



Learning and Innovation Prize
2011



About CES

Charities Evaluation Services (CES) supports third sector organisations and their funders so that they can focus on doing what they do best and achieve more for the causes they serve.

For over 20 years, CES have been driven by a commitment to strengthen and improve the sector. We do this by providing training, support, advice and undertaking independent evaluations.

CES are specialists. Our practical resources help those in our sector make more of a difference. Each year we directly work with over 1,000 organisations to develop their performance management, evaluation and improve the quality of their organisation and services. We also produce and support PQASSO, the sector's leading quality standard with over 14,000 copies sold in the UK. PQASSO is the only quality standard developed for the sector by the sector.

We understand how vital it is that organisations can access our help in ways that are appropriate to their needs and resources. For some, CES can be a catalyst offering a perspective that enables change, whilst for others we are a knowledge base providing practical tools that guide, inform and enable. Charities and funders alike turn to CES as a coach, valuing our skills in supporting individuals and organisations through change and development.

Working with commissioners, funders, charities and support organisations places CES at the very heart of the sector. Through our work, CES are ideally positioned to promote a shared language and understanding. As a result, we see charities and funders become more effective and better equipped to demonstrate their value.

Ultimately, we are passionate about helping voluntary and community organisations demonstrate how they are making a difference and share learning. With CES' support, organisations can become more effective and able and do more for those who need them most.

For more information about our work and how we can help, please visit www.ces-vol.org.uk



Welcome

We are proud to bring you the first ever CES Learning and Innovation Prize results.



The Prize recognises organisations that have made changes for the better, rewarding organisations who make the best use of the information they have to improve services or policies – either by making small modifications or significant transformations. It aims to highlight the contribution that monitoring information and evaluation findings make to improving service delivery through learning, not just through accountability.

Our four Prize categories encouraged entries from a broad range of organisations. CES appreciates the different contributions that different types of charities make to monitoring and evaluation.

- Small charities (under £500,000 annual turnover)
- Large charities (over £500,000 annual turnover)
- Funders
- Organisations that support other charities (also known as infrastructure, support or second-tier organisations).

We had a fantastic set of entries that required much debate and deliberation by our panel of expert judges. Both the winners and the highly commended organisations are outstanding examples of the difference that monitoring and evaluation can make. The summaries included in this booklet demonstrate the excellent practice that exists in the sector. I hope that they inspire you to monitor, evaluate, learn and change to improve your own work.

Special thanks to our funders who helped make the awards happen, and to our independent pool of experts from across the sector who volunteered their time and thoughts to selecting the winners.

CES is delighted to announce the winners of the 2011 Learning and Innovation Prize. I hope you will join me in congratulating all the organisations involved.

Andy Gregg
Chief Executive

Meet the Judges



Judges from left-right: Clare Thomas MBE, Rick Davies, Professor Nicholas Deakin, Vandha Gohil, Georgie Parry-Crooke (Clare Mills and Helen Simons not present).

Entries were judged by an independent panel of volunteers with extensive experience of the sector and monitoring and evaluation. To maintain independence, judges removed themselves from deliberations where the applications related to clients or organisations they were involved with.

Professor Nicholas Deakin In the mid-90's Nicholas led the National Council for Voluntary Organisations' independent commission on the future of the voluntary sector in England. Published in 1996, the groundbreaking recommendations from the report set the standards for the development of our sector. Nicholas's most recent post was as Trustee and Vice Chair of the Baring Foundation, chairing the Foundation's 'Strengthening the Voluntary Sector' Grants Committee. Nicholas is Chair of our judging panel.

Rick Davies is an international monitoring and evaluation consultant and the editor and manager of Monitoring and Evaluation News. He is currently working with World Vision in the UK and Canada, AusAID in Vietnam, DOEN Foundation in the Netherlands and Global Witness in the UK.

Vandna Gohil is the Director of Voice4Change England, the national policy voice for the Black and Minority Ethnic Third Sector. She has held posts at Futurebuilders, the Community Fund and was a policy adviser to the Home Office's Civil Renewal Unit.

Clare Mills is Head of the Knowledge Management and Evaluation Team at the British Heart Foundation. The Team is working to improve and standardise evaluation practice and knowledge and information management by establishing accountability and demonstrating the extent to which objectives are achieved.

Georgie Parry-Crooke is the Associate Director at the Centre for Social Evaluation and Research at London Metropolitan University. Her teaching focuses on social research methodology and evaluation theory and practice.

Professor Helen Simons is Professor Emeritus of Education and Evaluation at the University of Southampton. She specialises in programme, policy and institutional evaluation, qualitative methodologies, democratic evaluation and ethics across all sectors of education and the practice professions.

Clare Thomas MBE has been the Chief Grants Officer for The City Bridge Trust since 1996. The Trust is London's largest independent grantmaker, awarding grants of £15 million each year.



And the winners are...

