

Scottish Third Sector Research Forum meeting

9 March 2016, 10.30 am

Scottish Government, Victoria Quay, EH6 6QQ

Minutes

In attendance:

Steven Marwick (ESS) (Chair), Cath Logan (BIG), Patty Lozano-Casal (ESS) (Secretariat), Jane Marryat (ESS) (Minutes), Ilse MacKinnon (SCVO), Gemma Jackson (VS), Rosalind Tyler-Greig (IS), Catherine Ronald (VHS), Lizzie Leman (GCPH), Duncan Thorp (SES), Jacqueline Rae (SG), David Cruikshank (SG), Darah Zahran (SE), Orian Brook (University of Stirling), Fiona Malcolm (SG) (Joined meeting at 11.40am) and Anne MacDonald (HIENT).

Apologies:

Mark McGeachie (JIT), Sophie Flemig (UoE), Carolyn Sawers (BIG), Louise Meikleham (OSCR), Jackie McKenzie (Iriss), Mark Meiklejohn (SG), Andy Dey (ACOSVO), Claire Stevens (VHS), Sarah Deas (SE), Alasdair Rutherford (University of Stirling), Josie Isles (IS), Cassy Rutherford (TRT) and Stephen Plunkett (The ALLIANCE).

Welcome and introductions

Steven welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly new members – Rosalind, Catherine and Lizzie - and noted apologies.

Minutes and matters arising

The **minutes** of the previous meeting (1 December 2015) were approved with correction to a couple of misspellings [Fiona Garven (SCDC) and SCARF] and year 2015 not 2016 in last line of page 7.

Matters arising: Most actions have been taken forward. Patty's meeting with Andrew Kendrick has been rescheduled.

Action: **Patty** to follow up Josie's actions.

Action: **Patty** to upload the minutes when amended onto the website.

Planning Forum's work:

Workplan 2016/17

Steven spoke to the “TSRF work plan 2016–17” paper, which was circulated to members in advance. This paper captured the broad ideas from last meeting and suggests continuing a lot of the current work of the Forum with some shifts in development. It sets out 4 meetings per year with an annual event planned for 13th September 2016. This plan assumes funding for ESS to facilitate the Forum.

Steven invited broad views from members. There was general agreement that the plan outlined work expected to be done by the Forum. The Forum split into small groups to discuss the plan in more detail, particularly to identify specific priorities, communication ideas and areas to focus on. Key points raised are:

- A more structured stock-take of research to identify collective gaps in third sector research.
- Creating a list of researchers and their work.
- Using the [Knowledge Hub](#) for communication/dissemination purposes (SCVO is currently testing this), although some members had some reservations – people don’t know about it and can be easy to get lost in it.
- For communications – Facebook group to share learning and Twitter to help match-making service. GCPH’s communications team use social media to disseminate their research. Suggested that Sheena Fletcher could speak to the Forum.
- Research topics:
 - To continue with volunteering: e.g. context barriers; participation in volunteering; process of becoming a volunteer, and public trust in relation to charities.
 - Discussed ‘Inclusive growth’ - ensuring there is equal level of opportunities economically and socially to equalise wealth, and suggested this may be work for a subgroup.
- Continue to do what works for members: e.g. discussion of wide ranging research, ‘Let’s collaborate’ events, networking, disseminating research, getting feedback, etc.
- The group could have a role in identifying gaps in research.
- The work plan should have a definition of third sector.

Action: ESS to update the work plan 2016-17 to reflect the discussions and include:

- Piloting of different ways of communication

- Identifying the issues being wrestled with: e.g. definition of third sector, issues around employment
- The Forum being a place to share ideas and be creative about what we know and help solve each other's problems (purposeful updates).

Action: ESS to add 'work plan 2016-17' to next meeting's agenda for approval. Patty suggested that the evidence framework could be used to take stock. This could be done pre-meeting. **Patty** to email questions to Forum members in preparation for discussions for next meeting.

Steven asked members for feedback about Forum – what works and what doesn't work so well, and what success will look like in a year (**Annex**).

Action: Patty to invite members who were unable to attend this meeting to answer these questions by e-mail.

Collaborating with academics

Patty tabled the latest Knowledge Translation Network (KTN) resource: "[Collaborating with academics](#)", which is a supplementary guide to [Evidence for Success](#) (2014). Patty said that:

- 'Collaborating with academics' provides practical guidance and resources for third sector organisations to **set up effective links with academics to generate and use evidence** to influence policy and practice.
- The publication will be **launched on 17 March** at an afternoon event at University of Edinburgh. During the event participants will be asked to comment on their support needs i.e. training, one hour surgeries.
- KTN members, Cath Logan and Cassy Rutherford, are working on another supplementary guide to support third sector organisations make sense and use 'secondary evidence'. This will be launched later in the year.

Action: Patty will circulate a link to 'Collaborating with academics' when on ESS website. Link: <http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/resources/340/>.

