Evaluation Support Scotland

Activities and impact report

2013/14

Building conversations to support and champion self-evaluation

"You made a real difference at all stages and it [the report] wouldn't have been anything like as good without your input."

Andrew Findlay, Interest Link Borders Project Coordinator

What do we do?

This review sets out the highlights of what we did and the difference we made in 2013/14.

We focused our work in four main areas:

- Supporting third sector organisations to explain, measure and prove their contribution to policy and practice
- Supporting funders to evaluate
- Supporting valuable, relevant and proportionate self-evaluation
- Championing the use of third sector evidence

Activity area	Outcomes			
Evaluation support and training: workshops, tailored support, website and information.	Better skills, knowledge, understanding and confidence around evaluation	Improved evaluation environment	Improved learning and action from evaluation	Needs are met more effectively
Funder learning programmes: Evaluation Support Accounts (funder pays for support for funded organisations), master classes and one to one help.				
Thematic programmes: to generate third sector evidence and evaluation.				
Sharing and influencing: methods and reporting best practice, third sector learning from and about evaluation. Addressing barriers to evaluations.				

Who we work with

In 2013/14 we supported

521

organisations:

431 third sector organisations

90 funders and public sector

What those organisations do

- **1%** - Substance misuse
- **3%** - BME/equalitites
- **4%** - Older people
- **4%** - Rights and homelessness
- **5%** - Environmental
- **6%** - Learning and employment
- **7%** - Children and young people
- **7%** - Arts and sports
- **9%** - Community
- **12%** - Women and families
- **15%** - Third sector support
- **27%** - Health and disability

Supporting third sector organisations to explain, measure and prove their contribution

This year we have worked on three programmes:

A Stitch in Time?

Support in the Right Direction

Violence against Women

What did we do?

In 2013/14 we worked with third sector practitioners to explain, measure and prove the third sector contribution to reshaping care for older people (RCOP). We did this by producing a tested logic model, exploring evaluation measures and methods, and undertaking and commissioning research and evidence reviews.

We worked with Midlothian third sector organisations and local commissioners to produce a new reporting template and guidance, and make sense of third sector evidence. We shared learning from our work. For example we started feeding the learning from A Stitch in Time? to Scottish Government officials drafting the Health and Social Care Integration guidance.

Coming soon: We are publishing throughout 2014 documents to show the learning from A Stitch in Time? This is feeding into guidance to commissioners.

What difference did we make?

- The models have increased understanding of third sector interventions.

- Third sector organisations use the models to better explain the impact of their services for older people to commissioners and funders.

"Some [community transport providers] said that they would be likely to use the model in discussions with service commissioners and funders, so that they can gain a better understanding of community transport and its impact on older people."

John MacDonald, Community Transport Association

- Third sector organisations have increased their evaluation skills to evidence and report on their work.

"For me it was a really useful experience- making sense of what we needed to collect and really asking myself why we were asking the questions we were. The reporting template is much easier to work with. We are just starting to use the new tool [...] and so far it's been really good."

Wendy Bates, Health in Mind

- Local commissioners have used information from commissioned reports.

"This paper [A Stitch in Time? Informal Community Action and Reshaping Care for Older People Research report] provided us with local information and feedback highlighting areas for further development and consideration to help refocus services towards early intervention."

Midlothian Change Fund quoted in 'Change Fund 2013/2014 Mid-Year Review'

What did we learn?

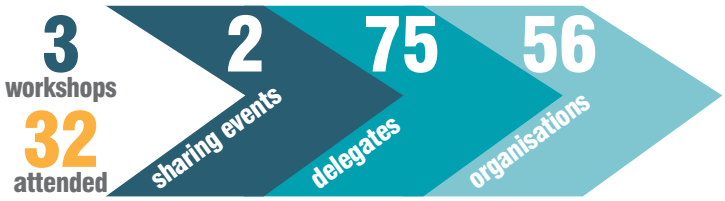
- The model enables complex information to be communicated to a range of audiences but we need to keep it simple. We acted on feedback to merge two logic models into one simpler model.

- Explaining and evidencing the third sector contribution enables funders to more easily support third sector organisations.

Support in the Right Direction is funded by Scottish Government's Self-Directed Support branch to improve understanding about 'what works' in independent support for self-directed support (SDS).

What did we do?

