



LEEDS
BECKETT
UNIVERSITY

Citation:

Woodward, J and Kinsella, K and South, J (2013) Evaluation of the HSCVF Bursary Scheme. Project Report. Centre for Health Promotion Research, Leeds Metropolitan University.

Link to Leeds Beckett Repository record:

<https://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/847/>

Document Version:

Monograph (Other)

The aim of the Leeds Beckett Repository is to provide open access to our research, as required by funder policies and permitted by publishers and copyright law.

The Leeds Beckett repository holds a wide range of publications, each of which has been checked for copyright and the relevant embargo period has been applied by the Research Services team.

We operate on a standard take-down policy. If you are the author or publisher of an output and you would like it removed from the repository, please [contact us](#) and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

Each thesis in the repository has been cleared where necessary by the author for third party copyright. If you would like a thesis to be removed from the repository or believe there is an issue with copyright, please contact us on openaccess@leedsbeckett.ac.uk and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

LEEDS METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

**INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH
AND WELLBEING**



Evaluation of the HSCVF Bursary Scheme - Final Report

Jenny Woodward

Karina Kinsella

Jane South

October 2013

Health & Wellbeing

Centre for Health Promotion Research

Leeds Metropolitan University

E-mail: j.south@leedsmet.ac.uk



Contents

Acknowledgements	4
Summary of evaluation	5
<i>Introduction</i>	5
<i>Evaluation Aims and Objectives</i>	5
<i>Evaluation Methods</i>	5
<i>Key Findings</i>	6
<i>Conclusions and Recommendations</i>	7
The Report	8
1 Introduction	8
1.1 <i>The Bursary Scheme</i>	8
1.2 <i>The Evaluation</i>	8
1.3 <i>Report Structure</i>	9
2 Methods	10
2.1 <i>Methodological Approach & Analysis</i>	10
2.2 <i>Brief Literature Review</i>	10
2.3 <i>Monitoring data analysis</i>	10
2.4 <i>Qualitative telephone interviews</i>	11
2.5 <i>National level interviews</i>	12
3 Literature Review	13
3.1 <i>Results of the Brief Literature Review</i>	13
3.2 <i>The role of the VCS in HSC</i>	13
3.3 <i>The challenge of being commissioned</i>	13
3.4 <i>Funding Plus and Capacity Building</i>	14
3.5 <i>Models of Funding Plus or Capacity Building</i>	15
3.6 <i>Issues and Factors for Success</i>	16
4 Findings	19
4.1 <i>The Bursary Model</i>	19
4.2 <i>Organisational Needs</i>	22
4.3 <i>The Offers</i>	26
4.4 <i>Impact / Outcomes</i>	29
5 Discussion	37
5.1 <i>Was the bursary scheme an effective way to deliver targeted capacity building to established projects? (Objective 1)</i>	37
5.2 <i>How well did the HSCVF bursary scheme work in practice (process evaluation)?</i>	38
5.3 <i>Did the bursary scheme meet the immediate organisational needs of projects and has it responded to the flexible needs of each project in the changing climate within the sector?</i>	40
5.4 <i>Has the scheme led or is it likely to lead to any changes in organisational and / or project sustainability?</i>	40
5.5 <i>Summary tables</i>	41
6 Conclusion	43
6.1 <i>Recommendations</i>	43
7 References	45
Appendix 1 Participant Information Leaflet	47
Appendix 2 Interview Schedule: Support Consultant	50
Appendix 3: Further support required as described by HSCVF projects	52

List of Acronyms

CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CSV	Community Service Volunteers
DH	Department of Health
HSC	Health and Social Care
HSCVF	Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund
NAVCA	National Association for Voluntary and Community Action
NVCO	National Council for Voluntary Organisations
VCSE	Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Organisations
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector

Acknowledgements

The research team would like to thank all the partners for their help in this evaluation. We are particularly grateful to Jodie Parkes and Fumie Izaki of Ecorys for their assistance in providing access to the data and explanations of the scheme.

Our thanks also go to Attend, Community Service Volunteers (CSV) and Eastside Primetimers for their valued insight.

Finally, we appreciate all of the project staff and direct beneficiaries for giving up their time and agreeing to take part in the evaluation.

Summary of evaluation

Introduction

The 'Building Sustainability: Extended Support Package' aimed to increase the capacity and sustainability of 94 local projects - all were Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations funded by the Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund (HSCVF). The bursary scheme, as it became known, was managed by Ecorys as the lead partner alongside Eastside Primetimers, CSV and Attend as the three delivery partners.

Projects chose from a menu of over 50 offers including mentoring, coaching, on-site support, training and 'other'. A Support Consultant, allocated to each project, helped them assess their needs, choose the most appropriate offers and submit the application. The scheme was introduced in 2012 with all offers utilised by May 2013. It was funded by the Department of Health. This report presents the findings from an evaluation undertaken by the Institute for Health & Wellbeing at Leeds Metropolitan University.

Evaluation Aims and Objectives

The evaluation aimed to assess the implementation and impact of the bursary scheme as a means of focused capacity building. The objectives were:

1. To examine whether the bursary scheme is an effective way to deliver targeted capacity building to established projects.
2. To determine how well the HSCVF bursary scheme has worked in practice.
3. To assess whether the bursary scheme has met the immediate organisational needs of projects and has responded to flexible needs of each project in the changing climate within the sector.
4. To identify whether the scheme has led or is likely to lead to any changes in organisational and/or project sustainability.

