

The Evaluation Trust

working with you
to reflect and learn
to adapt and change
to achieve your aims

EVALUATION
TRUST



Our Mission

In accordance with our charitable aims, to enable voluntary and community organisations to acquire and practise evaluation skills that will strengthen their learning and development.

Our Vision

A future where sustainable and effective community and voluntary organisations are continually reflecting and learning to meet the changing needs of their beneficiaries, enabling them to contribute to a healthy, democratic society.

Who are we?

The Evaluation Trust (ET) was formed in 1990 to help smaller voluntary and community groups explore the potential of evaluation as a self management tool for promoting effectiveness and assessing quality. Our aim was to show how research and evaluation could place users' needs and experiences at the heart of organisational change and development.

The Trust was funded for the first four years by the Allied Dunbar Charitable Trust and the Government. Historically, our roots are in the south west of England, but we have expanded over the years and have since worked with hundreds of organisations in rural and urban areas across the UK and Europe.

In 1999, we received funding from the Community Fund and the Lloyds TSB Foundation to undertake development work with small groups in the south west of England. Our work was further enhanced in 2006 with support from a Capacity Builders 'Improving Reach' grant.

What are our strategic aims?

1. To enable small voluntary and community organisations to undertake participatory evaluation.
2. To work in partnership with other agencies to achieve the Trust's vision.
3. To champion the importance of evaluation at all levels, particularly with funders and purchasers.
4. To promote learning in order to develop good practice.
5. To collaborate nationally and internationally with those who support a participatory approach to evaluation.
6. To create an effective organisation which continuously evaluates its performance, and which is funded to achieve its aims.

What do we do?

Working closely with voluntary and community organisations, large and small, we provide advice, information and ideas on ways to improve performance and best meet the needs of the people who use the services provided. We also work with organisations that fund and support groups in these sectors.

We recognise that people do not want their work and efforts to be evaluated, and possibly criticised, by external assessors. We appreciate that this traditional method of evaluation often marginalises the people who are meant to benefit from it.

We prefer to carry out what we call 'participatory evaluation' which encourages the involvement of all stakeholders. This method ensures a greater ownership of the process, leading to better understanding and implementation of the findings.

There are many benefits to evaluation, including:

- The organisation can demonstrate that it is meeting the needs of local people, service users, members of the managing body, funders, volunteers and staff.
- The organisation is able to deal with any weaknesses and build on identified strengths.
- Stakeholders can learn more about the work that they do, and where they should be heading in the future.
- With self management tools in place, such as research and evaluation, the organisation will have a stronger case when seeking external funding.

“The Evaluation Trust’s work has helped our organisation to develop and grow.”

“We thought we were doing a good job, but really had no idea how much difference our work was making until we worked with the Trust.”

“This way, we know what needs to change because we have identified the evidence ourselves.”

Our people

There are four members of the Evaluation Trust Board of Trustees whose considerable experience and knowledge of the voluntary, statutory and private sectors are invaluable to the work that we do.

- ◆ Steve Wheeler (Chair)
- ◆ Joan Cox
- ◆ Pauline Hatherill
- ◆ Barbara McDonald

The ET currently employs a Principal Evaluation Worker, Sarah del Tufo, based in Reading, and a South West Projects Manager, Maria Clarke, based in Bristol. Their work is supported by two administrative staff and a Finance Officer. The core staff are responsible for the general management and administration of the Trust. A part-time Business Development Manager was appointed in this new post in autumn 2007

Face-to-face work with clients is carried out by our team of 30 highly skilled consultants based in England, mainly in the South West. Here are some of the many advantages of working with our consultants:

- ◆ All consultants working for the ET have been accepted on to our consultant pool following a rigorous selection process.
- ◆ Many of our consultants have been working with us for many years, and all bring a wealth of experience to their work.
- ◆ Consultants have extensive knowledge of the voluntary and public sectors.
- ◆ All consultants are self employed. Many are from black and minority ethnic communities and are able to speak a number of languages.
- ◆ Consultants are carefully matched with each client and the project is tailored to meet specific needs and objectives. Each consultant brings a broad local knowledge to the project, which benefits clients.
- ◆ The ET guarantees the assignment of experienced, skilled consultants who have access to the wider skills and knowledge of the consultant pool.
- ◆ The ET operates standard procedures and support for consultants, including emergency or sickness cover for consultants if required.
- ◆ All consultants support the charitable aims and vision of the ET.
- ◆ All consultants are part of an open, approachable, accountable organisation that has an excellent reputation.

To find out more about our pool of consultants, please visit www.evaluationtrust.org.

What do we do?

We apply the following criteria when deciding whether to work on projects. Organisations must:

1. have charitable status, or their work must benefit members of the local community;
2. be sure of the reasons why they need to evaluate and the questions they need to answer;
3. prove that they have the staffing capacity to work in partnership with the ET and the time to carry out the work in the agreed manner. They must also ensure that they are able to maintain effective communications with the ET;
4. be open to self evaluation, and willing to accept independent evaluation if necessary;
5. be willing to share and learn with other organisations;
6. provide contacts, staff job descriptions, plus evidence of sound financial systems, legal status and proper policies and practices in place.

The Evaluation Trust will sometimes fund projects to enable them to use our services if they fit with the criteria above and where factors such as their size, geography, client group or difficulty in raising funding for the work themselves are clearly demonstrated.

ET will also take the following into account:

- whether we have the capacity to take on the work within the time-frame;
- whether we have the appropriate consultancy skills for the project;
- whether the project provides a learning opportunity for ET;
- whether the work raises the profile of ET.