We had an excellent response to the Prize and received a very high standard of entries in all categories. It wasn't easy to pick winners, and our judging panel thought long and hard about who to award in each category. The results are below, with one winner and one highly commended entry in each of the four categories:

Small charity

Winner Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service

Highly commended Harpurs Hill Children and Family Centre

Large charity

Winner Broadway

Highly commended Family Action

Support organisation

Winner Coventry and Warwickshire Infrastructure Consortium

Highly commended Central London CVS Network

Funder

Winner The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund

Highly commended The Nationwide Foundation

Read all about the inspiring work of these organisations in case studies on the next few pages!

We would like to thank all entrants to the Prize for the effort they put into their entry – they all demonstrated some excellent work and we hope they continue to learn from monitoring and evaluation in future.

Winner small charity category

Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service

The Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service (LSLCS) was set up in 1999 to provide services which were an alternative to hospital admission and statutory provision for people in acute mental health crisis. They provide a helpline (Connect), a place of sanctuary and support (Dial House) and group work.

Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service



Sanctuary and support in times of crisis

The service is unique in Leeds and indeed many other parts of the country, in being a survivor led crisis service in the voluntary sector. It was established by a group of campaigning service users and is still governed, managed and staffed by people with their own experience of mental health problems.

In 2005 the service was at risk of closure, but its effective use of monitoring and evaluation helped to save it, and was the starting point of a journey that would see monitoring and evaluation at the heart of improving services for its users and better support for staff.

LSLCS undertook research with mental health service users and established that they needed to change the opening hours of Dial House (a sanctuary for people in crisis). This change in service provision, informed through evaluation, led to a 400% increase in visitors to Dial House between 2005 and 2006. They describe this transformation as:

'This radical change to services as a result of visitor feedback was the beginning of our monitoring and evaluation journey.'

The organisation then launched a new database and developed a host of systems to monitor and evaluate their work. These systems can now provide LSLCS with the information their commissioners request. The NHS in Leeds has commented that their data is the best available in the mental health voluntary sector in Leeds – a huge achievement for a small charity.

Use of the data has made it possible for them to identify what they call 'The Five Elements of Effective Support': Listening; treating people with warmth, kindness and respect; people not feeling judged or assessed; being in a different and calm environment and peer support. This learning has informed practice and given LSLCS a clear message they can disseminate externally.

LSLCS obtains data through a wide range of methods to identify if they are achieving their desired outcomes, including: user and staff questionnaires, focus groups, regular user review meetings and questionnaires to other services in Leeds – to gauge outside perceptions of the service.

To develop the ways it collects its data, LSLCS looks to its users. They run focus groups with visitors and callers to ask them if they are measuring things appropriately, which benefits all round:

‘Visitors/callers feeling ownership of monitoring and evaluation and understanding what information we collect and why, means they are encouraged to complete questionnaires, take part in reviews and play an active role in developing and improving our services.’

The LSLCS Management Committee review the information and regularly discuss the findings and considers ways to make improvements. LSLCS also report findings to commissioners quarterly, who provide feedback and often meet with managers and users of the service, helping them to gather even more learning. Reviewing and reporting on information gathered is taken seriously, LSLCS say:

‘We are passionate about monitoring and evaluation as we believe it is the absolute right of our visitors and callers to know that we scrutinise our work in order to ensure that we are providing an excellent service which meets their needs.’

Internally, findings are reviewed in an annual report based on the previous year and covering service activities, outcomes achieved and staff feedback. This is disseminated to the staff team, volunteers, commissioners, partners and interested parties. The staff also discuss and reflect upon the findings at an annual workshop.

Findings have helped to inform their future work, support their staff better and learn about their users. For staff, they’ve improved the working environment by increasing annual leave, creating a staff support budget, and offering them training on working with specific groups. The investment in staff is returned by the low staff turnover, despite



Fiona Venner, Manager of LSLCS with guest at LSLCS’ 10th birthday party.

the unsocial hours and nature of the work. They also say of their staff:

‘We are proud that half of our 20 paid staff began with us as volunteers.’

Findings have also demonstrated their severe capacity issues and the unmet need for their services; Dial House often receives many more visits than it can accommodate. But being able to show this has enabled LSLCS to secure additional funding from commissioners, maintain core funding and increase donations, putting them in a situation of full cost recovery.

Data has also been able to verify the value of the work they already

do. For example, they discovered the preventative power of group work when data from the last three Christmases showed that few of the visitors who attended their Christmas dinner needed to use the evening crisis services in the following few days. Identifying the importance of this type of work has enabled them to develop the group work programme, also allowing users to run some groups – something they are particularly proud of.

LSLCS puts its successful implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems down to the steering group that initiated them, involvement of staff and involvement of users – upholding the survivor led ethos of the organisation.