In this second year we launched an outcomes framework, ran evaluation workshops and 'sharing the learning' events, facilitated learning sets and supported Scottish Government to continue to improve reporting.



Learning set 1 wrote case studies about their chosen evaluation method. Published in *'Some ideas and case studies to help you think about how to measure the difference your Independent Support Organisation makes'.*

Learning set 2 produced a draft workbook about involving service users in evaluation.

What difference did we make?

- Independent Support Organisations were better able to measure and report on the impact of their work

"I will use the knowledge gained to improve my overall ability to evaluate PAMIS SDS project, which will enable me to report back more effectively to the Scottish Government."

Brenda Garrard, PAMIS SDS project

- Independent Support Organisations and Scottish Government have increased skills on effective evaluation methods - in particular those which involve service users themselves.

What delegates said they learned from the 'involving people in evaluation' event:

"The importance of perhaps formally involving people. Maybe recording experiences and views in different ways that could be used (or better-used) within the evaluation process."

"Involve people in setting the outcomes in the first place!"

What did we learn?

- The outcomes framework was great as a first step but maybe too complicated. We will be looking to simplify this next year.
- There is a wider audience for learning about involving service users in evaluation.
- Our support can give funders confidence to develop their own systems.
- We facilitated peer feedback on reports and projects found this valuable.

"Very interesting to have someone who did not understand advocacy to review report."

"Feedback from others about my report will be used to influence future ones."

Violence against Women

is a two year programme supporting Voluntary Action Fund to evaluate the impact of the Violence against Women Fund which funds 136 projects working with women and children who are at risk of violence.

What did we do?

In the first year we ran **17** evaluation workshops,

Attended by **135** staff

From **67** organisations

We facilitated a working group of

14

members from 11 organisations.

They produced a reporting template using Harmonising Reporting[1].

[1] Harmonising Reporting sets out good practice for funders and funded organisations on how to make reporting more useful and less burdensome.

What difference did we make?

"I really found these courses helpful and have overcome my reservations of evaluation."

Funded organisations improved their evaluation skills.

"I will now develop methods we use to be more client-friendly and tailored to their individual needs. I also hope to make the information gathering process more seamless and our outcomes more transparent."

Following the training organisations said they were more able to set outcomes, share the learning with their team and write better outcomes for funding applications.

"My manager showed me a funding application that had been turned down for another aspect of our service. After reading through the outcomes I responded with 'so what?' My manager was a bit taken aback at first but I explained that the information we had supplied didn't really tell the funder anything about what we wanted to achieve. We have since made the changes."

The reporting template is being used to produce more relevant and useful reporting by organisations.

What did we learn?

- Including support workers and managers from the same organisation in workshops has added benefits. It enables projects to understand the evidence needed to improve practice and strategy.

"It was really useful to work together with colleagues. So often at training you are split up but this was really helpful to work at what is needed for our own organisation."

- Including funders in workshops reinforces the message that funders are committed to supporting meaningful evaluation.

Scotland Funders Forum

Supporting funders to evaluate

We worked closely with Scottish Funders' Forum. We work with funders through delivering workshops and tailored support, running seminars and promoting the recommendations from Harmonising Reporting. This work supports funders to evaluate the way they work and to improve their support to funded organisations.

What did we do?

This year we:

- Ran three thematic seminars for funders – 'Influencing practice', 'Funding collaboratively' and 'Funders give more than money'.
- Facilitated the 'Shifting a gear' event, which encouraged joined-up working in the funding sector and was a stepping stone to our plan for 2014 -15.
- Brought together funders and funded organisations at a pilot Harmonising Reporting workshop.

What difference did we make?

- Funders are people too. They appreciate having a safe space to learn together.

"Been good to be facilitated and organised. There has been value in having a space to share."

"This has been the most useful event I've attended since I came into post."

Douglas Hamilton, RS MacDonald Charitable Trust

What did we learn?

- Funders want a place to learn and ESS is valued as a trusted, neutral facilitator and critical friend.
- Good practice tips in Harmonising Reporting remain very relevant.
- The reporting relationship is important to funder and funded and is vital to good reports.
- There is a need for more examples of good practice in the use of Harmonising Reporting.
- We need to work more at explaining Harmonising Reporting to funders and showcasing its benefits to the third sector.

