

Wacky Races

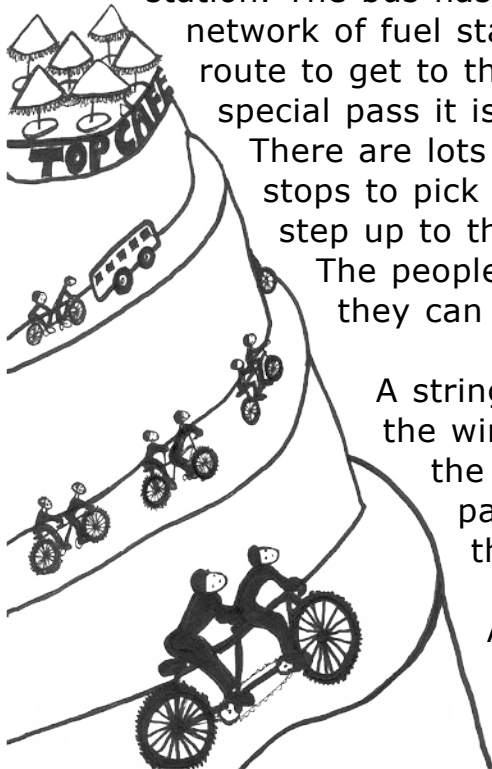


There is a little car driving along. It needs to get to a fuel pump and knows that one exists. Unfortunately there are many dead ends, many roundabout routes and no map will adequately show how to get to the fuel pump. The little car may well run out of fuel in pursuit of its goal (more fuel), or when it reaches the fuel pump it might find that it only serves diesel and not petrol.

A big bus accelerates past the little car towards the fuel station. The bus has good information on the network of fuel stations in the area, it knows the route to get to the diesel fuel it needs and with a special pass it is able to fill up its reserve tanks.



There are lots of people on the bus and it stops to pick up more people along the way, but the bus has a big step up to the door and some people can't manage to get on board. The people left behind see the little car in the distance and hope they can flag it down, if it ever gets to them, that is...



A string of tandem cyclists peddle by, determinedly climbing the windy route up the hill, aiming to get to the tea shop at the top, but worried that it will be closed or that the bus party will have eaten all the cakes before they can get there.

A horse and cart trots along. The horse can stop wherever there is grass to feed itself. It goes at its own pace and follows its own route.

KEY MESSAGES

- VCS organisations have to keep abreast of the constantly-changing funding schemes and deadlines and even then they are not guaranteed to get the money they need to struggle on, let alone to develop the group or project.
- Often VCS organisations have to spend increasingly large amounts of time and resources pursuing elusive funding to survive. This can lead to the loss of organisational efficiency, effectiveness, staff morale, or even the closure of VCS organisations and a cynical attitude to yet more government initiatives designed to help them.
- Some VCS organisations won't survive because they don't want, or are not able, to adapt to the new funding requirements.
- There is particular concern that sources of funding for small groups doing very valuable, specific work will disappear if there is a move towards contracting and competitive tendering. Big Lottery grants won't fill the gap for those areas that don't meet the right criteria or for those groups (for example, some faith groups) that don't consider it an ethical source of money.