The value of monitoring and evaluation in demonstrating what they do and how they do it, is key to them being able to prove their worth:

‘The data we have collected since 2006 enables us to demonstrate that we provide a truly survivor led, compassionate, empathic, consistent and effective service to some of the most vulnerable and excluded people in Leeds. The body of evidence we have amassed also enables us to articulate our approach externally, to champion being a person centred, survivor led service and to demonstrate the efficacy of alternative, non medical approaches to mental distress.’

Highly commended small charity category

Harpurs Hill Children & Family Centre Ltd

Harpurs Hill Children and Family Centre has provided low cost quality childcare and family support in the Coleraine area since 1993. It supports parents in promoting the social, emotional, educational and psychological development of their children. In 2009 the project undertook an evaluation with the support of an external evaluator which identified the need for a systematic way of demonstrating the impact of the Family Visiting Team's services.



'We definitely agreed... that there was a need to design a framework to capture the progress made by families so that we could clearly identify, progress and evidence the stages that families were at.'

The team began to work on the development of a framework tool which would guide the gradual withdrawal of support to parents as they achieve key stages or indicators of personal development. The idea was to create a simple, yet flexible, procedure which would further place monitoring and evaluation in the heart of their work. For the team, this meant creating an innovative tool which allows them to evaluate the quantitative and qualitative results of the work.

Working together, it was possible for the team to identify clear progress steps made by the families being supported. These were further developed into guidelines for progress, based around four 'stages'

that families move through. The results were used to create the 'Step Process' framework tool, which maps advances made by families. Using the tool gave structure to a process which was previously subject to individual interpretation. Providing shared guidelines has meant that family development is more easily captured and recorded. The framework gives a clear, standardised basis which allows for a better evidence-based explanation of the work to other professionals and funders.

'We feel that this is a much more positive and encouraging approach because we are measuring growth.'

Harpurs Hill Centre ran a pilot, where the tool was monitored and changes were made to make it more appropriate and relevant. When it became clear that the tool was working effectively, processes were changed and it is now embedded into practice. It is incorporated into

support and supervision sessions, helping to encourage a focused and constructive discussion which clearly identifies what has happened, and what should subsequently happen. Having a step process means that the family visiting team can easily see where families are at, and their progression – a positive approach which is encouraging for both families and the team.

Using the tool has increased efficiency and effectiveness of the support offered to families, and has also ensured consistency of services and a more equal service for users. This work has led to a real change in monitoring and, in turn, a real change in the service they offer to their users. They recognise the potential for shared learning, and for others to adopt a similar approach to their work.

‘As a project we recognise how difficult it is to measure qualitative work and are very excited about the tool which has been developed by the Family Visiting Team.’

The team believes that this new tool for monitoring progress is unique in their field. They feel that their work can provide valuable guidance for others who wish to provide positive evidence of their work and ensure high-quality service delivery. Ultimately though, the team are

‘driven by the needs of the families and community and are encourage by the uptake of services. The whole team feels privileged to be part of this groundbreaking work.’



Harpurs Hill Centre staff



Winner large charity category
Broadway

Broadway is a London based homelessness charity. They provide a full range of services to help people get accommodation, improve their physical and mental health, gain training and employment and to live successful, independent lives.



The Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN), is managed by a team at Broadway on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Greater London Authority (GLA). Initiated in 2001, the CHAIN was developed by the voluntary sector to help those working with homeless people coordinate their work and share information. It has become a vast database on rough sleeping that is used for collecting, compiling and disseminating information about rough sleeping in London.

CHAIN is an example of monitoring data *really* making a difference. Broadway say:

‘Sometimes day-to-day monitoring data gets overlooked in research and evaluation when it actually holds some of the most detailed and valuable information available.’

In 2009 Broadway published the seminal report ‘Profiling London’s Rough Sleepers’ with the help of the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen). The report analysed data from CHAIN to provide an

unprecedented overview of rough sleeping. This was shared with policymakers and practitioners, helping inform work to end rough sleeping. Key to the interest in the report was early dissemination enabling it to influence rough sleeping policy that was in development at the time.

‘The DCLG reported that the analysis has ‘changed the way we view rough sleeping’ and the GLA state that CHAIN has been invaluable to the work of the Mayor’s London Delivery Board to end rough sleeping.’

CHAIN is now considered the country’s most comprehensive source of information on rough sleeping. Aggregate data is shared regularly and used to inform local, regional and national policy and practice:

‘We [Broadway] provide bespoke reports, publish annual and quarterly rough sleeping reports and respond to hundreds of data requests each year.’

In addition to the ‘high-level’ influence, on a day-to-day basis



CHAIN is a vital source of information for services directly working with rough sleepers and is contributed to by outreach teams, day centres and hostels:

'In any given quarter, 27 organisations and 152 workers directly contribute to CHAIN.'

The contribution from such a wide set of workers is a feature Broadway are particularly proud of.

The importance of CHAIN in demonstrating the impact of outreach work to commissioners and others has changed practice – it encourages coordination of effort, following up and tracking clients and diligently recording work done.