Key messages about the conditions which enhance communication between funders and funded organisations

Supporting valuable, relevant and proportionate self-evaluation

Workshops

What did we do?

We delivered **102** workshops and learning events for **1341** participants

from third sector organisations and funders – more than ever before:

- What are my outcomes?
- Telling my story
- Logic modelling
- Outcomes and Funders
- Collecting information to report on outcomes
- Using creative approaches to evaluate your project
- Making sense of reports
- Evaluating outcomes
- Train the Trainer
- And some tailored workshops

What difference did we make?

98% of workshop participants reported improvements in learning against the core workshop outcomes.

Workshop participants tell us they appreciate learning about self-evaluation and are able to put their learning into practice.

"Good practical examples which gave me plenty of food for thought and will be taking a systematic approach to analysing and reporting on outcomes."
Stacey Webster, LGBT Health and Wellbeing

"Excellent training, now feel much more positive and informed about reporting evaluation to funders."
Jenny Anderson, Children 1st

What participants tell us they will do after training? (585 reponses)

- 20% - Apply to work
- 18% - Share with others
- 15% - Write a good report
- 12% - Put a plan in place
- 11% - Write better outcomes
- 8% - Review existing methods
- 7% - Design new methods
- 6% - Other
- 4% - Use in funding apps

What did we learn?

Delivering more workshops than ever before has allowed us to get more feedback to analyse. This has resulted in more learning and in response we have:

- Scheduled more popular workshops more frequently.
- Improved our evaluation methods. We now ask participants on the Creative Approaches workshop to create their own evaluation of the day.

Tailored support

72 organisations

105 sessions

of one to one evaluation support tailored to the organisation's specific needs.

Much of the support was to help identify indicators and explore methods of gathering data.

"We've used what you worked with us on in the following ways: [We're] using the information we collect against the indicators to pull together a review of our work. We produced a 5 year review. [We've] used the framework to pass onto other evaluators to help design specific evaluation frameworks for individual programmes. Overall we looked at how we can pull together an annual report based on the framework that can be carried out each year. We were asked by all our funders to have an evaluation framework in place so it was incredibly helpful to have done most of the work."

Karen McGregor, Firstport

Case Study – Young Scot

When Young Scot was thinking about their Strategic Plan and were beginning to use a new project planning system they wanted to create an evaluation strategy. ESS facilitated a 'Champion Group' of staff to create organisational outcomes and a strategy to evaluate them. The group produced a logic model that showed how the outcomes linked to their strategic vision and contributed to national outcomes. They also created an evaluation strategy setting out how Young Scot evaluated its work.

What difference did this make to Young Scot?

"We are definitely in a much better place now and everyone is thinking more systematically about evaluation and what they need to have in place to monitor and evaluate their work. It's also much clearer to everyone about how their work fits into the bigger Young Scot picture."

Lead champion, Alison Hardie

Enquiries and website

In 2013/14 we answered **137** phone or email enquiries and provided information and resources through our website which had on average **1700** visits per month.

Evaluation Support Accounts

An evaluation support account (ESA) is when a funder pays for funded organisations to receive a package of evaluation support.

What did we do?

In 2013/14 we ran 9 ESAs:
Community Food and Health Scotland
Climate Challenge Fund
Creative Scotland Artworks
Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland
Link Up
Comic Relief Home and Away
The Robertson Trust Thinking Differently
The Alliance's Self-Management IMPACT Fund
Paul Hamlyn Foundation

What difference did we make?

Funders consistently receive improved reports as a result of our support to the organisations they fund.

"Discovering new ways to tell our stories, to share our journey has allowed us to better capture the impact we have on those who participate in our services... We created a 3d tree and used leaf shaped post it [stickers] for the children to share their thoughts, opinions and what they learned! The platform ... allowed candid responses from the children ... [which] were pivotal in helping us design the programme for future Sunshine Club sessions."

Extract from a longer testimonial from Kelly Drummond, the Boghall Drop in Centre - Sunshine Club

What did we learn?