The Evaluation Trust will not engage in projects when:

- the evaluation duplicates the work already undertaken by the organisation which has not been acted on;
- it would be better if the work was carried out by another organisation, such as CVS, or by other methods, such as a partnership with a more experienced sister organisation on a peer basis;
- the project is in crisis, including financial problems or potential job losses.

Clients and Case Studies

- Adoption UK
- Age Concern
- BTCV and Black Environmental Network
- ChangeUp
- Creating Excellence
- Department for International Development
- Funding South West
- GOSW
- Mother Tongue Counselling Service
- Neighbourhood Renewal Unit ODPM
- Poole and Gloucestershire Children's Funds Projects
- Shelter

Case Study One

Client: DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION IN DORSET (DEED)

Project: Future Stars Project 2006

The DEED Future Stars project is funded by the Children's Fund. It aims to improve educational services to Black and Minority Ethnic Children, including refugees, asylum seekers and travellers, aged 5-13 years. It is designed to enable them to 'Enjoy and Achieve' more in Poole schools, as well as providing free advice and training to teachers, children and parents. The work evaluated the effectiveness of the project within participating schools. It identified ways in which the project could be strengthened and improved, and explored the benefits of extending the model. The evaluation demonstrated that the project was very cost effective with positive long term outcomes within the schools as a whole. It also helped the schools develop an increased understanding of the importance of cultural diversity. The report is now being used to secure funding to mainstream the service.

Case Study Two

Client: ADOPTION UK

Project: A collaborative evaluation of Adoption UK's parent support programme 2006-07

Adoption UK (AUK) is the only national charity run by and for adoptive parents. Their parent programme is delivered by trainers who are adopters themselves. It aims to enable parents to help their children cope with loss and trauma and form secure attachments. The evaluation was designed to discover how well the programme was working, which parts of it had the most impact, and make recommendations for its development. In a competitive market, the evaluation needed to be rigorous, persuasive and low cost. It also had to engage with people within the organisation. The Evaluation Trust developed a research partnership with the Hadley Adoption Centre at Bristol University, and trustees, staff and volunteers from AUK, who were trained to undertake some of the work themselves. The report offers powerful evidence on the effectiveness of the support programme, and Adoption UK has already started to action the learning from the report, including developing a video to help purchasers and parents understand the programme better.

Case Study Three

Client: Gloucestershire Children's Fund

Project: What's working and why?' in two neighbourhoods 2006-07

There are eight, mainly small, projects based in inner city Gloucester and the Cashes Green area on the edge of Stroud, who are working with local children and their parents to provide various activities, including family fitness, access to play, specialist youth provision for Muslim families, language support for Chinese children, individual support to parents and intensive groupwork with young people close to school exclusion. There is also a Social Services project aimed at getting early preventative support to children. The evaluation was designed to support the learning and development of the programme and to identify how the work can be mainstreamed into the new Children's Trust arrangements. The evaluation supported the projects' existing evaluation work, strengthening their capacity to collect and analyse both 'hard' and 'soft' data as well as collecting independent feedback from children, young people, parents and other agencies. The projects are now using the evidence to make the case for long term funding.

The Bursary Scheme

The Evaluation Trust has received funding from ChangeUp – a project managed by Capacitybuilders and supported by the Cabinet Office - to provide a range of free services to help selected groups use evaluation skills to plan and manage change and improvement in their own organisation.

Here are some of the ways that this scheme can help your organisation:

- Training in using the tools for self evaluation and performance improvement.
- Consultancy with ideas, information and support with monitoring success.
- Mentoring links with more experienced individuals or groups.
- Signposting towards local and national support networks.
- Help and advice either online or by telephone.

The scheme is aimed at groups whose annual turnover is £80,000 or less, but applications from groups with a higher turnover may be considered in some circumstances. The scheme is targeted at the following groups:

- Black and minority ethnic groups
- Refugee and migrant groups
- Faith based groups
- Isolated rural groups

Fee guidelines:

Work carried out under the Bursary Scheme is free to groups who meet these criteria.

Organisations with an annual turnover between £81,000 and £150,000 will be expected to pay 10% of the market value of the work to cover ET's core administration costs. For example, three days consultancy at £300 a day would cost £900 + 10% = £990. Therefore, the organisation would pay just £99 for the work carried out under the Bursary Scheme.

Organisations with turnover between £151,000 and £500,000 would also pay 10% towards the costs, but these are calculated at a higher rate. For example, three days consultancy at £350 a day would cost £1050 + 10% = £1155. The organisation would then pay £115.50 for the work.

If you would like to find out more about the scheme, or you would like an application form, please visit our website at www.evaluationtrust.org or contact us on the numbers given at the back of this booklet.

Contacts

The Evaluation Trust has no dedicated offices, but we maintain a large library of resources at our registered office in Reading shown below. All ET staff and consultants meet regularly, maintain supportive contact and share experiences via telephone conferencing, email and e-group communications.

Sarah del Tufo
Principal Evaluation Worker
The Evaluation Trust
12 Bulmershe Road
Reading
RG1 5RJ






Phone-fax: 0118 966 4864
Email: sarahdeltufo@evaluationtrust.org

Maria Clarke
South West Projects Worker
The Evaluation Trust
10 Acramans Road
Southville
Bristol
BS3 1DQ

Phone: 0117 904 2636
Email: maria_evaluationtrust@blueyonder.co.uk

For more information about the Evaluation Trust and the work that we do, please visit our website at www.evaluationtrust.org

Our library of policy documents can be downloaded from the website. Among many others, these include:

-  Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults
-  Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying
-  Volunteer Policy
-  Employment Contracts
-  Financial Policy