

Scottish Third Sector Research Forum meeting

25 May 2017, 1pm

Thorn House, 5 Rose Street, Edinburgh

Minutes

In attendance:

Steven Marwick (ESS) (Chair), Patty Lozano-Casal (ESS) (Secretariat), Jane Marryat (ESS) (Minutes), Gregor Berry (SG), Rowan Boase, (BIG), Stuart Cable (Dundee University), Ilse MacKinnon (SCVO), Gemma Jackson (VS), Stephen Osborne (UoE), Alasdair Rutherford (University of Stirling), Cassy Rutherford (TRT), Duncan Thorp (SES), Rosalind Tyler-Greig (IS), Guests: Ligia Teixeira (Crisis), Jenny Brotchie (Carnegie UK Trust).

Apologies:

Carolyn Sawers (BIG), Kerry Musselbrook (Iriss), Andy Dey (ACOSVO), Fiona Malcolm (SG), Jane Cullingworth (Voluntary Sector Studies Network, VSSN), David Cruikshank (SG), Jacqueline Rae (SG), Darah Zahran (SE), Josie Isles (IS), Sophie Flemig (UoE), Mark Meiklejohn (SG), Anne McDonald (HIENT), Rushir Shah (SCVO), Gareth Allen (SG), Kiren Zubairi (VHS) Louise Meikleham (OSCR), Claire Stevens (VHS), Chris Harkins (GCPH).

Welcome and introductions

Steven welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted as above.

Minutes and matters arising

The **minutes** of the previous meeting (5 March 2017) were approved.

Action: **Patty** to publish Minute on ESS website

All actions were achieved from the last meeting or will arise during the meeting. Jacqueline had provided an update on her actions by email – they were in hand.

The Forum noted that **Patty** is leaving ESS for a new role at See Me. The Forum thanked Patty for all her hard work on TSRF over the years and sent good wishes for the future. Steven M said that ESS would be recruiting a new team member who will have responsibility for the Forum.

Update on Forum's work plan 2017/18:

Patty reported that she had made the small number of changes to the work plan as agreed at the last meeting. The meeting signed off the work plan 2017/18.

Action: **Patty** to publish TSRF work plan 2017/18 on ESS website.

Steven O commented that he had been to the Voluntary Sector Studies Network event "Border Crossings" which had been a good event. He agreed the Forum should continue to make links with VSSN.

Evaluating the Forum: what do we know about our impact?

Patty said it was difficult to evaluate the Forum's impact due to its nature but it was important to try. This is needed so Third Sector Unit can report to Scottish Ministers, so members can continue to make the case to their own organisations for their own involvement, and so we can improve the Forum's work.

Only 5 responses had been received to the survey of members. She tabled a summary of responses:

What keeps you coming to forum meetings: –

- Sharing research
- Questions
- Understand research in relation to third sector
- Professional development opportunity.

Examples of use:

- Networking
- Signposting
- Sounding board
- Identification of research topics.

How to improve the Forum:

- Continue with Forum
- More presentations – We've actioned this (in today's meeting we have two presentations)
- Broaden Forum's network
- Raise profile – develop website/ more communications. (We have plans to do this in the future).

Steven M asked for reflections.

Cassy agreed with all the points. She said there was scope to link make closer links between the Forum and the Knowledge Translation Network and jointly to make communications even clearer.

She also suggested that if anyone receives an email with feedback or comments (positive or otherwise) about the Forum that this should be forwarded to ESS.

Action: Patty – to resend the survey.

Action: ALL those who have not completed survey please do so by end of next week before Patty leaves.

Action: ESS to keep this item on the agenda.

Action: Cassy and ESS to review links between TRSF and KTN including around website/comms.

Action: ALL to collect evidence of Forum's impact and send Steven Marwick feedback by email as appropriate

Planning the “Let’s collaborate” event

Patty said Scottish Government had (this week) kindly agreed to fund the costs of running the event at an outside venue. This means we can be more flexible and have larger audience than before. She proposed an overarching theme of ‘Co-production’ for the conference. This would allow us to promote the evidence paper about coproduction and look at coproduction in research specifically.