Evaluation Methods

A mixed method approach was utilised including qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of stakeholders. There were four main methods:

- A brief literature review of capacity building or funding plus models
- Analysis of existing monitoring data including 78 applications, 69 end of bursary reports plus issue logs and monitoring sheets
- Qualitative telephone interviews with 35 participants including the lead partner, delivery partners (x4), Support Consultants (x11), Project Staff (x10), Direct Beneficiaries (x9)
- Analysis of national level interviews conducted for the HSCVF evaluation (x9).

A thematic matrix was used to plot each source of qualitative data by theme and assess levels of agreement between stakeholders.

Key Findings

The model

- The bursary scheme provided additional, in-depth support for projects targeted to their needs. It gave access to a wide range of pre-determined training and support offers.
- The model of having one lead partner and three delivery partners worked very well. There was a positive, constructive working relationship with shared values and commitment, a clear division of responsibilities and effective communication.
- The Support Consultant role was critical - they acted as mentors, advisors and navigators of the menu. 100% of projects said they were helpful. They worked flexibly and were seen as professional, approachable and knowledgeable.

Organisational Needs

- The bursary came at a fortuitous time – the projects' HSCVF funding would soon finish and they needed to prepare for their future as commissioned providers.
- Projects listed multiple organisational needs, the most common being Funding & Sustainability and Organisational Change.
- The application process was simple and straightforward with the Support Consultants help appreciated.
- A longer time to take up the offers was needed. Some projects underestimated the commitment required.
- Nearly every project (93%) said the scheme had met their expectations.
- Three-quarters of projects identified future support areas at the end of the scheme.

The offers

- 78 projects applied for 326 offers, most projects applied for three.
- All offers were taken up. Offer 2 (on-site support) was the most popular.
- The menu system was clear and easy to understand but the credit system less so.
- The extensive range of offers meant there was flexibility for projects and they could tailor their requirements.

The Impact / Outcomes

A wide variety of outcomes emerged, categorised into four key areas (see below). Whilst some outcomes are fairly immediate, for both individuals and organisations, others relate to preparation for long-term change in VSCE organisations. Both tangible and less quantifiable outcomes are reported but data was collected soon after the bursary ended, therefore long term outcomes were not yet fully realised.

- Changes in skills, confidence and mind-set.

Many individuals received training and were up-skilled as a result of the bursary. Their understanding, knowledge and confidence increased. At an organisational level there were signs of increased confidence, aspiration and working more as a team.

- Changing how projects worked.

84% of projects changed how they worked, 61% said it had helped to build their capacity. Projects revised policies and procedures, improved their communication and marketing and their volunteer management.

- Changes in organisational sustainability / funding.

38% of projects said the bursary had made a difference to their funding arrangements. Organisations were preparing themselves for longer -term sustainability by changing their structure, collaborating with others, exploring new funding opportunities and improving their evaluation.

- Future sustainability plans.

87% of projects said the bursary had helped their organisation make future sustainability plans. It had provided increased impetus, focus and support and helped engender a greater feeling of optimism.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The bursary scheme gave nearly 80 VCSE organisations much valued support and assistance during a time of change. Key positive features include the scheme's flexibility and the menu of offers that allowed the tailoring of support. The Support Consultants' involvement was very positive; they acted as mentors, advisors and navigators of the menu. The management of the scheme, undertaken by the lead partner and three delivery partners, was efficient and effective.

A wide range of positive outcomes were recorded. For some organisations substantial changes had already occurred but for the majority the bursary had allowed them time to prepare for change and establish new ways of working. It had helped them improve their confidence and develop strategic plans. Which outcomes are most important and will lead to future sustainability is unique to each project.

Key recommendations are to maintain the model of working whilst ensuring projects have the capacity (including the time) to utilise the support. Consideration should be given to ensuring consistency in delivery, minimising any potential conflicts of interest, allowing national projects to participate and increasing networking opportunities. Conducting an evaluation at a later date would help establish the longer-term impact of the scheme.

The Report

1 Introduction

The 'Building Sustainability: Extended Support Package' was introduced in 2012 and funded by the Department of Health (DH). It aimed to increase the capacity and sustainability of the 94 local projects funded by the Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund (HSCVF). The bursary scheme, as it became known, was a response to projects' desire for *"additional and more flexible capacity building support."* (HSCVF, 2012)

1.1 The Bursary Scheme

All the 2010 and 2011 local projects were eligible to apply for this one-off scheme. Prior to this they had already accessed the original HSCVF Support Package consisting of; An Organisational Diagnostic, Support Consultancy, Action Learning Networks, Training and access to an online forum.

Ecorys administered the scheme as the lead partner whilst the 3 delivery partners of Eastside Primetimers, Attend and CSV supplied both the Support Consultants and the majority of the bursary offers. Support consultants were matched by partner agencies based on expertise, skill set and suitability to the project

Projects discussed their requirements with their Support Consultant who endorsed and submitted the application. Each project could apply for a variety of offers, up to a certain number of credits. Over 50 bursary offers were available falling into four main categories;

- Offer 1: Mentoring or coaching
- Offer 2: On-site support e.g. financial health checks, commission readiness checks etc.
- Offer 3: Training courses
- Offer 4: Any other - supplied by external parties

Project staff, volunteers or the governing body could receive the offers. (HSCVF, 2012)

Applications had to be submitted by the end of September or October 2012 (depending on whether they were a 2010 or 2011 project) and there was a turn-around time of 28 days. The original deadline for completing the offers was the end of March 2013 but this was subsequently extended to May 2013.

