND ANDREW HUNT

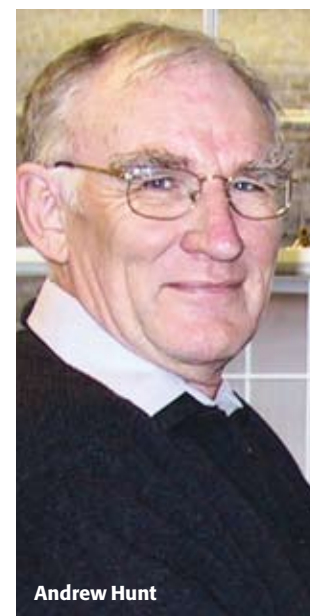
After nearly 40 years involvement in Nuffield curriculum projects, Andrew Hunt recently retired as Nuffield Curriculum Centre Director, and the Foundation held a seminar to mark the occasion. Professor John Holman talked about building capacity in science education. Professor Robin Millar said that 'Science for all' did not mean the same science for all – what did we want students to be able to do as a result of their science education? Professor Mary Ratcliffe described the vital role of teachers in the development of Nuffield Chemistry. Would teachers be able to be involved like this in future? Professor Paul Black asked 'Who owns curriculum development?' and highlighted the importance of involving teachers, universities and independently-funded institutions such as the Nuffield Foundation and Salters Institute. [www](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org)

Adolescent well-being

Are adolescent mental health problems on the rise in the UK? If so, is this happening everywhere, or is there something specific about the UK? What might be driving these trends? What are the policy and practice implications?

Three major reviews looking at these questions have just begun as part of Nuffield's Adolescent Mental Health Initiative, examining the evidence on time trends over recent decades in a number of

aspects of social change and adolescent experience. The first maps changes in the structure and style of parenting, the second looks at changes in how adolescents use their time, and the third examines changes in alcohol and illicit drug use. All three will go on to explore whether these changes (if found) can help to explain the known changes in adolescent problem behaviour over the same period. [www](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org)



Andrew Hunt

Investment Issues

The Foundation holds occasional seminars at which Foundations discuss investment issues. A recent seminar explored the question of how much the market values of assets matter. Market values are the most visible sign of a Foundation's financial wellbeing, but they can be very volatile. Over the past seven years Nuffield's market value has gone from £250m down to £165m and back up to £250m again. How much does this matter?

For one speaker, from an endowment which was

planning to wind up in 20 years, certainty about the sale value of assets was a priority in order to meet known liabilities. A counter point from a perpetual US endowment suggested that if there was no intention to sell assets and wind up the market value was irrelevant. What mattered was the amount that could be spent in perpetuity; what he called 'fecundity' of the assets. Such different objectives result in very different investment strategies. [www](#)



Tomasz Trojanowski istockphoto.com

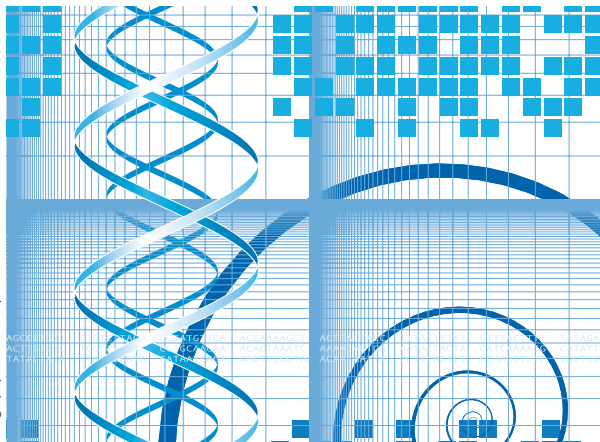
Lord John Krebs, will become a Trustee of the Nuffield Foundation with effect from March 2008. He succeeds Lord May, who retires after 15 years as Trustee. Lord Krebs has been Principal of Jesus College, Oxford, since 2005. Previously he was Chairman of the UK Food Standards Agency, and before this Chief Executive for the Natural Environment Research Council.



Anne Purkiss

Lord John Krebs

The Nuffield Council on Bioethics...



Gregory Spencer istockphoto.com

...has a full schedule this autumn with reports to be published on two highly topical areas of bioethics. The first, due in September, will focus on police powers to take, store and analyse DNA. The Report will consider whether storing the DNA profiles of victims and suspects indefinitely without their consent is justified by the need to fight crime. The second report, to be launched in November, will consider the ethical issues surrounding public health, looking in particular at questions around alcohol, smoking, obesity and infectious diseases. It will discuss the responsibilities of governments, individuals and industry in achieving a healthy society. Both reports will make recommendations for policy makers. [www](#)

Anthony Tomei, Director of the Nuffield Foundation, is taking a period of sabbatical leave until mid-October 2007. During this time he will be on part time secondment to the DfES, working on the National STEM (Science, Technology, Mathematics and Engineering) Programme. Sharon Witherspoon, the Foundation's Deputy Director, is Acting Director until October 2007.



William Morris, Lord Nuffield
1877-1963

The Nuffield Foundation is an endowed charitable trust established in 1943 by William Morris (Lord Nuffield) the founder of Morris Motors with the aim of advancing social well being. We fund research and practical experiment and the development of capacity to undertake them, working across education, science, social science and social policy. While most of the Foundation's expenditure is on responsive grant programmes we also undertake our own initiatives.

Full information on all our current activities and on how to apply for grants can be found at www.nuffieldfoundation.org

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