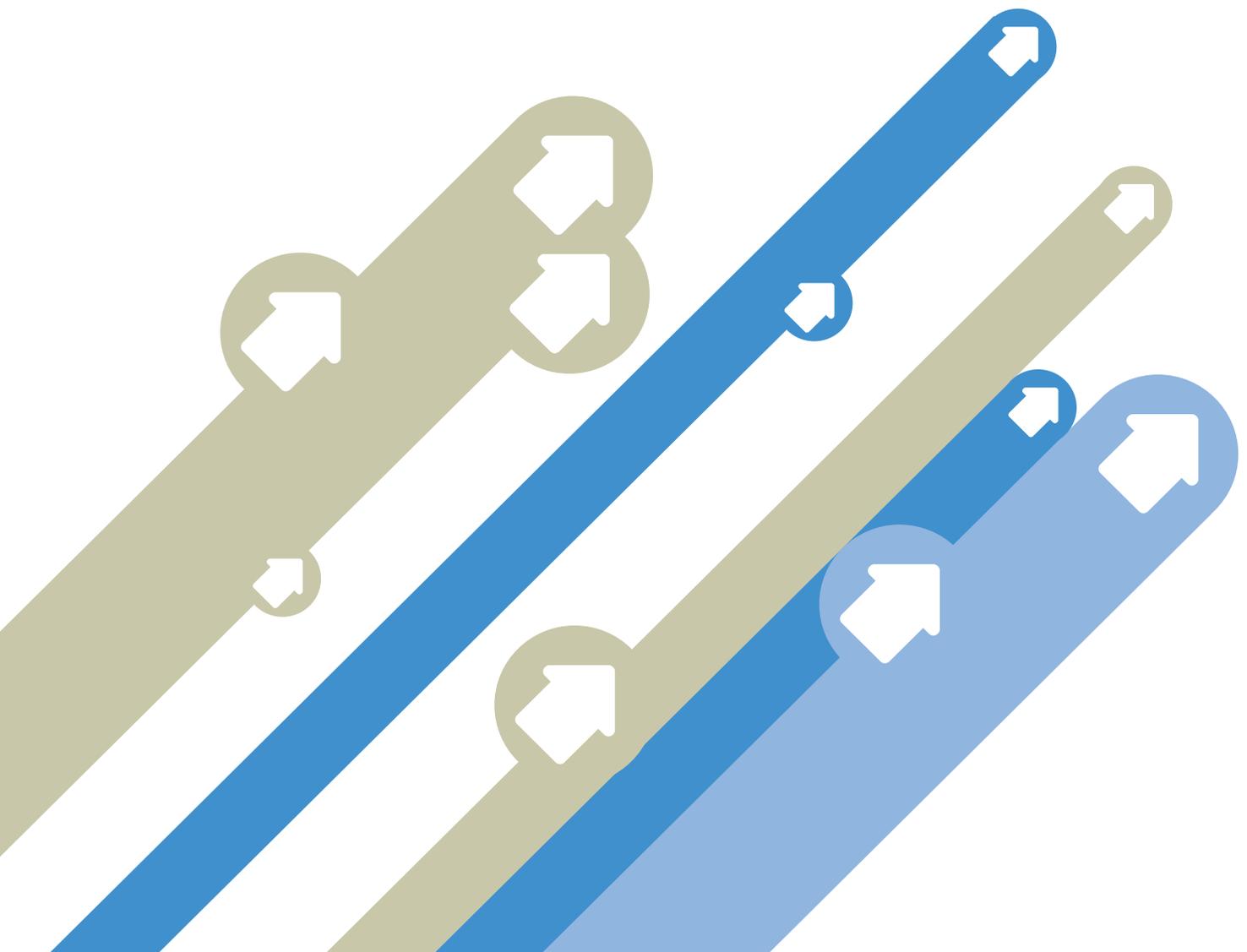




EVALUATION SUPPORT SCOTLAND WORKS WITH VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AND FUNDERS SO THEY CAN MEASURE THEIR IMPACT, REPORT ON THE DIFFERENCE THEY MAKE AND IMPROVE THEIR SERVICES.

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*"A breath of fresh air amongst other organisations who use jargon
- they strip away the unnecessary waffle"*

QUOTE FROM ESS STAKEHOLDER SURVEY



What did we do?

➔ We supported 305 voluntary organisations.

➔ We ran **38 workshops for 398 people from 178 organisations.**

Our core programme contains 4 workshops on setting outcomes, collection information, visual approaches and analysing and reporting. We also ran core workshops for third parties and we developed special workshops in relation to health and climate change.