'CHAIN prevents teams working in isolation and helps avoid duplication of effort.'

Data from CHAIN has helped inform Broadway's own work with homeless people. In highlighting emerging trends it helps them to be responsive, react quickly and change services accordingly. Its findings showed

that more work needed to be done to prevent the flow of 'new' rough sleepers. The CHAIN team will be evaluating a new project specifically addressing the needs of individuals who find themselves sleeping rough in London for the first time.

CHAIN has also helped influence other wider policy and practice in

vulnerable rough sleepers and help service providers focus effort and attention on this group. The RS205 lists have seen well over half of the 350 rough sleepers identified, housed.

To summarise, Broadway say,

'We believe that CHAIN generally, and the 'Profiling rough sleepers' report specifically are a good example of information really making a difference to peoples lives. There is a direct link between the analysis undertaken and effective new approaches to helping rough sleepers move off the streets.'



the sector: the 'flow, stock, returner model', used in the report places rough sleepers into one of three groups. As a model it has been adopted by policy makers working in the sector, to ensure that activities to end rough sleeping do not over or under focus on any particular group.

The 'Profiling London's Rough Sleepers' report and CHAIN contributed to the creation of 'RS205 lists'. These lists detail the most



Highly commended large charity category
Family Action

Family Action has been a leading provider of services to disadvantaged and socially isolated families since its foundation in 1869. The organisation works with over 45,000 children and families a year by providing practical, emotional and financial support through over 100 services based in communities across England. A further 150,000 people benefit from their educational grants and information service. They tackle some of the most complex and difficult issues facing families today – including domestic abuse, mental health problems, learning disabilities and severe financial hardship.



‘Parenting is one of the hardest jobs and enabling parents, in challenging circumstances, to improve outcomes for their children is tough work.’

Family Action works with families that have been referred from social services or other agencies due to concerns about a child’s well being, safety or development. It works with the families for 3-12 months to improve their parenting and therefore improve outcomes for their children.

Over the past year Family Action has used a Family Star tool to systematically improve its frontline and organisational performance. The Family Star, developed by Triangle Consulting, is a version of the Outcomes Star (see www.outcomesstar.org.uk). It is a visual tool focused on eight key areas of parenting including ‘setting boundaries’ and ‘providing emotional support.’ These are underpinned by a journey of change from ‘stuck’ through to ‘effective parenting’.

The Star is integrated into assessments and reviews and the

scores are negotiated between the family support worker and parent – ensuring parents are at the centre of the work. The completed Star is then used as a basis for an action plan. If it’s not possible to negotiate a score then two scores can be recorded, with the worker score being used for an analysis of service-wide outcomes.

Data from the Family Star is collated to produce reports for review by the services, trustees, senior management and funders. Findings are presented at regional and senior management team meetings and trustee meetings.

Information and data gathered from using the Star has enabled many positive changes in Family Action’s work. The organisation now has better informed discussions with other agencies regarding the support required for a family, and it structures internal discussions with management and trustees in deciding which areas of work to prioritise. It has improved relationships with commissioners, and the data supports Family Action in securing on-going funding:

‘Some commissioners now accept less monitoring information from us overall, on condition they receive this outcome data. Overall, we feel that being able to demonstrate positive outcomes has increased our chances of being re-tendered at a time of cuts.’

One of Family Action’s local authority commissioners has been so impressed by the Star that he has used the outcome data in internal negotiations during the recent period of debate and decision making for funds at a time of government cuts.

Completed Stars are discussed at ‘team around the child’ meetings where all the agencies working with the family are present. They are also discussed in supervisions to help support workers in their role and the service level outcomes data is reviewed between managers.

The information gathered using the Star is an effective way to help families see evidence of change or lack of change.

‘The visual nature of the Star and the clearly defined criteria enable parents to have a more realistic grasp of where they are and to see their progress.’

Family Action believe that the original development of the Family Star, involving parents, gives it an integrity that staff and parents understand and like when they are introduced to it.

Using the Star helps staff carry out their roles more effectively. It was recognised that in some cases they had been working with families for longer than required and the Family Star scales helps to assess when to reduce or conclude casework.



Evidence from the Star can support them in handling difficult situations with families. For example

‘...in one of the most sensitive categories – ‘keeping your child safe’ scores can be lower at first review than at initial assessment, a positive indication that workers are enabling parents to have a more realistic view of their child’s safety, which can be critical to the longer-term effectiveness of the work.’

Critical to the success of introducing the Family Star was the clear and transparent implementation, with all staff on board. Using the approach has been strongly supported by management and trustees. The director responsible for this area also supported the process of learning

‘...at the start of the process [the director] acknowledged that he didn’t know where it would end up. This was a powerful message to the project that there was space for open and honest learning.’