Stuart said – and others agreed - that it was important to have a greater proportion of academics in attendance.

Action: **Stuart** to email Patty with ideas to get academics to attend event including making links with Brendan McCormack QMU.

ESS to consider other ways to encourage academic attendance.

The meeting broke into groups to discuss theme, topic and audience.
Feedback from groups:

Cassy’s group suggested:

- Collaborate with Scottish Coproduction Network
- Use inclusive and simple language (‘coproduction’ is not a word everyone is familiar with)
- Draw on different perspectives from different disciplines
- Discuss coproduction at different points in research cycle
- Continue with previous messages – value of collaboration
- Highlight opportunity for early career researchers to attend

Rosalind’s group suggested:

- Think about mechanisms for coproduction and co-design
- Break down stages of research process
- Have case studies/presentations For example, DRILL
- When and how to co-produce. What are the resource implications?

Ilse’s group suggested:

- Value of practical case studies to showcase e.g. DRILL and Fiona Malcolm’s European Social Funding Programme.
- Posters (make sure ok with venue)
- Produce messages for the non-converted that are not at event about why to fund coproduced research and how to do it well.
- Invitations could encourage people to promote the event researchers: “bring researcher friend”.
- Think wider than academics e.g. invite think tanks
- Showcase the third sector as researchers

Steven O. suggested a further topic of linking the third sector with students.

Rosalind and **Stephen Osbourne** volunteered for a subgroup for the event planning.

Action: **Patty** to email forum members not here today to see if they would be interested in helping plan the conference.

Action: ESS will produce 'save the date/invite' for Forum to promote the event by summer 2017.

Action: ESS to pull ideas into an outline programme and consult the subgroup.

Subgroup 'thematic' work

Inclusive growth subgroup

Duncan explained that there had not been a huge amount of progress since the last meeting but ideas were developing about creating case studies. Jacqueline's idea to run a workshop was still on the cards. The subgroup hoped to have something more substantial to share at the next meeting.

Co-production subgroup

The group has produced an evidence paper on co-production (in meeting papers and now on line [here](#)). Rosalind gave an overview of the paper.

Forum members welcomed paper and thanked subgroup members, particularly Rosalind and Patty, for their work. **Rowan** said she has been looking for something like this for a while. It gives a framework for her work (BIG's people in the lead) and a practical way to evaluate. **Cassy** said her colleague Linda had used some of the principles in a meeting.

The Forum agreed that the next stage was to consider how to promote the paper to different audiences. This could be done by sending it with a bespoke email with reasons why this may be of interest to the person being approached.

Rowan suggested a one page summary.

Stuart suggested creating a PowerPoint of key messages. He also suggested that the paper include the list of other TSRF publications so far to back of paper.

Ligia offered to help with the communications strategy.

Stephen O had a few comments he'd sent separately for Patty to consider if appropriate.

Action: Patty to make amendments, sign off and publish on website, to email to Mark Meiklejohn for promoting.

ESS to consider a further communications plan.

What are we learning about "using research from elsewhere?"

Steven invited two speakers to give their presentations.

Gemma Jackson (Volunteer Scotland) presented 'Comparing UK Volunteer Participation Rates'

It was noticed that rates of volunteering were apparently different in Scotland to other parts of the UK. Gemma talked through the work by Volunteer Scotland to establish why. She revealed the reason was almost certainly due to small but significant variations in the wording of the survey questions in the four countries that in turn generated broader or narrower definitions of volunteering. She

spoke about how they had shared their findings with their partners and the consequences for the future.

Action: Gemma will publish fuller paper in July.

Ligia Teixeira (Crisis) presented research by Crisis

Please click on pdf for Ligia's slide presentation.



