

# CES Outcomes Report - summary

on training March to September 2009

*“You have a very hard-working and intelligent course delivery team.”*

Attendee of the ‘Analysing data’ course.

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## 1. Introduction

Every year, Charities Evaluation Services (CES) carries out an evaluation of our training service by contacting previous course participants. They are contacted either by telephone interview or online survey, and asked questions about what they have done with their learning from the course. We specifically contact participants that have been on training around 4-10 months ago, to allow time for them to implement their learning.

This report covers CES open training delivered between 16 March and 29 September 2009. Thirty-one training days within these subjects were delivered within the period. The courses included in the evaluation are:

- Advanced course in monitoring and evaluation
- Foundation course in monitoring and evaluation
- Collecting qualitative and quantitative data
- Analysing data
- Presenting evaluation findings effectively
- Designing effective questionnaires
- Implementing PQASSO.

Forty-one people completed the survey between 22 January and 24 February 2010. This is a breakdown by subject area and by course:

<b>Quality: 13 (32%)</b>	
Implementing PQASSO	13
<b>Monitoring and evaluation: 28 (68%)</b>	
Advanced course in monitoring and evaluation	11
Foundation course in monitoring and evaluation	7
Collecting qualitative and quantitative data	3
Analysing data	2
Presenting evaluation findings effectively	2
Designing effective questionnaires	3

This summary report covers some of the key findings from the evaluation.

## 2. Key findings

### 2.1 Putting learning into practice

- 88% of participants had put their learning into practice.

The top three reasons for coming on our training courses were:

- 63% wanted to gain a better understanding of key terms and concepts
- 39% wanted to implement a new system
- 39% wanted to enable them to help others with their monitoring and evaluation/quality systems.

### 2.2 Benefits of implementation

#### *Service improvement*

- 44% of those that had implemented their learning had used information collected from monitoring and evaluation/quality to improve their services
- 100% of those that said their services had improved linked this to their learning from the CES course (33% said it was linked to a great extent, 47% to some extent, and 20% said the CES training was a 'catalyst').

#### *Improved internal processes*

- 54% said they had a more positive approach to monitoring and evaluation/quality/PQASSO
- 44% said they had included monitoring and evaluation/PQASSO within planning cycles/planning documents.
- 37% said that they felt they were clearer about what they are doing and why.

#### *Improved external communication*

- 37% said they are more able to demonstrate effectiveness to others
- 29% felt better able to communicate outcomes to funders
- 24% used information from monitoring and evaluation/quality to report to existing funders
- 7% said they had used the information to obtain further funding.

One participant described how the work they had done on the monitoring and evaluation systems would help them better demonstrate their work:

*"The new systems should make the demonstration of outcomes better and clearer. This will help us evidence the impact of our work, which should be attractive to funders."*

### *Additional benefits of implementation*

- 78% said they had shared learning with colleagues.

Methods of sharing learning included presentations, workshops, training, staff meetings, one-to-one discussions, and informally in day-to-day work.

### *2.3 Difficulties experienced in implementing learning*

- 44% of respondents experienced difficulties in implementing their learning.

The top reason for them experiencing difficulties was a lack of staff time, which 72% respondents referred to.

Other reasons given included other urgent priorities, resistance from other colleagues, a lack of money/funding, a lack of staff skills, and a lack of support and commitment from managers.

Participants were asked if they were overcoming any of their difficulties:

- 28% had overcome them
- 17% said that they had not overcome them
- 56% said it was too early to say if they would overcome them.

One participant commented on how they were going about overcoming difficulties in implementing their monitoring and evaluation learning:

*“Slowly the importance of this work is being realised and we are investing more time and resources.”*

### *2.4 Other enablers to change*

- 80% of respondents identified factors other than CES training as enablers to change.

The top other enablers were:

- 42% said support from line manager/supervisor
- 42% said publications
- 33% said the internet
- 33% said other training.

### *2.5 Resilience in the recession*

88% of respondents had put their learning into practice. Of those,

- 28% said that they did feel they would be better placed to face the economic downturn, either to a great extent (2) or to some extent (8)
- 42% said that it was too early to tell
- 17% said that they did not know
- 14% said that they did not feel it would make them more resilient.

Of the 10 (28%) that felt they would be better placed to face the downturn, their reasons were as follows:

- 7 said new skills they had developed or acquired
- 4 said better relationships with funders/commissioners
- 4 said more or different funding they will be able to access
- 2 said acquiring more volunteers
- 1 said being able to afford or retain a new member of staff.

Some of the respondents commented on how they felt the implementation of their learning would assist their organisation in the downturn:

*“We will be better able to demonstrate our monitoring capabilities for new contracts.”*

Often reasons for respondents saying that it was too early to tell, or that they did not know, were related to their current funding situation being unknown for the time-being.

Some other responses reflected on the feeling in the sector:

*“Not enough information about how funders are approaching the reduction in budgets.”*

*“I do not feel that the full effects of the recession have yet been felt by the voluntary sector.”*

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