

# Research Forum 19 May

## **Scottish Third Sector Research Forum** **Quarterly Meeting 1, 2008/09 - 19 May 2008, Inverness**

### Present:

Geoff Pope, Scottish Government (Chair)

Louise Appleton, Scottish Government

Kathy Cameron, COSLA

Chris Higgins, HIE

Gerry Higgins, CEiS

John Lee, VDS

Nicola McBain, OSCR

Aidan Pia, Senscot

Ruchir Shah, SCVO

Antonia Swinson, Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition

Sandy Watson, Scottish Enterprise

Emma McGuire, Scottish Government

### Apologies:

Pat Armstrong, ACOSVO

Steven Marwick, ESS

Karl Monsen-Elvik, VDS

### **Minutes**

1. Prior to the meeting the group visited New Start Highland, a social enterprise which recycles furniture and household goods for the benefit of those who need them, while providing jobs and learning/training opportunities. The visit included a talk from Jim Dunbar, the Chief Executive, on the challenges of starting and developing a social enterprise.
2. The forum discussed the new draft remit and new name. It was clarified that the term 'forum' is intended to indicate the collaborative, information-sharing focus of the group. Some items for clarification were identified within the remit, as follows:

- The remit should refer to research *programmes* in the plural rather than the singular, to demonstrate clearly that the reference is to the research taken forward by all organisations involved, rather than by just no one member of the forum.
- In the same context, references to 'agreement' should be removed and replaced with references to collaboration and input.

A revised version of the remit will be produced on this basis by the Scottish Government, and will be sent out to the forum for final agreement.

3. The forum discussed the issue of additional membership. It was concluded that, while no one could identify an immediate need for additional members from the sector, the forum should not be constrained or limited in this sense, nor should formal membership be necessary for an invitation to a meeting where appropriate.

4. The need for some form of academic representation was identified and discussed. It was agreed that we need to make sure that communication is in both directions. Options identified were as follows:

- Invite academic representative/s onto the forum as members;
- Invite academic representative/s to act as advisers to the forum;
- Ask advice from a range of academic sources on specific projects as appropriate.

The decision was postponed.

5. The forum includes representation from organisations which might wish to bid on projects discussed within the forum. In order to ensure that these organisations do not have an unfair advantage over potential competitors, the forum identified a need to publish discussions in some form. As an initial step, it was suggested that the forum minutes and collective research programmes be published on the Scottish Government website. The Scottish Government will produce these documents and pass them to forum members for agreement prior to publication.

6. Ongoing, planned and potential research was identified and mapped out according to themes. In terms of the potential research, this exercise has identified potential links and gaps, which will be collated and sent out to the group by the Scottish Government. A discussion can then take place as to which organisations may wish to take forward/collaborate on which potential research projects. With these decisions taken, the collective research programmes for 2008/09 can be identified.

7. Dr Eleanor Burt of St Andrews University gave a presentation on questions/thoughts around the research needs of the third sector. Following this there was a discussion around related concerns.

8. The next meeting of the forum will be in Victoria Quay in Edinburgh on Tuesday 26 August at 10.30 a.m.

The forum noted its thanks to Chris Higgins for hosting the meeting, and to the organising committee.

## **Action Points**

- Agree the amended remit.
- Discuss and agree on (by email) the means of academic representation.
- As individual organisations, identify priority research from the list of potential projects produced within the meeting. Share these decisions, and on the basis of this, agree appropriate partnerships/collaborations on priority projects as appropriate.