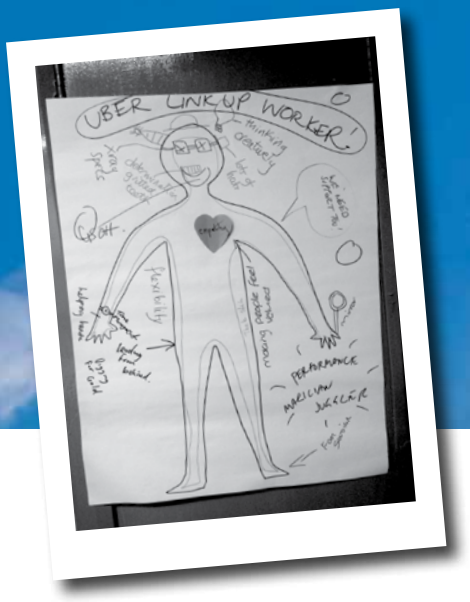
There's not one model of Evaluation Support Account, so we are developing a range.

"I did wonder if [the ESA] would be of help but I decided as Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland thought it would a be a good idea it was worth a try. I am delighted to say they were right and it was the best training I have attended for a while. The course was exactly the right level and easily applied to our work."

Dundee Crisis Pregnancy Trust

"It took me quite a while to get my head around what my outcomes looked like but I got there in the end, with support from ESS. I managed to get all my outcomes and indicators written and used them in other funding from the renewable energy fund and the Big Lottery!"

Sarah Hall, Hillhouse



Case Study – Link Up

Link Up is funded through Scottish Government's Cashback for Communities Scheme managed by Inspiring Scotland. It is an asset based community project involving workers who facilitate community activity to build stronger, safer and more resilient communities.

What did we do?

We supported Link Up workers to:
- Create an evaluation action plan.
- Explore creative ways to collect evidence.
- Produce a simple reporting template.

What difference did we make?

- We increased Link Up worker's self-evaluation skills and confidence to do evaluation.

"I've always thought of evaluation as this big scary complicated thing but doing it this way makes it simple."
Link Up worker

"The workshop's really clarified the evaluation process."
Link Up worker

- We improved our understanding of the impact of the programme and were able to report this in a consistent and meaningful way.

- We encouraged the inclusion of participants and volunteers in evaluation.

What did we learn?

- How to evaluate community asset based projects.
- This includes how to capture the rich information that comes out of informal conversations which we termed 'bagging the banter'.
- More creative evaluation approaches appealed to this client group.

Case Study - Four Square

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation's *Fitter for Purpose* pilot funding stream builds resilience in organisations through practical support. Through this programme we supported Four Square.

Four Square works with vulnerable people in Edinburgh to overcome the barriers they face through homelessness or other disadvantage by providing support to create opportunities for stable lives and social and economic inclusion.

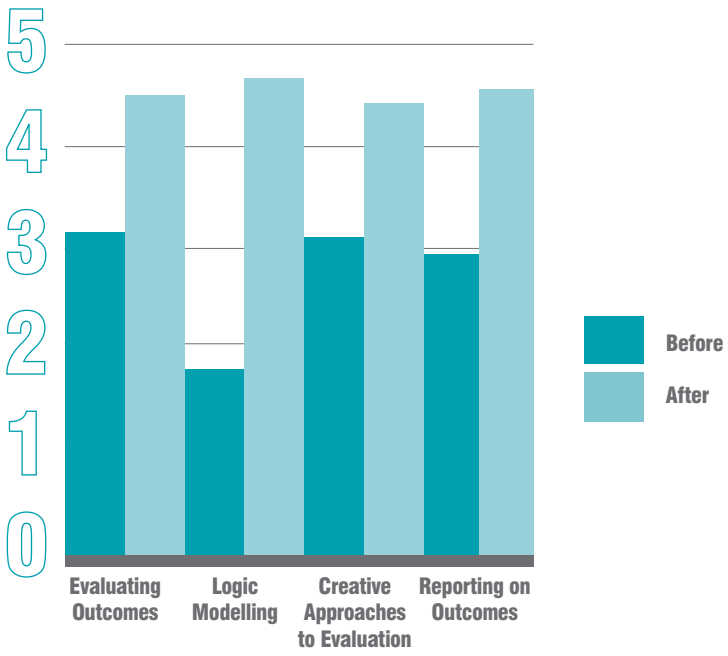
What did we do?

Four Square's new Chief Executive wanted to increase the organisation's ability to report on its impact. To achieve this outcome we delivered four tailored workshops to 10 key staff.

What difference did we make?

Staff reported increased skills, knowledge, understanding and confidence around evaluation.