1.2 The Evaluation

This evaluation aims to assess the implementation and impact of the bursary scheme as a means of focused capacity building for the HSCVF local projects. Four objectives, each with a series of key questions, were agreed:

1. To examine whether the bursary scheme is an effective way to deliver targeted capacity building to established projects.
2. To determine how well the HSCVF bursary scheme has worked in practice (the process).

3. To assess whether the bursary scheme has met the immediate organisational needs of projects and has responded to flexible needs of each project in the changing climate within the sector.
4. To identify whether the scheme has led or is likely to lead to any changes in organisational and/or project sustainability.

1.3 Report Structure

Section 2 details the research methods, Section 3 gives the results of the brief literature review whilst Section 4 presents the key findings of the primary research by theme. For each theme results from all the types of data collected are drawn together. Section 5 addresses the key objectives, whilst Section 6 provides a brief conclusion with recommendations.

2 Methods

2.1 Methodological Approach & Analysis

Whilst this is a relatively small-scale evaluation it includes qualitative and quantitative data from a wide range of sources – this was in order to gain perspectives from all key stakeholders and maximise the use of existing data.

There were four main data sources; a rapid review of existing literature, an analysis of existing monitoring data, qualitative telephone interviews with key stakeholders and secondary analysis of interview data from the main HSCVF evaluation. Each are discussed more fully below.

The project followed the Leeds Metropolitan University ethics process and was approved.

2.2 Brief Literature Review

Search criteria for the literature review were as follows:

- Funding Plus or Capacity Building models
- The setting to be Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) / organisations (VCSE) or the third sector
- To be based in the United Kingdom and conducted within the last five years

The Academic Search Complete database was searched as was Google Scholar. Websites of the following organisations were trawled for relevant reports: The Cabinet Office, The Home Office, Institute for Volunteering Research, Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR), Involve: Evidence Library, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, The King's Fund, NVCO and Third sector knowledge portal. Published material sent by study participants was also included.

The most relevant results were agreed between researchers. Both academic and 'grey' literature (non-peer-reviewed reports or evaluations) were included.

2.3 Monitoring data analysis

Data routinely collected as part of the bursary scheme was assessed for relevance and included where appropriate. The data tended to be quantitative but at times included more open questions. Key sources are included in Table 1.

Table 1: Monitoring Data Sources

Data Source	Document numbers	Key data extracted
Bursary application forms	78	Organisational needs (coded into categories), offers applied for, proposed beneficiaries.
End of bursary reports	69	Did the bursary meet expectations? Helpfulness of Support Consultants Impact on organisation – sustainability / capacity, any unexpected learnings or benefits.

Yearly narrative reports	41	One question related to the bursary scheme. Checked for relevant / new information.
Issue Logs	1	Reviewed for issues to raise in interviews.
Monitoring Sheet	1	Popularity of offer.

2.4 Qualitative telephone interviews

35 interviews took place with five groups of stakeholders, most were conducted by telephone. See Table 2 below.

Table 2: Qualitative Interview Participants

Stakeholder Group	Interviewee numbers	Participants	Notes
Lead Partner	1 interview, 2 participants	Ecorys	Face to face.
Delivery Partners	3 Interviews, 4 participants	2 x Attend, 1 x Eastside Primetimers, 1 x CSV	One face to face, remainder by telephone. Conducted at end of research to check findings.
Support Consultants	11	2 x CSV consultants (out of 3 in total) 9 x Eastside Primetimers consultants (out of 21 in total)	All by telephone. Attend Support Consultants were interviewed in their role as Delivery Partners.
Project Staff	10	3 x CEOs 1 x Chair of Trustees 1 x Project Manager 1x Development Manager 3 x Managers 1 x Service Manager	16 projects contacted; 11 agreed to participate, ten did. Four non responders.
Direct Beneficiaries	9	1 x Chair of Board 1 x Volunteer Coordinator 1 x Communications officer 1 x Volunteer & Trustee 1 x Volunteer 1 x Project coordinator 1 x CEO (new to post) 1 x Service development worker 1 x Head of operations	Participating project staff gave contact details of one direct beneficiary.

All potential participants received a Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 1), notifying them that participation was voluntary and information provided was anonymous and confidential. If they agreed to participate their responses were recorded (with permission). This was then transcribed ready for analysis. Tailored interview schedules were produced – one for each stakeholder group (see Appendix 2 for an example).

Contacting project staff, and therefore Direct Beneficiaries, was challenging. 16 out of 94 projects were selected as the initial sample – the aim was to gather a range of perspectives in terms of the offer category chosen and which individuals had benefited. Despite repeated contact via email and telephone, only 11 responded with ten agreeing to participate.

In addition to the above, case studies from projects (for example emails from appreciative projects) were collated.

In order to systematically analyse the qualitative data a thematic matrix was produced (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This plotted each source of data by each sub-theme. This meant that levels of agreement/disagreement across stakeholders could be examined to form a complete picture.