➔ We delivered **175 tailored support sessions for 116 voluntary organisations.**

➔ We **worked in partnership with funders to support evaluation**

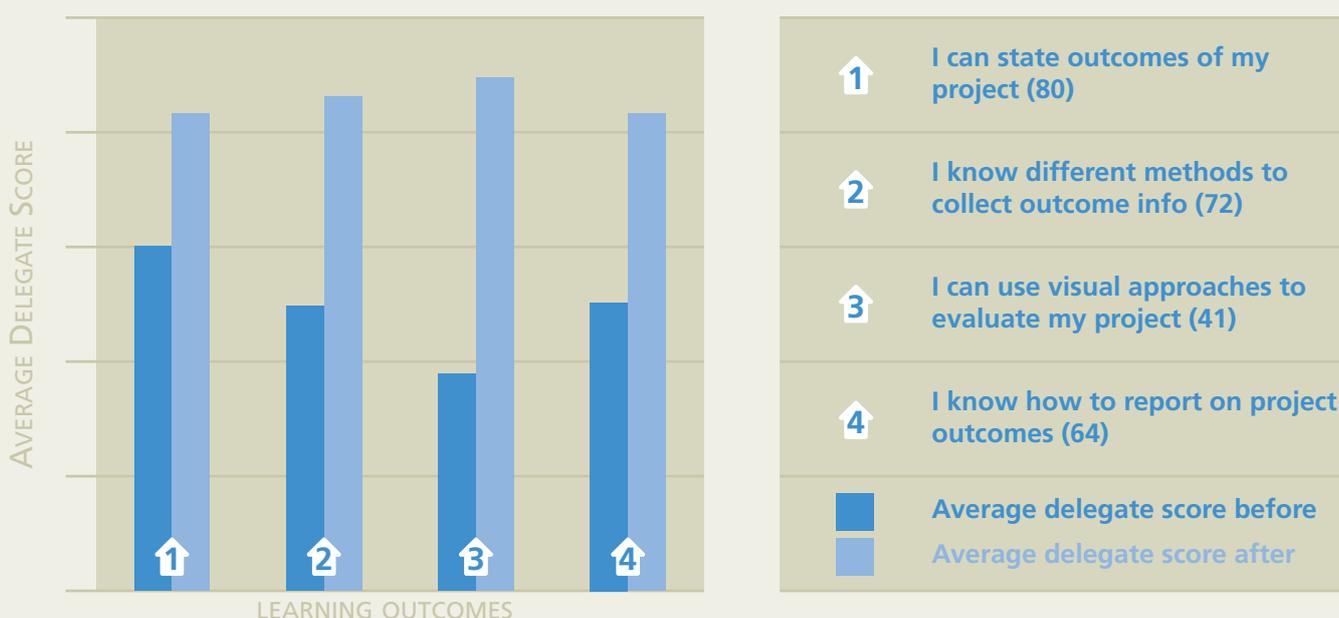
The Laidlaw Trust and Wood Family Trust pay for some of their funded charities to have a "bank" of evaluation support time with ESS. These evaluation support accounts supported 44 charities this year.

The Dundee Fairer Scotland Fund (FSF) funds around 70 projects. They wanted to move to outcome focussed reporting, so commissioned ESS to run a programme of support to build the understanding and skills of the council staff and funded projects about outcomes and evaluation.

What difference did we make?

➔ In summary: more than 9 out of 10 organisations we worked with are clearer about the outcomes of their work and have better evaluation systems.

ESS Workshop Feedback [extracts]



The graph above shows before and after delegate feedback from some of the outcomes of our workshop programme. The number of delegates is in brackets.

We helped organisations agree their outcomes and focus on the right activities

'Your input was valuable in shaping our thinking around the long term impacts we are aiming to achieve. We ended up incorporating these into our strategic plan and will use them to decide priorities as new work opportunities emerge'. **A health charity**

We worked with organisations to identify the right way to collect information

Many organisations reported that we had helped them to improve their monitoring and evaluation systems.

"The one to one support allowed in-depth discussion on the evaluation process. Knowing about the different types of evaluation available allowed us to determine the most beneficial assessment method for the project." **Jenny White, National Autistic Society**

"I enjoyed the course on visual approaches to evaluation yesterday. It will really help make our evaluation more effective and exciting for the pupils/ teachers we work with."

James Townsend, Youth Philanthropy Initiative, Institute for Philanthropy

Case Study – refocusing on key outcomes

We supported Partners in Advocacy to develop a monitoring and evaluation plan. We helped them decide how to involve partners and service users in gathering evaluation information and what questions to ask. By the end of our support, they had a clearly articulated set of outcomes and a draft evaluation plan to develop further and implement.

We helped organisations report on the impact of their work

Feedback from Laidlaw Youth Trust on reporting by one of their funded charities:

"The difference between [last year's report] and the latest 2009 report is simply outstanding. We think this is a huge improvement and wanted you to see exactly how much better their approach now is thanks to ESS support."

Some headlines from our stakeholder survey

93% of respondents agreed that we demystify evaluation

92% of respondents agreed that we help people understand the importance of evaluation

91% agreed that we help ensure evaluation is done better

88% agreed that we help people to understand what works and why

84% agreed that we help ensure evaluation is relevant to service users

78% agreed that we help ensure people use evaluation to make better decisions



Evaluation Declaration Health Check Report – follow up

The Scotland Funders' Forum Evaluation Declaration (2006) says that funders believe monitoring, evaluation and reporting are valuable, relevant, proportionate, supported and looking from inside and outside. Last year we used Evaluation Declaration health check to help 11 funders to think about the way they undertake monitoring and evaluation and their relationship with funded organisations. This year we got follow up feedback from 7 of those funders. All of them had improved their monitoring procedures. They found the health check useful and would recommend it to others.

