

Third Sector Research Forum Quarterly Meeting 09 May 2011, OSCR, Dundee

In attendance:

Geoff Pope (SG)
Kay Barclay (SG)
Louise Meikleham (OSCR)
Carolyn Sawers (Funders Forum)
Linda Boyce (ACOSVO)
Helen Harper (VDS)
Dee Fraser (ESS)
DuncanThorpe (SSEC)
Anke Roexe (SG)

Minutes

1) Review of Evaluation Exercise (Dee Fraser) and Update of Remit

Dee presented summary of findings from the evaluation exercise completed last time. Participants want the forum to:

- facilitate the sharing of information / available data
- obtain early comment on data projects
- identify gaps in evidence and priorities for research
- reduce duplication
- act as a conduit of knowledge and evidence
- share information with the sector to influence practice
- provide a knowledge exchange/mobilisation role

Discussion around the update of the remit:

The forum should aim to go beyond sharing data and aim to pull evidence together to change behaviour and policy directions. This should involve defining areas where data can have the greatest influence and to present evidence in a way that it can be put to use by demonstrating how things can be done differently. The forum should also work more closely with representatives across SG and with groups such as COSLA.

There was also discussion around adopting a more thematic approach to selecting subject areas to address in the forum, such as a meeting on health. There is also scope for going beyond Scotland in pulling in evidence from UK, Europe and internationally.

Thematic meetings would result in written-up reports / evidence briefings that would be useful for policy makers, funders and others. Other forms of dissemination such as face to face meetings with stakeholders may also be part of a successful dissemination strategy (and the briefings would be a starting point that forum members could use to trigger discussions).

It was stressed that the forum's focus was the development of and support of third sector.

Action Point: Kay will rewrite the Remit drawing on the discussed points and will circulate the document to forum members for feedback.

2) Membership updates

The forum agreed to Kay's suggestion to invite the Scottish Agricultural College to join the forum due to their extensive research focus on community resilience at the local level. (**Kay will inform SAC; update-Mike Woolvin has accepted**).

There was also discussion around including more academic participants in the forum and it was agreed to academic contributors on an ad hoc basis depending on the topic areas discussed by the forum.

It might be useful to ask the academic community not only about what kind of research is being done but also **what research is being planned**. It would also be useful to keep tabs on what sort of research funders are looking to support.

Action point: each forum member to check out their relevant funders and academic institutions to find out what research is being planned and to think about who may hold useful information about a specific topic that the forum is planning to discuss.

3) Examples of third sector contribution

The forum broke into three groups to discuss examples of third sector contribution.

First Group:

1) Big Lottery Funded Organisations Case Studies (Attached at Annex 1)

The group noted that case studies are useful sources of information especially for the funder and the organisation for internal reflection but they have important limitations: a) they sometimes leave out useful information; b) they cannot answer why an organisation was successful or failed; c) there are problems with comparison and aggregating cases to form a bigger picture.

Second Group:

1) Stand and Deliver Survey (2006-2007) proportion of charities involved in the delivery of public services;

<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/rs15.aspx>

2) Research by Bangor University about the benefits for the health service of contracts for patient transport with voluntary organisations.

Zinovieff, F. and Robinson, C.A. (2010) The Role of the Voluntary Sector in Delayed Transfer of Care (DToC)/Hospital Discharge and Prevention of Readmission. Bangor: Bangor University

The group noted that case studies are hugely important because they a) can point the way for future research; b) for raising problems such as sustainability of services; c) more detailed approach can help with dissemination; d) good method for organisations to understand their own impact better.

Third Group:

1) Partnership Drugs Initiative (PDI) programme analysis of intensive support for young people at risk of problem drug use

<http://www.ltsbfoundationforscotland.org.uk/documents/In-depth%20analysis%20Intensive%20support%20for%20young%20people.pdf>

2) Ipsos Mori Social Enterprise Survey;

3) SROI assessment supporting the commissioning of a Care at Home service.

The group noted that case studies and SROI assessment are both useful for highlighting the need for holistic approaches to service delivery to organisations such as local authorities, health boards and anyone who commissions work for vulnerable users. Health and well being tend to produce the best case studies.

4) Research Priorities / themes

Discussion was around the topic for the next meeting.

Geoff proposed health and wellbeing as this is an area where third sector makes an important contribution. The group discussed how to narrow the theme down.

The theme of benefits of including third sector in health care delivery or health service delivery was identified as the theme for the next meeting.

Action point: Participants will bring in a relevant piece of research for the next meeting. This should evidence the benefits/ contribution of third sector involvement in service delivery. Examples that can demonstrate cost savings would be particularly useful.