2.5 National level interviews

During the HSCVF evaluation in-depth interviews were conducted with nine individuals from five national bodies and organisations (Ecorys x3, CSV x1, Attend x2, DOH x1, and Eastside Primetimers x2). These were re-analysed for this evaluation with any findings relating to the bursary incorporated into the qualitative analysis matrix.

3 Literature Review

3.1 Results of the Brief Literature Review

Limited results were attained from the literature review and these were mainly 'grey' literature. This review will briefly discuss the current context and background for the health and social care VCS within England, before moving on to define what a Capacity Building approach is and potential advantages and disadvantages. Different model types will be described before identifying key issues and factors for success.

3.2 The role of the VCS in HSC

The role of the VCS in English Health and Social Care (HSC) is in the process of being radically revised. Government policy is to actively engage VCSE organisations in the delivery of public services (Curry et al., 2011; Cornforth et al. 2008). This is *"not only as a service provider, in competition with the NHS and private organisations but also as a source of commissioning support and a key partner in addressing public health challenges and inequalities."* (Curry et al., 2011, p5)

VCSE organisations can offer many **advantages**; they often have detailed knowledge of local populations and their needs and can reach people who may be marginalised or have complex needs, thus helping tackle inequalities. They can also help integrate and co-ordinate care across boundaries (Curry et al., 2011).

A number of potential **disadvantages** with this shift to commissioning are emphasised by Ludlow (2010) and NAVCA (2010). Newer or more innovative projects are less able to prove their worth and are therefore less likely to be commissioned – they need grant funding to become established. In addition, as VCSE organisations often lack working capital grant funding is needed to bridge between projects. Other concerns relate to influence. Being (or seeking to be) commissioned may mean organisations are less willing or able to advocate for the groups they represent (Onyx et al., 2008) it may affect their independence and potentially undermine their work with active citizens (Ludlow, 2010; NAVCA, 2010). Commissioning has been seen as a way of driving public policy and could encourage competition in the VCS thus discouraging partnerships.

3.3 The challenge of being commissioned

There are substantial **barriers** associated with VCSE organisations taking up their new commissioned provider role. They must compete with private sector and NHS organisations for contracts at a time when the key commissioning organisations are undergoing significant changes. Local Authorities are bearing new responsibilities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are only just becoming established - new networks and contacts must therefore be made at a time of great upheaval. There is also a demand for greater accountability and new regulatory requirements (Cornforth et al., 2008). At the same time financial cuts means grants are less forthcoming with more competition for them.

The **ability** of VCSE organisations to seize these new opportunities is therefore **up for debate**. Smaller organisations are seen as especially vulnerable (Cornforth et al., 2008) with less resources, fewer networking opportunities and

less able to deal with bureaucracy (NAVCA, 2010) - they risk being 'crowded out' by larger VCSE organisations or private sector organisations (Curry et al., 2011). Yet it is these smaller VCSE organisations that are often most in-touch with and responsive to local community needs.

Curry et al. (2011) state that for VCSE organisations to be successful in the new commissioning environment they need to;

- Develop strong leaders
- Consider collaboration with others or internal re-structuring for increased competitiveness
- Engage with new commissioning organisations, to establish new contacts and relationships
- Be able to provide data that demonstrates success and value for money
- Be able to market themselves effectively.

Ludlow (2010) emphasise that CEOs of VCSE organisations need heightened financial acumen to prosper in the commissioning environment.

3.4 Funding Plus and Capacity Building

A desire to ensure the VCS has the ability to seize these opportunities is one reason for the increasing focus on Capacity Building as a form of funding (CAF, 2008; IVAR, 2011). Defined as *"activity focused on helping to develop skills or competences of individual grantees or of organisations working in a particular field or on a specific issue"* (IVAR, 2011, p7) the aspiration is that Capacity Building will lead to stronger, more effective organisations. As the Big Lottery Fund state; *"Strong organisations help us achieve better outcomes The skills, abilities and resources of grant holders are critical..."* (Big Lottery Fund, 2011).

The IVAR categorise Capacity Building as a type of 'Funding Plus' - more broadly defined as *"all those activities in which funders engage ... to support and work alongside those they fund – whether those activities are about developing the skills or competencies of grantees; helping to influence policy and /or practice alongside grantees or on their behalf..."* (IVAR, 2011, p7)

Numerous advantages of the Funding Plus approach are cited:

- Improved organisational effectiveness or capacity (IVAR, 2011; Northmore et al., 2003)
- Providing the time and ability to think strategically (GrantThornton, 2010; Northmore et al., 2003)
- Contributing to making a 'step-change' (Northmore et al., 2003)
- Becoming more sustainable (Big Lottery Fund, 2011)
- Unlocking future funding (IVAR, 2011). Cornforth et al. (2008) found that 50% of grant holders got increased resources after receiving capacity building support
- Access to networks (IVAR, 2011; Northmore et al., 2003)
- Improved skills, credibility and confidence (Northmore et al., 2003)

Evidence for these cited advantages is however weak - and could therefore be seen as aspirations rather than proven outcomes (NAVCA, 2010; IVAR, 2011). Reasons for this are discussed later.

3.5 Models of Funding Plus or Capacity Building

"No one successful model ... is suited to all circumstances" concludes the Charities Aid Foundation (2008) suggesting that the chosen method needs to be tailored to the stakeholders and their abilities.