Graph showing the aggregates of delegates' scores around evaluation skills and confidence where 0 is low and 5 is high.



What did we learn?

- Organisations often feel powerless in relation to their funders and need to be encouraged to engage more proactively in these relationships. For example by offering to help the local authority with its planned review of outcomes for homelessness work.
- People can be encouraged to report on their outcomes even where this is not explicitly requested. For example, by taking advantage of text boxes in local authority monitoring forms.
- Following the delivery of workshops we were asked by Four Square to provide a session around Putting Self-Evaluation into Practice. From this we learned that in order for organisations to embed evaluation into everyday practice it can be beneficial to provide a 'trouble-shooting' follow-up session a few months later.

Championing the use of third sector evidence

ESS facilitates networks to share evidence, improve practice, and to make the links between theory and practice.

What did we do?

We worked in partnership with Scottish Government's (SG) Third Sector Unit.

We led the Knowledge Translation Network which has started to produce a guide to support third sector organisations to use evidence to influence policy and practice. The guide will be published in summer 2014.

"A good time I think to initiate such a Network given the constant call from decision-makers and others for evidence and demonstration of impact."
Janet Muir, SCDC/CHEX

We co-facilitated The Third Sector Prevention Roundtable which generates better understanding of prevention.

We chaired and are part of the secretariat for the Scottish Third Sector Research Forum, which shares third sector evidence about 'what works' and improves the evidence base.

We ran a seminar for officials with funding responsibilities to help them manage their relationships with funded projects and produced resources.

"Excellent! Exactly what I wanted to cover. Lots of food for thought to discuss as a team and with people we fund."

We worked with SG Justice Analytical Services to generate cross sector learning about evidence use and evaluation in criminal justice.

We contributed to The Commonwealth Games evaluation toolkit and guidance.

We lead Inspiring Impact[2] in Scotland: we have delivered 'champion' network events at 'The Gathering' to promote and test II tools including Measuring Up! and Impact Hub. We have written two reports: "A good practice case study" and "How funders measure their own impact".

What difference did we make?

Scottish Government has used ESS learning in its guidance on evaluating prevention.

We contributed to improving understanding about how to embed an outcomes approach in the delivery of public services.

"Very useful workshop. I feel equipped to take forward reviews of our grant organisations and use the tools to improve on managing our relationships and achieving focussed outcomes to assist in policy-making and delivery."

What did we learn?

Our involvement encourages evaluation and use of evidence, and the production of tools and resources that can benefit a wider audience.

Third sector evaluation and evidence is critical in achieving public sector reform. We want to get even better at supporting this.

For further information about our activities and support please see our website at **www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk**

[2]Inspiring Impact is a UK initiative that aims to change the way the UK voluntary sector thinks about impact

Our people and resources

Trustees

Kirsten Hogg, Convenor
Lindsay Robertson, Treasurer
Emma Crawshaw

Lynne Irons
Dr Anita Morrison
Professor Steve Platt
Linda Rodgers
Stephanie Rose
Jennifer Wallace
Diana Wilkinson
Keith Wimbles

Stood down:
Patrick Boase
Dr Sam Gardner
Rev Barbara O'Donnell
Professor Gillian Hogg

Current staff

Steven Marwick,
Director

Diane Kennedy,
Depute Director

Martha Lester-Cribb,
Evaluation Support Manager

Emma Liddell,
Evaluation Support Manager

Patty Lozano-Casal,
Evidence into Policy & Practice Manager

Jane Marryat,
Research & Communications Officer

Tom Scott,
Training Officer

Lydia Morrow,
Finance and Administration Manager

Ruth Johnston,
Administration Assistant

Money

Our income was

£378,143

and we spent

£370,347

We receive a grant from Scottish Government. The rest of our income comes from contracts and fees.

Our full Annual Report and Financial Statement for 2013/2014 is on our website.

Our auditor is Geoghegan &Co.

Funded by:

Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS) works with third sector organisations and funders so that they can measure and report on their impact, and use learning to improve policy and practice.

For further information about our activities and support please see our website **www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk**

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@EvalSupScot

follow ESS on LinkedIn

Thorn House, 5 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2PR
T. 0131 243 2770 | **E.** info@evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk | www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk

Registered Company: SC284843 | Scottish Charity: SC036529 | VAT number: 923 2102 72