The Star’s success means it will be used across the organisation, with a dedicated post agreed to support the roll out. Family Action speaks of its impact:

‘In effect, implementing the Family Star outcomes measuring tool has opened up the essentially private work of delivering support within family homes providing a level of transparency and understanding that could not have been anticipated. It has provided data that sometimes confirms but always provides the chance to strengthen our work at all levels from the family living room to the boardroom.’



Winner support organisation category

Coventry and Warwickshire Infrastructure Consortium

Coventry and Warwickshire Infrastructure Consortium (CWIC) is a partnership of voluntary sector infrastructure organisations. They share knowledge and experience and collaborate on service delivery, lobbying, funding and purchasing. In doing so they strengthen the capacity and the voice of infrastructure services for the benefit of frontline voluntary and community groups.

CWIC

CWIC is the only infrastructure consortium with a performance management framework using the Topical Dashboard methodology – an approach that enables collaboration to be measured. CWIC sought an appropriate tool for a long time, having found that other monitoring and evaluation tools generally focus on individual organisations or projects. They believe the Dashboard should be more widely available and would help to support the current emphasis on collaboration in the sector.

CWIC adopted and implemented the Topical Dashboard as the consortium's performance management framework in early 2010. With support from Stefanie Shedd, Director of The Solution Shedd and in association with the Capacitybuilder's funded National Performance Programme.

Data for the Dashboard is supplied by 12 Consortium members and CWIC staff on a quarterly basis. The Dashboard demonstrates outputs and outcomes for both frontline organisations and the members themselves working collaboratively through the Infrastructure Consortium.

For 2010 – 2011 the Dashboard is centred on eight topics such as volunteering, training. Each topic has between one and three strategic

indicators and is broken down according to the objectives set out for CWIC and the Partnership respectively. CWIC currently 'owns' six projects – Inter Faith, Young Believers, VCS Assembly, Vinvolved, Knowledge Management and Quality and Governance that are run by members and each of which is mapped under the relevant topic. Ensuring Dashboard monitoring did not add to existing monitoring was considered a crucial factor in the selection of the Dashboard methodology, part of which involves members agreeing which indicators they will report against, ensuring they are relevant to their own organisation and, in most cases, the evidence is already gathered for individual monitoring purposes.

An important factor in the process of gathering the data is the reporting deadlines. As well as being able to make reports available in time for scheduled meetings, the percentage of members meeting the deadline is one of the indicators used to demonstrate whether CWIC is

'transparent, accountable and effective as a membership body and models best practice.'

Reports are reviewed by the Operational Group, and as this is a relatively new set up, the focus has

been on ensuring that the framework process allows them to obtain the most meaningful information.

Reports highlight where collaborative targets are being met or exceeded, and most importantly where the target is being missed and actions by members are required. This method of reporting has provided CWIC with its first opportunity to monitor and review what collaborative working has achieved, both for frontline groups and for the members themselves. CWIC say the importance of the information is being recognised:

‘Members are starting to see how the information comes together and the areas of successful collaboration. For some members this has provided evidence for their Boards as to the benefits for their organisation and their frontline members of collaboration with other infrastructure organisations. This is particularly valuable at a time when the use of resources, especially time and finance, are being scrutinised closely.’

The Dashboard reports help to highlight areas for change in policy and practice, and signal where attention is needed. Changes have included the development of the trainers’ network and a coordinated

training programme for frontline organisations is planned for 2011. They’ve also taken a different approach to development workers’ forums to better meet existing needs.

Using the Dashboard supports the collaborative working process, helping organisations involved to better understand each other and the services each provides.



CWIC Quality & Governance Project Celebration 2010

CWIC’s consultant, Stefanie Shedd, gave support from the outset, helping them make decisions about the framework. They also went through a process of consultation with members on the first draft Dashboard, and a further consultation which focused specifically on each member’s ability to collect the desired data. The attention to individual members was crucial to its success:

‘These one to one meetings were essential to gaining all members commitment to and understanding of their role in the process.’

After implementation and the first quarter’s data gathering and reporting, members’ feedback was collated, and a report and recommendations were presented to the Operational Group:

‘The report showed that members found it a straightforward process... and that gathering the data was not problematic.’

Some members suggested changes and clarifications which were implemented in Quarter 2.

CWIC streamlined the roll-out with a targeted ‘two-speed’ approach to the Dashboard: core and larger organisations provide CWIC with the bulk of information for the Dashboard, and smaller organisations, who are struggling to survive the economic downturn and have significant resource constraints, provide details on indicators closest to their strategic aims

or that require minimal additional work for their staff.

CWIC’s efficient application of the Dashboard will support the consortia in being able to demonstrate its effectiveness, and in due course, it will illustrate the long-term impact of their collaborative working.

Highly commended support organisation category Central London CVS Network

The central London CVS Network (CLCVS) is a voluntary partnership. Established in 2001, its members are the councils for voluntary service (CVS) in seven Central London boroughs; Camden, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Southwark, Wandsworth and Westminster.