The IVAR (2011) identify five **delivery models** of funding plus, with two being most relevant to Capacity Building. These are where the organisation delivering the resources acts as either a Funder (giving additional grants to organisations they already work with for issues that need focused work) or a Provider (offering training, advice, introductions, monitoring and planning help to organisations). The Big Lottery Fund (2011) lists six types of funding plus models that include being able to buy services to a fixed value from a list of providers, assessing an organisation's capabilities, providing paid web content to organisations or giving bursaries to cover peer to peer support.

Who delivers the agreed resources is discussed by both the Big Lottery Fund (2011) and IVAR (2011). The former present a range of potential providers to VCSE organisations including national infrastructure / umbrella organisations, specialist support providers, on-line resources, private sector organisations or peer to peer.

Issues of **power and control** are debated by the IVAR (2011) and Cornforth et al. (2008). The IVAR stress that how funding is delivered and who provides it impacts on the power relationship between the funder and the grantee – with the former inherently more powerful than the latter. The more choice and freedom the grantee has in how they spend the grant and who with, the more this power imbalance is addressed. Using the funder's own staff to deliver training reduces the grantee's power whilst using third parties or issuing vouchers so grantees can choose increases it. Cornforth et al. (2008) believe that a close relationship between funders and grantees is beneficial as it gives more control to the funder over how the money is spent, as opposed to a more arms-length approach.

Two specific examples will now be discussed.

The **Modernisation Fund Programme** delivered by Capacitybuilders (GrantThornton, 2010) aimed to promote merger, collaboration and restructuring to enhance the resilience of the Third Sector. The fund gave bursaries (discussed here), grants and interest free loans. In total, over 800 organisations were awarded a bursary, worth approximately £1000, equating to two days of support from an Adviser on a range of issues.

The model consisted of Capacity Builders at the centre that set up and monitored the scheme. They recruited 48 Local Delivery Agents to manage the delivery of the bursary in their locality. This included running workshops, marketing the bursary scheme and preparing a list of suitable advisers (approximately seven each) who were then matched to successful VCSE organisations.

The model evaluated very positively – one aspect that was particularly effective was the use of local organisations to deliver key elements whilst the central team shaped and co-ordinated the programme. Using local advisers was beneficial as it maximised the time available to organisations. Organisations welcomed not having to procure their own Adviser. Two issues emerged – one was the short

time-scales available for implementation, impacting most significantly on smaller organisations with less staff. In addition the devolved structure meant there were potential inconsistencies in delivery.

The **Charities Aid Foundation** (CAF) Grant Programme (Cornforth et al., 2008) provided Consultancy & Training Grants worth up to £20,000 to VCSE organisations. This included up to 20 days consultancy with a CAF consultant plus funding for external training courses. A distinctive feature of this model was the direct involvement of CAF in recruiting and managing the consultants. VCSE organisations who had bid successfully were provided with a short list of consultants to choose from. One advantage of this model is the high level of control that CAF have over the quality of work delivered. Having a network of consultants also meant they could share good practice. Grantees have some choice of consultant whilst not needing to procure their own. One dilemma was how many consultants to have – the larger the network the better the coverage (geographically and skills-wise) but the more difficult it was to manage and share learnings.

In comparison therefore the CAF grant programme was operated largely from the centre whilst the Modernisation Fund used more localised structures. Both allowed the VCSE some choice of consultant – albeit from an approved short-list.

3.6 Issues and Factors for Success

A large number of issues and success factors are identified in the literature - the most important are listed below.

Issues – relating to VCSE organisations

The capacity of VCSE organisations to benefit from the support offered is identified as a potential issue by Northmore et al., (2003), Cornforth et al. (2008) and GrantThornton (2010). Many smaller organisations lack the time and staff to fully commit – particularly if there are tight time-scales.

Whether VCSE organisations are ready to participate or not is highlighted by Cornforth et al (2008) and IVAR (2011). Some may be resistant to receiving external support or be in the middle of a project or crisis. Whether they are ready is not always obvious at the beginning of the process.

VCSE organisations often lack experience in procuring support and training (Northmore et al, 2003, Cornforth et al, 2008,).

Issues – relating to the support package

The role of the consultant¹ is key to the success of a capacity building programme (Northmore et al., 2003; Cornforth et al., 2008, GrantThornton, 2010, Ecorys et al. 2011 and IVAR, 2011) but significant challenges exist.

- Ensuring a **good 'fit'** between consultants and organisations is critical - ideally they need to match in terms of location, area of expertise, skills and personality.
- **Ensuring quality** is seen by Blumenthal (cited in Cornforth et al. 2008) as the major challenge of capacity building. Scrutiny of their work is needed

¹ In this report we have used the term consultant for the individual who assesses and supports the VCSE organisations. They are also called business advisers or account managers.

but judging quality from a distance, particularly of process development work, is not straightforward.

- Finally, a concern that consultants may focus on their **own areas of expertise**, as opposed to what their clients need is raised “consultants have their own areas of expertise and may focus on areas of their strength and not recognise other important issues” (Cornforth et al, 2008, p32).