Joined up reporting to funders – the Gate experience

Gate is a youth voluntary organisation in the Scottish Borders. Its main funders were concerned about the administrative burden on Gate of reporting separately to 4 funders. They wanted to support Gate to evaluate and report effectively. So they asked ESS to work with Gate to develop a single joined up monitoring and evaluation report. Our report: Joined up reporting to funders: The Gate Experience is available from our office or to download from our website.

Case Study – Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland standard grant scheme

After they completed the Evaluation Declaration health check last year, we helped the Lloyds TSB Foundation to redesign their application materials to help them become more outcome focussed. We also provided training for assessors. The Foundation has harmonised their approach with other funders, which will minimise confusion in the voluntary sector. Connie Williamson, from the Foundation said:

"I was really pleased with the way things went. I think we are all a lot clearer about 'what is an outcome' and how we talk to [grant applicants] about difference and change without scaring them off!"

Strategic Partnership with Government

This year ESS became a strategic partner of Scottish Government. The partnership is about working together to build evaluation skills in the third sector, and to increase Government's understanding of evaluation good practice in funding and policy making. For example we have:

- ➡ Worked with the Third Sector Division on the outcomes of the Enterprise Fund.
- ➡ Supported the cross Government working group to promote the role voluntary sector can play in achieving the Government's outcomes.
- ➡ Participated in working groups such as the research forum and the social return on investment development project.
- ➡ Provided practical policy advice to officials on evaluation and outcomes.

This partnership is positive for us but has taken time to work out in practice. We have had to learn about differences in organisational culture and not overstretch ourselves. Regular meetings and honest dialogue have helped manage these challenges

Healthy Communities

We worked in partnership with NHS Health Scotland as part of a programme to promote and support evaluation of community and voluntary health improvement. This project looked at how to use qualitative information to measure and report on the impact that community-led health work has on people's lives. We wanted to build evaluation skills in 7 community-led health projects and help them to explain the difference they make.

Community Food and Health Scotland Self-evaluation Collaborative

The Community Food and Health Scotland (CFHS) Self-evaluation Collaborative is a long term partnership between CFHS, ESS and six community food and health projects. It has now reached the final third stage, which involves looking at how to use the learning from the collaborative to inform policy and decision making. It is due to culminate in an event in the autumn and a final report.

Other work

- ➔ We worked with Inspiring Scotland to help funded projects build their skills and plans to report on the impact of work with vulnerable young people.
- ➔ Other funders we worked with included the Parish Development Fund, The Robertson Trust, Voluntary Action Fund, Scottish Community Foundation, Big Lottery Fund and Scottish Borders Council.
- ➔ We worked with Youthlink Scotland and HM Inspectorate of Education to deliver 3 events to share evaluation good practice and gather ideas about challenges amongst youth work practitioners.
- ➔ We continued to work with SCVO to build an evaluation framework for the Supporting Voluntary Action programme to build the capacity and quality of services provided by Councils for Voluntary Service.

Lessons and Challenges

- ➔ During the year we formed a peer learning group to provide a longer term opportunity for people in voluntary organisations to build and share their evaluation knowledge and skills. While the learning set was useful to participants, it was hard for them to make this longer term commitment and for ESS there was a big commitment of staff time. In future we will use more focussed activities to help organisations share and learn from each other.
- ➔ Our stakeholder survey told us that we have more work to do to raise our profile. So we are developing a marketing strategy to make sure we use the right methods to reach the right organisations and share our learning and support more widely. We will also continue to build on our existing work with funders and voluntary sector intermediaries to share best practice.
- ➔ Stakeholders also suggested improvements to our training programme such as holding more workshops outside the central belt and expanding our core workshop programme. These suggestions are reflected in the next training programme from August 2009 and our new training strategy which will be in place by the end of 2009.

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OTHER INFORMATION WE'D LIKE YOU TO KNOW

Money

We received £290,743 and we spent £252,849.

We got grants from the **Scottish Government and the Big Lottery Fund**.

Other income included contracts with the Laidlaw Youth Trust and Inspiring Scotland.

Please contact us if you'd like a copy of our full report and financial statements for 2008/09.

Our auditors are Geoghegans and Co.

TRUSTEES AND COMPANY DIRECTORS

Fraser Falconer (Convenor)
Rev Jayne Scott (Treasurer to Oct 08)
John Arthur
Mary Craig
Martin Crewe (until Sep 2008)
Dr Sam Gardner
Marion Lacey (until Sep 2008)
Ewan Malcolm
Dr Sue Northrop
Dr Nicola Richards (Treasurer from Oct 08)
Fiona Rogan (until Sep 08)
Keith Wimbles (from Sep 2008)

STAFF

Jennifer Challinor
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