In 2009, following a discussion at CLCVS meeting, the Network decided to undertake a collaborative study monitoring and evaluating the impact on frontline groups of their capacity building and training. The widely praised report of their findings, *Supporting Central London's local third sector* published in 2010, highlighted the strengths of a CVS based approach from the perspective of their service users.

The monitoring study collected information from four different areas:

1. Six of the CVS' in the Network completed a questionnaire designed to capture data on their service users. This gave a clear picture of the organisations that had been using CVS services in the previous 12 months, and the service users of these organisations.
2. Secondary analysis used existing data from the six CVS' annual reports, project monitoring and evaluation reports, and case studies based on specific capacity building projects with frontline groups.
3. The study referenced wider research of trends in the sector and provided an extensive bibliography so that other organisations could further their own knowledge.

4. Information from organisations who had used the services of the six CVS' was captured by an online questionnaire, developed with support from a consultant and the performance NSS at CES. Formed of quantitative and open questions, the results generated a unique insight into the relevance and usefulness of CVS to frontline organisations.

For CLCVS:

'The value of the findings has been immeasurable.'

The findings from the four areas of research showed the broad reach of the CVS'. It also showed that engagement with a local CVS has direct benefits for frontline organisations:

- improved quality of services for the frontline groups' beneficiaries
- greater efficiency
- better responsiveness and adaptability
- ability to access more resources
- better management and accountability.

The research also revealed that groups favour using their local CVS because:

- there is a high level of knowledge amongst staff, including local knowledge
- they deliver high-quality services
- the services are affordable, local and accessible
- there is a range of services available which are delivered flexibly
- services are delivered on the basis of a group's need
- they have fostered good relationships and trust with the groups they support
- their capacity-building approach is seen as empowering.

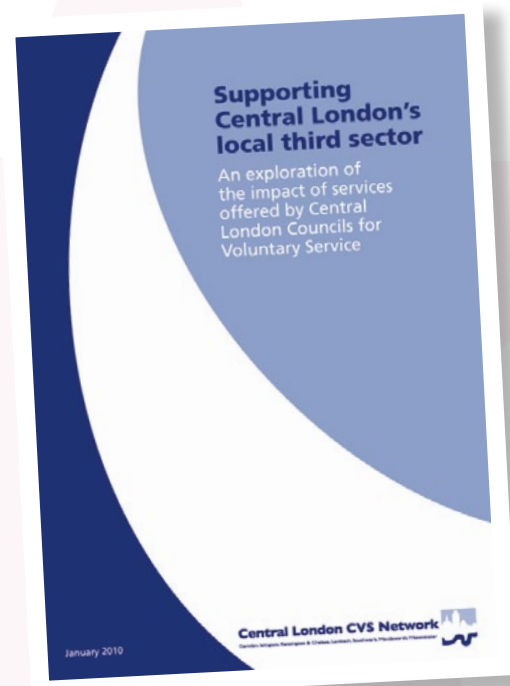
The findings of the report have been instrumental in providing evidence in lobbying and consultation work. CLCVS say:

'We have received feedback from councillors that they took on board our messages when developing their policies and for their decision making.'

For CLCVS, the results have been central to developing the support they offer. The report findings informed the development of *Access to Training*, a scheme designed to help groups work with their CVS to identify appropriate training. Through partnership working, CLCVS members are able to offer frontline organisations access to training in other network boroughs allowing groups to gain access to a wider variety of training.

'This piece of work was not only pioneering for CLCVS Network but was one of the first study/explorations of its kind for local infrastructure.'

For CLCVS, the value of this report to both the network, and the organisations they support, is wide reaching. The learning from the study has created a baseline from which future impact studies can be compared, as well as a robust impact framework. These tools can now be used to explore other CVS functions, such as policy or information work. As a result, CLCVS members – and other local infrastructure bodies have new ways to articulate their value, and how they make a difference.





Winner funder category

The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund

The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund ('the Fund') is an independent grant-giving charity established in September 1997 to continue the Princess' humanitarian work in the UK and overseas.



Princess of Wales Memorial Fund
THE WORK CONTINUES

Up until the end of 2006, the Fund was a criteria-led grantmaker and ran grant programmes open to applications from any organisation that wanted to apply. After a consultative process in 2006, it made the decision to become a proactive grantmaker and published a five-year Strategic Plan, which focused on achieving policy change in four areas: cluster munitions, palliative care in sub-Saharan Africa, penal reform and refugees and people seeking asylum in the UK. When the Fund was established, it was agreed that it should be time-limited and the Strategic Plan in 2007 confirmed that it would close at the end of 2012.

'Our Board took a significant risk in publishing a tightly defined and time-limited set of policy change objectives that we would work towards,'

explains Andrew Cooper, Research Manager at the Fund. One impact of this decision was a radical change to how the Fund approached the monitoring and evaluation of its grantmaking.