Ensuring the **right mix of tailoring and be-spoke support** is highlighted by many (Northmore et al., 2003; Cornforth et al., 2008; Big Lottery Fund, 2011; Ecorys, 2011). Whilst some development needs are general to an organisation others need to be specific to the organisation in order to ensure the people concerned feel it is relevant and invest their time in it. The IVAR (2011) state the tendency to standardise needs to be resisted.

Assessing the impact of a Capacity Building programme is complex and demanding (Northmore et al., 2003; Cornforth et al., 2008) due to its slow, often intangible nature. Outcomes may take a long-time to emerge and by then untangling the effect of the Capacity Building is challenging. What is seen as a positive outcome will vary by organisation and may change over time. In addition, the openness of grantees is debatable considering their position in relation to the funder. When best to do the evaluation is debated by Cornforth et al. (2008) – too soon and the impact may not have been felt, too late and learnings may be lost and it is difficult to attribute changes to the capacity building. A two-stage approach is therefore proposed.

Other issues to emerge include; **inconsistency** in how the support is delivered (in devolved structures), a **lack of time** to deliver the interventions and the fact that organisations may **not be aware** of their support needs until some time during the process.

Factors for success

Taking findings from all the literature, an ideal Capacity Building programme would ensure that:

- A comprehensive assessment of an organisation’s needs take place at the beginning of the process using external help and advice
- There is flexibility of support - as needs may change during the programme
- The support provided is tailored to the organisation, albeit with some standard features
- The support provided is “comprehensive but targeted” – organisations need to be able to access an extensive range of services
- There is adequate time for the VCSE organisations to utilise the support
- Efforts are made to ensure a good ‘fit’ between consultant and VCSE organisations
- Opportunities to build networks with other VCSE organisations are built into the support package
- It is not only organisations that are supported – but individuals

A structure that combines both local and national elements appears to be beneficial. In addition, how to evaluate the success of the programme needs to be carefully considered to take into account the variety of different ways

organisations may benefit from Capacity Building, without over-burdening organisations with excessive monitoring.

To conclude therefore there are many varied potential benefits from funding organisations to build their capacity but these have yet to be proven. Alternative models of delivery exist - which is most appropriate depends upon the aims of stakeholders, existing relationships and the funder's desired level of control. Common issues and factors for success have been identified across the available literature.

4 Findings

4.1 The Bursary Model

The main aim of the bursary scheme was to provide **additional, in-depth support** for projects. This was **targeted** to their needs and intended to help prepare organisations for the end of the project funding.

"I think its main purpose was to provide very targeted support that would meet the immediate needs of, relatively small organisations." (Key Partner Interview)

One-off monies were made available to be dispersed over a limited period and projects had already vocalised their desire for extra support;

"There was a real need coming through from the projects that they needed certain types of support." (Key Partner Interview)

One driver of this was that, as part of the HSCVF support package, projects had undertaken an Organisational Diagnostic that flagged up areas for development and improvement. Yet there was limited capacity within the original HSCVF to fulfil this with Support Consultants being allocated three days per project per year. The bursary was therefore a way of helping organisations implement the needs identified in this process.

A key element of the model was that projects were helped to **identify and prioritise** the most appropriate support for them by their Support Consultant. In most² cases individuals had already been assigned to them as part of their existing package;

"Organisations need more hand-holding in terms of determining what they need, what they want." (Key Partner Interview)

Another key element of the model was that support was provided, not as money, but as **access to a wide range of pre-determined offers** delivered by the three delivery partners. An alternative programme offering money for support was cited as not particularly popular.

"Giving additional support is good as opposed to getting funding and just getting on with it." (Support Consultant Interview)

Advantages of this model were that it tapped into existing structures i.e. the delivery partners and support consultants and it empowered organisations to 'buy/select' the assistance they needed. The timing, coming as it did, either at the middle or at the end of their grant funding meant they could start preparing for the end of their project funding.

² All the 2010 projects will have and most of the 2011 projects (exact numbers not known)

"It works as it is customised to what they want. Having a fresh perspective is useful." (Support Consultant Interview)

A disadvantage of this model is a potential conflict of interest; delivery partners both provide the advice on what offers to take-up (via their Support Consultants) and supply the offers. This issue did not seem to occur during implementation but is flagged up for consideration.

The role of Ecorys and the Delivery Partners

Four organisations worked as a "combined package" to manage the bursary. Ecorys was the lead partner, responsible for co-ordinating and managing the scheme. Attend, CSV and Eastside Primetimers were involved throughout the process and delivered both the Support Consultants and Offers 1-3.

Universally the working relationship was described as very positive. There was a clear division of responsibilities, good communication between partners and a sense of everyone striving for the same goal. A great deal of effort and time had been put in to make this work. As the bursary was built on the original support package the partnership 'hit the ground running'. An unexpected outcome of the bursary was that it resulted in the three delivery partners working more closely together.

Ecorys led the scheme. With the three partners they compiled an initial list of offers and were responsible for finalising the offer package. They then allocated the delivery between the delivery partners *"tailored towards their expertise and the pool of support consultants they have."* They processed projects' applications and communicated with the delivery partners regarding requirements.

Opinions of Ecorys were very positive with their professionalism, communication skills and attitude to learning praised. The fact that they were flexible in terms of projects' needs was appreciated. Their neutrality was seen as important - as Ecorys were not delivering the offers (with a few minor exceptions) they could allocate impartially. As they were not from the voluntary sector originally they had an outsider perspective which was seen as useful.

