

Evaluation Support Scotland

works with voluntary organisations and funders so that they can evaluate what they do, learn from that evaluation and deliver better services. We provide practical support and access to tools while taking action to build evaluation into funding and policy-making processes.



What did we do?

- We helped organisations understand why evaluation is important for them and to **agree their outcomes**.
- We worked with organisations to work out **what they are going to measure** and how and identify the right ways to collect information.
- We advised organisations on commissioning **external evaluations** and put together a database of consultants on our website.
- We helped organisations **analyse** and make sense of what they've collected and put together **reports**.
- We supported sharing and learning from **evaluation findings**.

The Numbers

We provided evaluation support for a total of **228** organisations.

We ran **28** workshops for **217** people from **148** organisations.

95 organisations got tailored support to write their outcomes, develop information collection systems and undertake analysis and reporting.

169 people received support by email or phone.

We worked with **14** public or charitable funders and **13** councils to improve and harmonise evaluation requirements or to support their funded organisations.

What difference did we make?

We encouraged organisations to use evaluation methods that make sense to them and the people they work with. We helped organisations develop tools that they can use as part of their day to day work with clients. Tools work best when they are not just for evaluation but also help clients reflect on their own progress and goals. We've supported organisations to shred questionnaires that were not telling them anything and replace them with more targeted techniques that get more useful information.

We supported organisations to use evaluation to focus service planning. We helped organisations to review their activities and feel able to stop doing activities that might be nice to do but won't actually deliver their outcomes.

We helped organisations consider involving service users in evaluation. Some organisations used art and drama to create user-led evidence about the outcomes delivered by the project. These organisations were doing art, user involvement and evaluation all at once!

In summary more than 8 out of 10 of organisations we worked with are now clearer about the outcomes of their work and have better evaluation systems.

In response to our stakeholder survey:

63% said we'd helped them get better at evaluation

36% said we'd helped them deliver a better service

48% said we have helped them use evaluation to make better decisions

Developing self-evaluation in a large organisation

Case study: **Aberlour Childcare Trust**

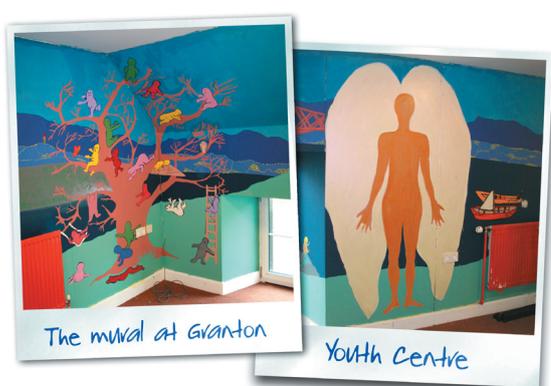
We worked with Aberlour Childcare Trust and staff from 4 of their projects to pilot self-evaluation. Aberlour is now using the materials and the learning from the pilot to roll out a self-evaluation model across all projects in the organisation. They plan to have better and more consistent information about the difference they make to children's lives and through that provide better reporting to commissioners. In turn self-evaluation will inform future policy and the continuous performance improvement of Aberlour's children's services.

ESS learned that building evaluation into a large organisation needs leadership, plus integration with other organisational systems mixed with involvement of front-line staff as 'evaluation champions'. Organisations with multiple projects can make life easier by sharing common evaluation tools and outcome statements across the organisation.

Being creative with evaluation

Case study: **Granton Youth Project Peer Leadership Project**

Granton Youth Project Peer Leadership Project wanted information collection systems that were imaginative and fitted the ethos of the project. The project now uses the visual evaluation tools we showed them to help young peer leaders reflect on how far they've come. Unexpectedly the young people liked the tools so much they incorporated them into workshops they run in local schools and into a mural they have created for the youth centre.



Building bridges between funders and the voluntary sector

Throughout the year we demonstrated that ESS can break down myths and barriers and create trust between funders and voluntary organisations and get them talking to each other. This led to the Evaluation Declaration which we developed with the Scotland Funder's Forum. This document is an example of funders working together. It has 5 statements that describe what makes evaluation, monitoring and reporting important to funders.

Case study: **The Robertson Trust**

The Robertson Trust wanted to change their monitoring forms to get more useful information about the difference their money makes (and to be consistent with other funders). They also wanted to keep things simple. So we helped them produce new forms and guidance. The best bit was testing the new forms with funded groups. This significantly improved the material.

'I was very impressed by ESS's knowledgeable staff, their friendly, no-nonsense attitude and the ease with which they helped me think things through - all of which helped me produce my evaluation report.'

Stakeholder survey respondent

What was less successful – and what did we learn?

Organisations have to be ready: When we've been less successful it's because organisations saw us as a representative of their funder or because they had other organisational problems. We improved what happens when we start working with an organisation so they are ready for our help or can be easily referred to someone else.

It takes time to make a difference: We ran short surgeries but these were too brief for learning to happen and practice to change. We ran sessions at conferences or for networks. Delegates liked our input and we reached over 200 people. But we can't definitively show that we improved learning or practice. We will not do surgeries or conference sessions in isolation in future.

Other information we'd like you to know

Money

We received **£182,608** and we spent **£154,322**.

We got grants from the [Scottish Executive](#), the [Big Lottery Fund](#) and [Access to Work](#). We got support in kind from the [Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland](#). Please contact us if you'd like a copy of our report and financial statements for 2006/07. Our auditors are [Geoghegans and Co.](#)

Trustees and Company Directors:

Fraser Falconer (Convenor), Rev Jayne Scott (Vice Convenor), Professor Linda McKie (Treasurer), John Arthur, Mary Craig (from 10 April 2006), Martin Crewe, Marion Lacey, Maureen McGinn, Andrew Muirhead (until September 2006), Dr Nicola Richards, Fiona Rogan, Dr Erica Wimbush

Staff:

Steven Marwick, Jennifer Challinor, Jacqueline McDowell, Anne Morrison

'The input of ESS is beginning to make a significant impact on the work of my organisation. They have provided tangible support to help understand how to evaluate work and demonstrate effectiveness.'

Stakeholder survey respondent

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