

# Top Tips for Sustainable Parent Associations

## Empowering Families with High Ability Children

### Definitions and the Importance of Sustainability

For parent associations, sustainability is the **long-term** capacity of the organization to effectively support gifted students, their families, and the broader gifted community.

Organizational Sustainability

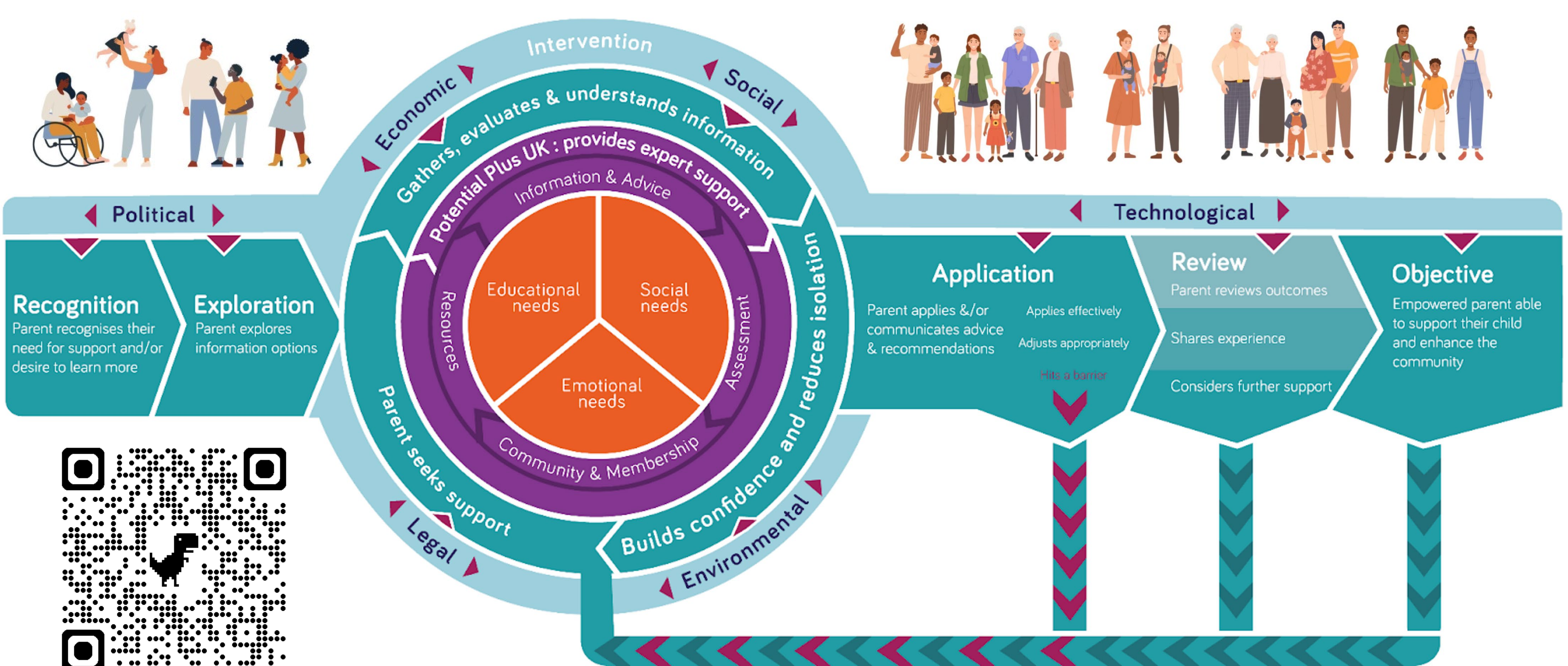
Programmatic Sustainability

Community Sustainability

- Sustainable practices help to set up organizational structures, normalize procedures, and ensure continuity when there is a change in leadership.
- Sustainability practices also help to maintain institutional knowledge, which is an organization’s collective knowledge, expertise, and information.
- Focusing on sustainability requires that associations adapt to changes.
- Having sustainability top of mind ensures that communications throughout the association are regular and relevant.
- Focusing on sustainability protects the mental health of members.

### Common Sustainability Issues

Straying from the original mission	Parents “aging out”	Burnout	Inability to communicate effectively
Lack of collaboration with others	Duplication of resources	Lack of expertise within the group	No time for reflection
No intentional path to leadership	No central information hub	No/low budget	Lack of flexibility or adaptability



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### Strategies for Sustainability

Develop clear referral pathways to trusted information sources.	Encourage cross-organization cooperation to maximize impact without overburdening individual groups.	Develop diverse funding streams (e.g., tiered memberships, sponsorships, fundraising).	Train and retain volunteers and parent leaders to prevent knowledge loss and burnout.
Ensure parents remain engaged beyond crisis points by offering ongoing roles in leadership, peer mentoring, and advocacy.	Establish alumni networks to maintain engagement and encourage mentorship.	Provide structured pathways for continued involvement, such as leadership development and community-building initiatives.	Focus on sustainable advocacy efforts, ensuring long-term policy improvements rather than short-term fixes.
Develop an interactive tool linking members to relevant resources, opportunities and support networks at each stage.	Identify and address gaps in provision, ensuring that parent support remains effective and adaptive.	Implement formal structures for long-term volunteer engagement, leadership succession, and financial resilience.	Foster a community-driven approach, where parents move from receiving support to becoming advocates and leaders.

### Building Sustainability Via Extended Family

#### The Grandparents Project: The Netherlands

Attention to giftedness in the Netherlands started in the 1980s, with the first parent association being established in 1986 and the first center for giftedness opening in 1988. This generation of grandparents is the first who may have heard of giftedness or who had experiences with giftedness when their own children were young. Some of these grandparents may have had negative experiences with schools, largely because schools did not have much knowledge of giftedness when their children were young. The Grandparents Project seeks to understand these grandparents, their needs, and their possible contributions to gifted children.

A survey was conducted on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram (December 1st, 2024-March 1st, 2025). There were **183 respondents**.

#### What information do grandparents need?

- Interaction between grandparent and gifted grandchildren (69.9%)
- Knowledge about gifted children in general (68.9%)
- Giftedness and upbringing (60.7%)
- Giftedness and education (58.8%)
- Interaction between grandparent and parents of gifted children (50.3%)

Grandparents can contribute to sustainability by serving as volunteers and advocates for parent associations. When asked whether they would be willing to contribute time to gifted organizations, **10.4%** of respondents said yes and **47%** said maybe, unlocking a new potential pool of volunteers. The Grandparents Project seeks to organize webinars, lectures, meetings, and podcasts aimed at grandparents. Additionally, they will set up a “train the trainer” course for grandparents who want to organize workshop for other grandparents.