"I had a brilliant relationship with Ecorys, they were helpful & professional-they really made it easy." (Support Consultant)

The three delivery partners performed similar roles with slight differences in emphasis.

- Eastside Primetimers had 21 Support Consultants allocated to 46 projects. They delivered a total of 493 credits. Most of Offer 2 (on-site support and training) and half of Offer 1 (coaching and mentoring) was delivered by them.
- Attend had two Support Consultants allocated to 21 projects. They delivered a total of 547.5 credits, using a pool of specialists. Most of Offer 3 (Training Courses), approximately half of Offer 1 and a third of Offer 2 were delivered by them.
- CSV had three Support Consultants allocated to 11 projects. They delivered 35 credits, most of which were Training Courses (Offer 3).

Potential for overlap between the delivery partners existed with a few minor incidents cited. Having an engaged lead partner however meant these were resolved promptly and amicably. An advantage of having three delivery partners was that if anyone could not deliver it would be passed onto another.

"Using skills from several organisations in the delivery added to the breadth of experience organisations could access, and (in my experience) I found all consultants focused on those organisational benefits, and very prepared to collaborate and shape their individual work to maximise that benefit." (Case Study provided by Support Consultant).

The role of the Support Consultants

All 69 respondents (100%) said that yes the Support Consultants were **helpful** (End of Bursary Reports). They were described as 'effective communicators' who were 'pleasant, professional and helpful'.

"The support consultant was professional and stimulating and offered input and ideas." (End of Bursary Report)

In this scheme the Support Consultants, in the main, had an **existing relationship** with the projects. This meant that they were already aware of the organisation's background and needs.

"I think it is one of the positive features of the Bursary that you had individuals that already had a relationship and knowledge of the organisation and you weren't trying to do it on some kind of simple application form basis, as applications only tell you a certain amount about an organisation, it's only when you have an interaction that you can bring a richness of knowledge." (Delivery Partner Interview)

Their role was to act as a **mentor** or an **advisor** to projects. Being from outside the organisation meant they were a fresh set of eyes.

"It was someone with a different perspective, to come and facilitate, but also with a good grounding and understanding of what we do." (Project Staff Interview)

"Invaluable to have support of an external and impartial adviser to help us to focus on key issues and move forward in partnership." (End of Bursary Report)

They acted as a **navigator** for projects, helping them access the menu of offers – providing access whilst providing focus and direction;

"When she came we went through the things I had identified as being strengths or weaknesses. She highlighted areas where we would benefit on focussing attention or additional support. That was really helpful." (Project Staff Interview)

"[The support consultant] *Understand needs and sympathetically guide us to the most appropriate form of help. They are very flexible and responsive.*" (End of Bursary Report)

For the partner agencies they acted as middle-men, **feeding back information** when needed.

Key attributes of a Support Consultant include having **appropriate experience and skills**. They needed to be professional with relevant qualifications "*not just somebody who's learnt a bit*" (Delivery Partner Interview). Having a background in the voluntary sector is beneficial (see quote above) as they understand the environment the project is operating in.

Being **approachable** and comfortable with dealing with a variety of people is important. Projects said that consultants were 'attentive' to their organisation's needs.

"Consultants took time to understand our core business and you felt that they were dedicating time to assisting the organisation in a practical way."
(End of Bursary Report)

Working in flexible ways using a range of approaches and tools was praised in the End of Bursary Monitoring reports, for example offering support through: Skype, telephone, and face-to-face.

A couple of **potential issues** regarding the role of the Support Consultants were identified. Support consultants were matched to projects, based on their expertise, skills and suitability to the project. However, there was a concern that whilst it was not considered intentional, consultants may suggest action in the areas where they have particular skills or where their experience emanates from. It was important therefore to ensure they always acted in the best interests of the project (Delivery Partner Interviews). Having a lead partner and a strong central organisation helped counteract this potential bias by acting as a 'check and balance'. In addition, as Support Consultants were sourced from three different delivery partners, there is the possibility of a lack of consistency between them. One participant described it as the "*luck of the draw*" in terms of which the organisation got. (National Partner Interviews)

Criticism of consultants was rare but a few comments were made in the End of Bursary Reports (see next section). One project said the consultant "*was difficult to get in contact and maintain contact with*" and that they did not keep to several appointments. Another commented that there was "*no close support or meaningful follow up, lack of understanding of the project's real needs*".

4.2 Organisational Needs

There is a growing need for VCSE organisations to identify new funding streams and provide evidence of a value for money service. Typically the VCS do not have a culture of personal development therefore the bursary has been beneficial in

assisting staff members and volunteers to access accredited training and help organisations plan for the changes ahead.

Whilst the bursary fund was not initially planned as part of the HSCVF, it came about at a particularly **critical time** as projects were half way through or coming to the end of their initial funding;

"The timing of the bursary was wonderful. Without it they would have struggled to keep going." (Support Consultant Interview)

"The projects have to plan for their exit, having something at the end of that encourages them to focus on some areas via training or coaching so that the work gets sustained." (Support Consultant Interview)

Stated Needs

Organisations were asked to describe their organisational needs in their application – see Table 3. Many listed multiple areas for development. The breadth and quantity of needs identified indicates that organisations are aware of forth-coming challenges and preparing for change.