Dissemination of findings:

Geoff suggested a short 2 page briefing document format pulling together difference case studies/ evidence sources with key findings bulleted. Key messages and implications overall will be summarised.

It was also suggested that the forum should check assumptions on how decisions are made by those in positions of power. Voluntary health Scotland could help with this.

It may also be possible to disseminate findings via the Research Officers of the organisations that the forum would like to influence.

On the basis of checks with organisations and individuals (VHS, Scottish Government Health Directorate, NHS Health Scotland) that have better knowledge about the health sector and knowledge exchange, the forum should define its target audience and plan the next meeting accordingly.

Outline for the next meeting:

Initial discussion to find out whether we are talking to the right people about the right things, presentation of material each has brought, identifying key messages; planning content and structure of the output (evidence briefing).

5) Research updates

OSCR: Charity income impact analysis planned: research into the sustainability and resilience of the sector; this research may be carried out separately or as part of the Charity Register analysis, a new Charity Register Profile should also be due.

VDS: 22 June Volunteering and Public Service Delivery Event, Glasgow: presentation of papers on issues such as job-substitution and the policy landscape.

ACOSVO: Report pending on the partnership research; key findings: time, effort and energy going into maintaining partnerships; Membership survey report pending, main findings: income continuity has emerged as a big issue

6) Date, time and location for the next meeting

Date: September (exact date tbc)

Location: Stirling - VDS to host.

Annex 1: Big Lottery Fund Case studies

1) Auchencairn Initiative

The Auchencairn Initiative is a community organisation based in Dumfries and Galloway serving a community of 400 people. They received £225,000 from the Big Lottery Fund to develop their Enterprise Centre. The money helped to stabilise the future of the post office and store. The grant also allowed for the creation of a space for new business space which is currently used by Scruffs Nursery Group. The post office and shop are used by most of the people in the village while the nursery fills a local need for specialist childcare

This project demonstrates the ability of BIG funding to help build more sustainable communities. This community was due to lose its post office, as a result of the retiral of their postmistress who operated the service from her home. The community began by accessing land for a temporary facility from a portakabin and the Big Lottery Fund grant helped provide a new build facility that also offered the opportunity to generate additional income from lettable space and related accommodation.

For the community the aims of the project were to:

- Provide better and more secure access to post office and village shop services
- Have a positive impact on the environment by a reduction in need for daily car journeys, estimated to be at least 100 per day, as the post office and shop will be locally available to the community
- Reduce carbon emissions and save on energy costs by installing a ground source heat pump throughout the building
- Secure employment within the village for two people in the retail section and a further two people within the lettable area
- Re-invest an estimated net income of circa. £1k per year in community projects.

This one year capital build project was delivered through the £225,000 grant from BIG along with contributions from several other funders: Dumfries and Galloway Council, LEADER+ and the Auchencairn Initiative itself.

Not only did the project provide a positive response to the threatened loss of the Post Office caused by the retiral of the postmistress, but due to the success of this branch in the new community building the Auchencairn Post Office was retained following the review of Rural Post Offices in the area which saw several others being closed. Post Office turnover in Auchencairn has increased substantially in the Enterprise Centre. The childcare facility within the lettable area of the building provided a new childcare service within the community and the operator occupies the residential flat on the first floor.

The building is fully occupied, each of the businesses is profitable and all rents and other costs are being paid on time. Landlord costs are substantially below income and funds are available from income for future maintenance/repair. On this basis the project is sustainable and, subject to adjustments over time as markets change, expects it to remain so for the long term.

As a result of the project the community now still has its post office but also has a new childcare facility. The rental income from all three ensure the building's sustainability and the services they provide contribute to the sustainability of the community.

2) Family Action in Rogerfield and Easterhouse

(FARE) is a voluntary organisation based in Easterhouse in the east end of Glasgow. A registered charity, FARE was started in 1989 by local people who wanted to work together to "enhance the lives of the inhabitants of Rogerfield and Easterhouse." through the delivery of services to meet their social, emotional and physical needs.

In 1997 FARE acquired premises and graduated from being based in a room within a local flat to moving into their current premises. FARE has grown considerably since then. As geographical boundaries have expanded, so has the reach of FARE's services; now over twenty staff and volunteers help with their delivery and in June 2010 they moved into a brand new purpose built building.

The new centre cost £1.8m and contains:

Community cafe, creche space, multipurpose hall, games room, art room, chill out space, recording studio, learning centre (linked to John Wheatley College), office space and meeting room.

Services range from youth clubs, art classes, exercise classes, sports clubs, Duke of Edinburgh Award and projects such as Mer Tae Me, Territorial History Project and Mini Olympics.