The new approach involved two significant changes in practice for the Fund, its staff and its grantees. The first was a new way of working with and alongside grantees and the second a strong emphasis on sharing learning externally.

In terms of monitoring and evaluating projects it supports, the Fund adopted a more flexible and proportionate approach designed to increase effectiveness and contribute to better outcomes. It moved away from the conventional focus on accountability and compliance to place greater emphasis on learning from evaluation.

Grant monitoring forms were changed after seeking advice from experts and researching what other funders used.

'We tried to ask for the minimum amount of information, while placing a greater emphasis on progress towards objectives rather than on activities,'

says Andrew Cooper.

The Fund has also undertaken several formative evaluations (for example of the grant to the Prison Reform Trust's Out of Trouble campaign – see photograph) to assess both its own work and that of grantees. Evaluators were asked, for example, to consider bigger learning questions, such as how the Fund and its partners could adjust advocacy tactics over time.

At the same time, the Fund increased its focus on sharing learning externally with other funders and policymakers. It has published a



number of evaluation reports, also designed to influence policy change in its four focus areas; its staff are active members of networks and groups and it regularly runs learning events for its grantees and other funders.

The process of developing a new approach to monitoring and evaluation has prompted the Fund to ask many questions about its work and its position as a funder, for example: how can advocacy work be evaluated effectively? Can evaluation data itself be used for advocacy purposes? What is the role of a funder above and beyond making grants? How can the Fund collaborate with other funders to contribute to social change, and what learning arises from such collaboration? The Fund is now investigating some of these questions through an independent evaluation of its work and is aiming to share what it learns with a broad range of funders and philanthropists.

‘The successful implementation of these new policies and practices would not have been possible without strong leadership and commitment from the top of the organisation, including the board,’

says Andrew Cooper. There was a strong message from the board to focus more on learning than simply

gathering monitoring data, which has helped to create a culture where monitoring and evaluation is considered the responsibility of all staff.



Penelope Gibbs, Director, and Rebecca Nadin, Campaigns Officer, Out of Trouble campaign. © Nadia Bettega 2010

‘We obviously hope that our partners and grantees will want to continue our approach to evaluation and will go on sharing learning and evaluating their work in innovative ways after we have closed,’ he adds. ‘And that the current independent evaluation of our work will

draw out some useful lessons for the grantmaking sector.’

‘Changing our entire approach to monitoring and evaluation has not always been easy, but we believe that it has both increased our effectiveness as a grantmaker and added to our ability to make an impact in our areas of focus.’



Highly commended funder category
The Nationwide Foundation

The Nationwide Foundation is one of the UK's leading and most innovative grantmakers and is committed to making a significant difference to people's lives.



*Supporting communities
nationwide*

'We seek to provide grantees with more than just the value of their grant. It is our ambition to increase the capacity and build the organisational resilience of charities.'

Since 2001, the Foundation has invested in evaluation as a key aspect of their grantmaking, both for themselves as a funder and for their grantees. They build new strategies based on the lessons learned from previous, independently evaluated work, continually striving to improve their grantmaking. In doing so, the Foundation enhances the positive outcomes to funded charities and their beneficiaries.

The Foundation's Supporting Families strategy ran from 2005-10, primarily comprised of the 'Investor Programme' which awarded 18 three year grants totalling £2.7m. This strategy incorporated learning from their previous strategy, the New Generation Initiative (2001-05), which had been independently evaluated.

'The Foundation's previous grant programmes have been recognised for good practice and benefited thousands of families and young people across the UK.'

An independent evaluation of the Supporting Families strategy was commissioned to assess all aspects of the strategy and the Foundation's effectiveness as a funder. The evaluation also sought to measure

the success of the work charities were funded to deliver, and the difference made to their beneficiaries. The learning from this evaluation was key in shaping their current 2009-12 grant strategy.

Clear objectives for evaluating the Supporting Families strategy were set out by the trustees to measure how successful the Investor Programme had been in achieving its aims to help the beneficiaries in need. The Trustees also wanted evidence on the impacts of their grantmaking practices. The brief for the evaluation included how the Foundation's support had improved their grantees' organisational resilience and how regularly bringing the grantees together resulted in positive partnership work. The findings would be used to support changes to future grantmaking to help increase impact.

To inform the evaluation, data was gathered from grant applications, routine grant monitoring reports and visits to charities funded. The evaluation also reviewed the streamlined application processes for the grants programme and the guidance provided to applicants to help them complete their bids, in particular to set clear objectives, outputs and outcomes. All funded charities were given CES training on monitoring and evaluation to help them ensure they were obtaining the correct data.

Evaluators met with grantees to explain the aims of the Foundation's evaluation and to review their data

and experience of being supported by the Nationwide Foundation. Grantees were also tasked with carrying out baseline assessments with their beneficiaries.