Third sector research
forum.pdf

Ligia spoke about some of Crisis's research projects. In brief summary she gave 3 benefits from her experience of investing in large scale UK wide research:

- It is cost effective
- It unlocks creativity and innovation.
- Doing big research helps make change happen – including sometimes using research from one country (or city) to influence change in another.

She highlighted a specific challenge that not enough research is being translated into practice and spoke about an ambitious new idea for a "what works" centre.

She also shared learning from research about how to challenge public myths. She said it that it doesn't work to focus on the problem. Individual case studies can help with fundraising but are not effective (and indeed counterproductive) in changing public perceptions or in influencing policy. It is necessary to generate robust stories about the system. If you use system stories people will support policy change.

Action: Patty to circulate presentation to Forum members.

Action: Jane to put in newsletter.

Action: ALL email Ligia with any further questions or for more detail

The Forum discussed each presentation and asked questions. Members shared their own experiences of cross-UK research.

Steven thanked Gemma and Ligia for two very interesting presentations.

Sharing the learning (Members updates)

Patty had previously sent updates from the Forum members to members as follows:

From Rosalind (IS and DRILL Programme): DRILL has just announced its new funded projects; and a new call for applications has been launched. For more information, including [research themes](#), visit the [DRILL website](#).

From Duncan (SES): The new [Social Enterprise Census 2017](#) survey is now live! If you work in a social enterprise please complete the survey. It will only take around 15 minutes to complete. We're calling on all Scottish social entrepreneurs to [complete the survey](#) - and also forward this email on to all your social enterprise and third sector contacts. The survey is vital in order to get robust and reliable data from every part of Scotland. [Take the survey now](#) to be automatically entered into the free prize draw to win 1 of 3 iPads!". Duncan also shared the details for the ["Universities and Business: Strengthening the](#)

[Partnership" event](#) organised by Holyrood Policy (31 May 2017 | 09.55 - 15.30 | Edinburgh).

From Ilse (SCVO): NCVO launched their [2017 UK Almanac](#). It's got some really useful context for the Research Forum's health of the sector discussions, not to mention some pretty fancy infographics. They've got a good blog [here](#). I've also written a [blog](#) on how it fits with the Scottish picture, with a particular focus on the growth in earned income.

From Carolyn (BIG): Cath Logan (who represents BIG in the Knowledge Translation Network) wrote a [blog](#) about the [Evidence from Elsewhere guide](#) for our Scotland page and for circulation in our bulletin to grant holders."

From Jane (ESS): "We have uploaded quite a few new things into our website, including a [guide for third sector and funders to talk about economic evaluation](#) and [a guide on how to evaluate asset-based approaches, principles for funders on getting the best from external evaluation](#). For those of you who are interested in 'good reporting practice', we have published the [story behind Harmonising Reporting](#), taking stock of where we are since the Scotland Funders' Forum report came out in 2010. We also have published some [new blogs](#), including a blog where Steven shares reflections on ["Collaborating for change – how do you measure success?"](#). Finally, you might be interested to know that we'll be shortly publishing a new guide for third sector organisations on *how to evaluate their policy influencing work*, so watch out for it!"

Cassy said her colleague **Linda** will email Jane with an update about Sport for Change for the newsletter. **Cassy** also said The Robertson Trust want to do some light touch research about why organisations are not applying for their funding. Cassy would like to use TSRF networks to reach people who haven't engaged with TRT. Ilse said she is working on a paper on 'grant-making trusts' which will send to Cassy.

Action: Ilse to send Cassy grant-making paper and to put Cassy in touch with Sandra Hogg who maintains SCVO funders connections.

Action: Cassy to send link to survey for TSRF newsletter to Jane.

Action: ALL Please send any further updates to be included in TSRF newsletter to Jane by [mid-June](#).

Date of future meetings:

5 October 2017, 10.30-1pm, venue to be confirmed (N.B. Please note change of date).

8 December 2017, 12.30-3.30pm, Volunteer Scotland, Stirling

15 March 2018, 10.30-1pm, venue to be confirmed