Funding of the new centre and services came from a range of partners and included The Big Lottery Fund in Scotland, Inspiring Scotland, Glasgow Housing Association, The Bannatyne Group, The Moffat Charitable Trust and Sport Relief.

FARE was awarded £334,988 in December 2008 through our Investing in Communities programme and their 'Building a FARE Future' project will improve relationships, trust and understanding within the communities of Rogerfield and Easterhouse in Glasgow.

This three year grant will partly fund capital costs related to the building of the community centre, salaries and overheads. Staff posts will be an existing full time business development manager, funded for one year, an existing family support worker and an existing media worker both funded for the second and third years of the project.

Project outcomes

- By the end of the project 425 people from the local community will demonstrate an increase in social interaction and improved life skills with greater trust and understanding among generations resulting in a more integrated community.
- By the end of the project FARE will have improved long term sustainability through a 15% increase in income generation thereby reducing dependency on grant funding and through personal/professional development of volunteers encouraging long term involvement in management of the facility and delivery of services.

- By the end of the project, due to increased freedom of movement resulting from the territorial work, there will be a 12.5% increase in interaction among young people from Greater Easterhouse and surrounding areas and increased access to positive opportunities within a purpose built facility.
- By the end of the project, through an increase in physical activity and social interaction, 500 members of the local community will demonstrate an increased sense of physical, emotional and social well being through the support delivered to individuals, groups and families from within the purpose built facility at the heart of the community.

Progress to date

Since the award of grant the construction phase of the new facility has been completed successfully while clubs and projects have continued to be delivered during this time.

FARE has also worked closely with Evaluation Support Scotland to develop tools to strengthen their evaluation processes. Members of staff are now utilising these skills in service delivery.

They have also received training and support from EKOS and Forth Sector to develop their knowledge and experience in using SROI methodology. This is currently being applied to their Mer tae Me programme.

3) Kibble Education and Care Centre

Kibble Education and Care Centre's 'Careers for Care Leavers' project supported care leavers aged 16-18 years to live independently and obtain employment or other education and training opportunities. The project aimed to assist at least eighteen young people in Renfrewshire over two years. Participants have been helped to move away from hopelessness, violence, petty crime and depression and to gain confidence and basic vocational and other employability skills while undertaking work placements in three of Kibble's social enterprises. The project also involves an element of aftercare once participants are placed in work.

Kibble Education and Care Centre received a two year grant of £164,153 from the Big Lottery Fund in October 2008. In this project Kibble used BIG funding to support the work of three co-ordinators developing their three businesses, providing match funding for the grant from their own resources. In November 2010 they reported that the project has given a group of twenty three vulnerable young people a chance to gain experience in a real life working environment, developing skills that have increased their chances of moving into employment or training. Throughout this work experience they have also been able to work towards a variety of qualifications, and been given the opportunity to play an active role in the community which has further developed their social and interpersonal skills, thus enabling them to make a successful transition to independence.

The project outcomes stated that they would provide six employment and training placements per year for a group of Kibble's most vulnerable care leavers, deemed not ready to return to their home communities at age

sixteen, from which five young people would move into further education, training or employment by the end of the project. Within the first year, they reported exceeding this target by providing eight placements for young people within the three businesses; Knibbles, Promoworks and Frameworks. In this year, two of these young people moved onto training or employment.

During the second year of the project they exceeded their target by offering a further fifteen placements, although not all of the young people remained in the placement for the amount of time anticipated. Out of these fifteen placements, six young people moved onto training or employment and four young people are still with the organisation in their placements.

Overall, they have reported success in achieving their main goal of providing twelve training and employment placements for care leavers who are statistically more likely to experience unemployment or have limited access to further and higher education than other young people. Although not all of the young people involved in the project have moved onto employment or education, they believe that considering the barriers these young people face it is an extremely positive result for eight of them to have succeeded.

In terms of learning from the project, the grant holder has reported that over the course of the project they identified that there were weaknesses with their monitoring and evaluating processes and as a result they have developed a new system which has made it easier for staff to collate the most relevant information required for analysis. In addition, they have recently launched Kibble Performs website which shows how they measure performance and plan for the future. This tool shows how they are making life wealthier and fairer, smarter, healthier, safer and stronger and greener for everyone involved in Kibble. This website is the first of its kind for organisations within this sector.

The grant holder has confirmed that the 'Careers for Care Leavers' project will continue following the end of Lottery funding.

This project was included in the self-evaluation support case studies that Blake Stevenson carried out for us. All of the case studies can be found at: http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/iic_case_studies.pdf