Action: All to email Patty if wanting a paper copy.

Action: All to promote this publication across Forum and members' networks.

"Let's collaborate" event

Steven reminded the Forum that the "Let's collaborate" event will be hosted again by Scottish Government TSU and it will take place on **13 September 2016** at Victoria Quay (Edinburgh). Initial thoughts from members suggested

that it should take a similar format to previous events – presentations and breakout sessions.

Steven said that last year's event was successful in showcasing lots of examples of collaboration and an option for this year's event is to showcase further examples, such as Fiona Malcolm's work on European Social Fund.

The Forum shared the following ideas for the event:

- Ilse suggested exploring themed breakout sessions to explain the structure of the sector, such as housing, health and children and families.
- Orion talked about interesting learning coming out of the Big Data workshops which may make a topic.
- David suggested using the event to find out how academics engage with the third sector: e.g. do they use particular websites? Do they know the structure of the third sector, like Third Sector Interfaces?
- Patty informed the Forum that someone from Interface, probably Shelley Breckenridge, will be attending and might be able to present examples of how they broker relationships between sectors, including academia.
- David said there is a need for higher level part of the day, not just themed discussions.
- Patty suggested 'funding of research' as a topic. Fiona (and Anne) could share learning about the process of engaging researchers and third sector on developments around the European Social Fund.

Patty said that Scottish Universities Insight Institute provide funding for knowledge exchange activities between academia and the third sector, so it might be good to invite them too.

Steven said that the Forum didn't have funders at the event previously and suggested inviting ESRC to talk about funding academics to research and disseminate results. He said that he heard at a recent event of the tension for researchers around doing 'action research' and pressure to publish in peer reviewed journals.

- Patty suggested a presentation about how public sector and researchers engage.
- Jacqueline commented that SG are currently engaged in funding evaluations but there are SG initiatives to support research: e.g. Roger Halliday Scheme (running again this year).

- Cath suggested using the Scotland Funders' Forum to map who funds research and what research is being funded.

Steven summarised the discussion suggesting a need for a good mix of elements including: focussed examples, themed work and 'funding' as a topic.

Patty asked for volunteers to help shape programme for event: Ilse, Jacqueline, Catherine, Orion and Cath.

Action: Patty will send Doodle Poll to Ilse, Jaqueline, Catherine, Cath and Orion with dates to meet. Group will take on board above comments and suggestions.

Member's updates

"Public confidence in the third sector": what do we know?

Other updates from Forum members

Ilse presented SCVO briefing "The public view: trust, confidence and support of charities in Scotland" and talked about the research that they commission from Ipsos Mori to survey public opinion of charities in the light of some very negative high profile media coverage in 2015 about fundraising and financial management practices and a consequent fundraising review. SCVO wanted to know what public confidence was in Scotland.

Ilse said that survey results are very positive in Scotland, especially for people who had had a personal connection with a charity and in rural areas. It seems that people in Scotland are more likely to use a charity.

In terms of what's next for this work, Ilse said:

- Theme for the Gathering 2016 became 'I love charities' as a result of the research and the research was fed into the Gathering
- Infographic was designed which attracted press coverage (Daily Record)
- celebrities and politicians engaged to publicise the findings
- Bo'ness was chosen as an example of an average place
- A video will be made
- The 'I love charities' campaign will be used in the future to change/challenge attitudes
- SCVO will be working on this with NCVO during 'Volunteers' Week and 'Charities' Week will feed into fundraising review.
- Exploration of what brings charities into disrepute will be part of phase 2 of the research.

Links: <http://www.scvo.org.uk/i-love-charity/>; <http://www.scvo.org.uk/i-love-charity-figures/>, and <http://www.scvo.org.uk/blog/why-is-public-trust-in-scottish-charities-so-strong-2/>

Steven invited questions and comments from Forum members:

- There was a discussion about whether the survey questions were comparable with other surveys as some of the statistics seem to show stark gaps between Scotland and UK figures for volunteering. Ilse responded that some questions were comparable whilst others were not. OSCR and the Charity Commission are both running surveys and Community Life survey is not included in Scotland. Louise Meikleham and Ilse have worked together on the OSCR survey questions. OSCR is also doing some focus groups.

Action: Patty to liaise with Louise to present OSCR's learning around public's trust in charities at the Forum's May meeting.

Action: Ilse will send key messages and link to infographic (on SCVO Facebook page) for Forum members to use to promote research

Other updates from members

Duncan said that two reports have recently been published:

- "Better Business" report into CSR in Scotland from SVL:
<http://www.socialvaluelab.org.uk/2016/01/examining-better-business-in-scotland>
- "Innovation Growth Lab" report into UK private sector business subsidies:
<http://innovationgrowthlab.org/blog/how-much-does-uk-spend-supporting-its-businesses>
- Social Enterprise Scotland have had meetings with think tanks – IPPR, Common Wheel and Reform Scotland, and suggested that the Forum might have one of these speak at a Forum meeting and be invited to the "Let's collaborate" event in September.