The data gathered by grants officers and evaluators was shared regularly through reports and meetings throughout the evaluation, providing opportunity for changes to be made during the programme. The Foundation and evaluators were also able to present initial findings at the Association of Charitable Funders annual conference in September 2009. The audience of around 40 UK funders positively received the findings; in particular on partnership working. The final evaluation report was received by the Foundation's trustees in early 2011 and a summary of the findings will be disseminated

during the year. In addition to the main evaluation report, the funded charities have each been provided with an evaluation report of their own achievements and lessons learned so that they can improve their services and better evidence the benefits of their work to other funders.

The independent evaluation stated:

'The Nationwide Foundation team should be commended on their dedication to ensuring the work of the Foundation is meaningful, develops capacity and promotes innovation within the Third Sector.'

The evaluation highlighted a host of positive points about the Foundation, amongst them how their approach and flexibility makes them a **'unique and effective funder'**, supporting charities to achieve and often exceed their objectives, and provide long-term impacts to their beneficiaries. And relationships with the grantees are open, yet professional which encourages charities to report honestly.



Nationwide Foundation staff

Recommendations from the evaluation led to a series of policy and practice changes for the 2009-12 strategy: the Foundation appointed evaluators earlier on, meaning recommendations could be adopted sooner; the approach to partnership working among grantees became more structured and a clearer set of strategic aims, objectives, outputs and outcomes were developed. These changes will help the Foundation to better measure what they want to achieve and whether they are on track. Investment in communications has seen the Foundation's profile increase considerably during 2009-

10 and be recognised for good practice, and they now provide more dedicated support for charities via 'building resilience' interventions i.e. training and consultancy for grantees.

The Foundation attributes the success of its changes in monitoring and evaluation practice to a variety of factors. The Foundation staff and Supporting Families grantees all receiving CES training on monitoring and evaluation has helped the Foundation and charities work together to understand and measure the work more effectively. Quarterly monitoring and support visits to charities were key in gathering evidence and provided a real insight into the charities' work:

'It helped build honest, open relationships without which, vital information may have been withheld and the gathering of information would have

been more challenging.'

Getting evaluators on board earlier has meant that problems in the programme could be tackled and remedied as they were identified.

'The Nationwide Foundation continues to invest in and recognise the value of evaluation and will continue to provide evaluation to grantees to help them attract funding in the future and improve their own measurement processes. This is vital in the current operating climate where proving you can demonstrate your success is of increasing importance.'

Our supporters

The Learning and Innovation Prize would not have been possible without funding from our event supporters. We would like to thank them all.



**national
performance
programme**

Capacitybuilders

The Learning and Innovation Prize, the learning event and this case study resource were managed by The National Performance Programme.

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ZURICH[®]

Zurich Insurance plc

Zurich is our anniversary partner and has supported CES events during our 20th anniversary year.

Zurich has over 100 years experience providing insurance and risk management services to charities and community organisations. Dealing with customers either directly or through its specialist distribution network, Zurich works with its customers to develop tailored solutions which enables them to focus on meeting their objectives.

The Bulldog Trust

The Bulldog Trust

The Bulldog Trust contributed to the venue for the learning event and prize giving at Two Temple Place.

The Bulldog Trust is a charitable trust that has given financial and advisory assistance to charities for the past 25 years. Intrinsic to all its major donations is the ethos of making a real difference to the organisations it helps.



Next steps

If you are feeling inspired by the examples from our winners and would like to further develop your monitoring and evaluation practice, then CES has a wide range of resources to help you, many of them free to download from our website.

Your Project and its Outcomes

A booklet for trustees, staff and volunteers who are involved in planning, monitoring and evaluating their project. The aim of the booklet is to help you describe the outcomes you want your project to achieve. Free to download at www.ces-vol.org.uk/yourproject

First Steps in Monitoring and Evaluation

A basic guide for organisations who are looking at monitoring and evaluation for the first time. Free to download at www.ces-vol.org.uk/firststepsme

Next Steps: Monitoring and Evaluation on a Shoestring

Practical guide to help organisations develop their monitoring and evaluation approach and improve their effectiveness on a limited budget. Free to download at www.ces-vol.org.uk/shoestring

Assessing Change: Developing and Using Outcomes Monitoring Tools

Practical handbook to help you identify and develop ways to collect information on the outcomes of your work. Free to download at www.ces-vol.org.uk/assessingchange

Practical Monitoring and Evaluation: A Guide for Voluntary Organisations

Comprehensive guide to monitoring and evaluation in the voluntary sector, now in its third section. This can be purchased from www.ces-vol.org.uk/practical

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In addition, our website hosts a resource guide with over 100 online and published books, tools, discussion papers and factsheets on all aspects of evaluation. Whatever your size and type of organisation, whether you are starting out on evaluation or looking to develop your approaches further, you should find a resource to help you.

www.ces-vol.org.uk/resourceguide

If you feel that you would like training or support to make the next steps then please visit www.ces-vol.org.uk/training or www.ces-vol.org.uk/consultancy for more examples of how we can help.

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