

Research Forum 26 August

Scottish Third Sector Research Forum

Quarterly Meeting 2, 2008/09 - 26 August 2008, Edinburgh

Present:

Geoff Pope, Scottish Government (Chair)

Chris Higgins, HIE

Sandy Watson, Scottish Enterprise

Kathy Cameron, COSLA

Silvy Peeters, ESS

Gerry Higgins, CEiS

Karl Monsen-Elvik, VDS

Louise Scott, Scottish Government

Eleanor Burt, St Andrews University

Ruchir Shah, SCVO

Shirley Otto, ACOSVO

Antonia Swinson, Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition

Nicola McBain, OSCR

Emma McGuire, Scottish Government

Apologies:

Kris von Wald, ACOSVO

Aidan Pia, Senscot

Minutes

1. General introductions were made, as some new members were present. The minutes of the last meeting were approved with no objections.
2. Forum members outlined the progress of their research projects as follows:
 - Scottish Government (Geoff Pope) - potential projects as detailed below. **It was noted that these projects are dependent on Ministerial agreement, which has not yet been gained.**

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- Examination of the contribution of the third sector to the government's purpose and five strategic objectives.
- Consideration of the opportunities and challenges of the Concordat for the third sector.
- Projecting looking at the role of third sector organisations in Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs).
- Evaluation of the success factors for establishing a thriving social enterprise.
- Qualitative research to identify the problems/barriers facing BME in social enterprise.
- ACOSVO (Shirley Otto) - two projects:
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- Cranfield research project intended to provide insights into governance and leadership within the Third Sector in Scotland.
- Research into leadership and Change Management in the Scottish Voluntary Sector.
- OSCR (Nicola McBain) - currently considering future research needs prior to identifying potential projects in the new year.
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- Taking forward some thematic studies on charities with a turnover of more than £25k.
- Social Enterprise Coalition (Antonia Swinson) - taking forward small scale project on Single Outcome Agreements, and demonstrating how social enterprises link in to government priorities etc, for the benefit of members.
- CEIS (Gerry Higgins) - two projects:
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- Project identifying organisations which may have the capacity to take on opportunities for second level contracting for the commonwealth games.
- Project looking at best practice for social enterprise involvement in the health sector, in the context of work currently going forward in England.
- HIE (Chris Higgins) - looking at means to identify the level of community recycling that is taking place in the Highlands and Islands.
- SCVO (Ruchir Shah) - projects as follows:
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- Initial analysis of single outcome agreements. A survey of the national intermediaries group showed that 12 others are also taking forward similar analyses.
- Project looking at best practice in providing funding for equalities groups in the third sector.

- Working with NCVO to get a detailed breakdown of information on the assets of the top 100 third sector organisations.
- VDS (Karl Monsen-Elvik) - currently taking forward projects as follows:
 - Initial review of single outcome agreements - which of these include references to volunteering. A more in-depth study will be shortly be commissioned.
 - Project looking at the ways in which different 1st world country ask citizens about their volunteering.
 - ESRC-funded case studentship on informal volunteering.
 - Work with volunteer centres to ask different groups how they see their volunteering, and examine ways in which it could be more fit for purpose.
 - Examination of the involvement of volunteers with the NHS in four health board areas.
 - Also potential projects identified for the future, as follows:
 - § Work with SCVO on community empowerment: 'Future Pulse'.
 - § Broaden the definition of the economic value of the volunteer, and find a way to link this into labour market statistics.
 - § Find examples of how grassroots volunteering is linking/inputting to outcomes for single outcome agreements.
 - § Look at the significance of the Olympic legacy for volunteering.
 - § Link with organisations in England about the areas of legislation and policy that have not been devolved from Westminster, and which have an impact on volunteering in Scotland.
- ESS (Silvy Peeters) - strategic work on evidence base for the third sector. Projects as follows:
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 - Healthy Communities project - work with community-led health organisations to measure and report on the impact on people's lives using qualitative information
 - Community Health and Food Scotland - self-evaluation of six projects to build robust and meaningful evidence amongst community food projects

3. Brief presentations were given on three new central resources on research for the sector, as follows:

 - The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is currently funding two research centres as follows:
 - Birmingham University will host a third sector research centre that will look at the value of the third sector as an alternative to the mainstream in terms of the delivery of public services.

- Cass Business School in London will establish the UK's first independent, multidisciplinary and academically based Centre for Charitable Giving and Philanthropy.
- SCVO has been commissioned by the Scottish Government to provide a service as connector and research link for the third sector, to be known as the Interactive Evidence Library. The service will include seminars, an annual self-funding conference, and an interactive portal website collating and summarising research publications.
- A Research Network on the future of the third sector in Scotland has been commissioned, to be led by St Andrews University and Glasgow Caledonian University. It will bring together key academics in the field of third sector research with key stakeholders from the third sector in a series of seminars, to discuss the direction for academic research on the sector.

4. Geoff Pope gave a brief account of the Suppliers Development Programme, which is run by Glasgow City Council, and which comprises a searchable database of suppliers for the use both of suppliers and commissioners, as well as a programme of support services for suppliers. The Scottish Government has purchased membership for all third sector organisations across Scotland, should they wish to take this up, and will be emailing key stakeholders on this shortly.

5. Forum members shared news on items of research being taken forward by other parties, as follows:

- Project to be taken forward by Rocket Science, commissioned by SVA, aimed at developing a common approach across the CVS network to collecting, analysing and publishing data on the third sector.
- Report from OTS on women in BME.
- Kevin Dunion, the Information Commissioner, is taking forward research into why there has been low take up of the opportunities provided by the Freedom of Information Act on the part of the voluntary sector.
 - The DINC Forum will be commissioning a mapping exercise looking at existing support services for the sector.
 - Some inhouse research by Midlothian Voluntary Action on the current marketing capacity of Midlothian social enterprises.
 - Investigation into potential options around post offices scheduled for closure - currently unclear whether this project will go ahead.
 - Research by the Scottish Procurement Directorate into the take up and usage of reserved contracts, i.e. contracts reserved for organisations who's workforce consists of 50% or more disadvantaged people.

6. There was a brief discussion around dissemination methods - there is a lot of information available on previous research, but how do we get organisations to look at/make use of this? It was agreed that a fuller discussion should take place around this issue at the next meeting. In the meantime it would be valuable for members to consider their own

dissemination practices, and ways in which these could be made more accessible.

7. The next meeting will be due at the end of November/beginning of December. It was identified that this is a busy time for many members, therefore agreement of the date was deferred, and will be agreed by email.