Action: Patty and Duncan to liaise to invite think tanks to attend event in September and organise speaker at a Forum meeting.

Ilse – Nominations are open for [Charities Awards](#). Deadline: 18 March 2016.

Steven invited **Fiona Malcolm (SG)** to provide an update on the European Social Fund. Fiona said that there will be more to say at a later date but she found the Forum helpful and especially the "Collaborating with academics" publication. She will signpost applicants to this publication and include in the

Fund guidance. Fiona said that would welcome the Forum's feedback on the application form and process when these are ready.

Catherine said Voluntary Health Scotland is secretariat for the Parliamentary cross-party group on health inequalities. They receive many requests from academics and lately have had Stuart Mercer and Graham Watt present to the group on a primary care perspective. Catherine also said VHS is holding a knowledge exchange event on 1 June in Stirling to share research on health equalities. Catherine would be interested to hear suggestions for the agenda. Patty suggested Catherine contact Andrew Paterson from CHEX. Ilse suggested it would be a good idea to repeat the case studies. Gemma suggested the TSRF's volunteering research would be useful to share at the event.

Action: All to e-mail suggestions to Catherine or to her colleague, Lauren Blair (Lauren.Blair@vhscotland.org.uk).

Action: Patty to give Catherine Andrew Paterson (CHEX)'s contact details.

Rosalind provided an update from **Inclusion Scotland** on the DRILL project. She said that the application forms are being developed for summer 2016 and that her colleague Josie is talking to disability groups and developing a match making service to find academics to work with groups. Rosalind commented that the "Collaborating with academics" guide will be a great resource for their project.

AOB

1. Steven asked the Forum to note the Forum meeting dates: 31 May – at OCSR (Dundee); 31 August; 30 November at BIG (Glasgow), and 9 March 2017. Steven asked members to get in touch if they'd like to host the August and March 2017 meetings.

Action: All to consider hosting and liaise with Patty accordingly.

2. **Action: Patty** to put a link to Collaborating with academics (after launch 17 march) onto TSRF webpages. **Alistair Rutherford** to put a link to the "Collaborating with academics" document on Think Data website.

3. Orion/Ilse reminded members of the [Think Data](#) webinars and workshops. Past webinars are on the [website to view](#).

Action: All to spread the word about these statistics training opportunities.

Action: ESS to put a link to Think Data webinars on TSRF pages

4. Patty reminded everyone to put 13 September – “Let’s collaborate” event in their diaries. **Action: All.**
5. Patty thanked Nicole for organising the venue for today’s meeting on behalf of Mark Meiklejohn.

Date of next meeting:

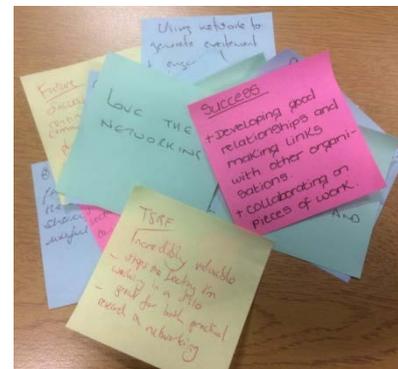
31 May 2016, Scottish Charities Regulator office, Dundee.

Annex

Scottish Third Sector Research Forum 9 March 2016

What do you like about the Forum (and/or its work) to date?

- Love the networking
- Incredibly valuable:
 - Stops me feeling I'm working in a silo
 - Great for both practical research and networking
- Being able to network/know what is happening around research in 3rd sector, and
- Collaborating on pieces of work
- Working remotely from other organisations on the Forum. Sharing papers/minutes useful



What would success for the Forum look like for you?

Promote and share research about and from the third sector

- Third sector research is more widely available and used
- Successful dissemination of research to others for learning – wide networks
- I would have identified academics or previous research on the area I'm working on or know who to ask!
- Locate and engage helpful academics who can contribute and signpost other people/materials of use
- Using networks to generate excitement and engagement around research i.e. cross-posting, sharing, social media conversations, etc.
- Increased connections between 3rd sector, public sector and academics through joining up resources – 3rd sector (especially smaller orgs) can't do it alone and has a pressing need to better demonstrate impact

Identify research questions and meet evidence gaps

- Greater awareness of social enterprise in the group and identifying gaps in research
- Continuation of great communication and networking, plus some practical outputs around shared themes/big research questions and gaps

Promote the use of research to improve policy and practice

- Evidence exchange to bolster different research products
- Forum could inform, support and integrate research findings into wider policy and strategy frameworks
- We identified priority areas to look at a number of years ago. It would be good to revisit these and consider the outputs of the group that reflect these priorities

Forum members have networking and peer support opportunities

- Developing good relationships and making links with other organisations
- Collaborating on pieces of work
- It'd be useful to have regular, critical reflection on:
 - Aims of the group
 - Outputs of the group