Table 3: Organisational Needs (from Application Forms)

Organisational Needs	Number of projects
Funding & sustainability	40
Organisational change	31
Evaluation & impact assessment	17
Development	17
Volunteer management	14
Business plan	14
Income generation	10
Training & support- Leadership/management	10
Social return on investment	4
Bid writing	3
Governance	3
IT strategy usage, systems & support	1

Following mutual agreement of the details, **Bursary applications** were completed by the support consultants; this was appreciated by projects as it saved them time and enabled them to spend longer understanding the offers.

"Good to have someone else to bounce ideas off and give you a check on things you are asking for... With the consultant undertaking the application, it is less time we have to put into it which is good." (Project Staff Interview)

Support consultants and key partners suggested that organisational **needs can change** once further insight is gained;

"What clients say they want and what they actually need, are not always the same thing, and it's only when you start to engage in the conversation, so they need a marketing material, but what they actually need is a marketing plan before the material." (Key Partner Interview)

The **application process** was generally described by support consultants as 'easy', 'clear' and 'straightforward' though some stated it could have been simplified with less paperwork involved;

"The form itself was easy and asked good questions of the organisations." (Support Consultant Interview)

"The guidance at the beginning was over-kill...you didn't need that level of background information." (Support Consultant Interview)

Delivery of the Bursary Scheme

The most common issue regarding the delivery of the scheme was that the **time-scale was too short** for the delivery of the offers. There had been slippage in implementing the scheme, with some projects not aware of their approved application until December 2012. With offers initially needing to be completed by the end of March (this was later extended), this only left a short amount of time for delivery. Both project staff and support consultants commented that the process felt 'rushed at times';

"Shame it was in such a limited period as all training had to be done within limited time which is not necessarily the most suitable. My training course was useful but a longer term relationship with the organisation may have been more suitable for them." (Support Consultant Interview)

Some **organisations underestimated the amount of time involved** in each offer and applied for more than they had the capacity to engage with;

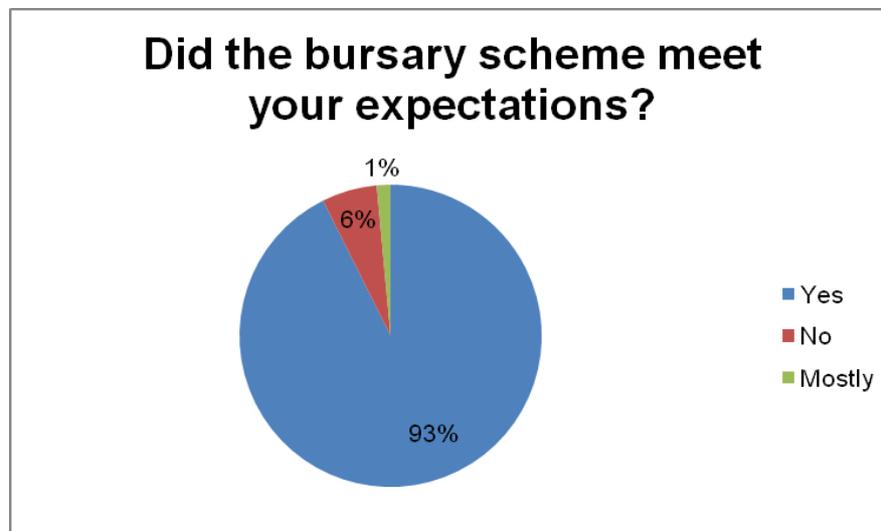
"I think that is one of the things that tends to happen is that people overestimate, they try and grab an awful lot and sometime risk losing some of the depth of just doing fewer things in more detail." (Key Partner Interview)

A couple of **logistical challenges** were identified - though these had been resolved. Group training courses required a minimum number of participants, but as they had been tailored to certain audiences (e.g. volunteers with mental health needs), there were at times difficulties meeting minimum numbers and conducting them at convenient times and locations. When training was not delivered 'in-house' there were some logistical issues around travelling to the venue.

Satisfaction with the Bursary Scheme

64 out of the 69 projects (93%) who returned their End of Bursary reports said the scheme had met their expectations. One said it had 'mostly' whilst four said 'no'.

Figure 1: Did the bursary scheme meet your expectations



Key successes were the **tailoring of the offers** and the **flexible delivery**. Support consultants were praised for their **enthusiasm and commitment** – visiting the projects in person was appreciated as it meant they got a 'feel' for the organisation and added insight.

"I think that was excellent, a lot of consultants you phone or email them but they [bursary project support consultants] came to us, they could feel our situation and frustrations." (Project Staff Interview)

"I think it is effective because the consultants came and they could see what was happening at the grass roots, they worked locally." (Project Staff Interview)

"Where we are at the end of the process exceeded where we thought we could be. It has been very useful." (Project Staff Interview)

A cause of dissatisfaction was a lack of time to take up the offers (discussed earlier) whilst some project staff debated whether the level of the training delivered;

"If I was paying for it I would have been a bit disappointed...it could have challenged us more." (Direct Beneficiary Interview, Chair of Board)

The four projects who said the scheme had not met their expectations gave the following reasons;

- Difficulties contacting and maintaining contact with the support consultant.
- Large scope of work- needed too much information in a short timescale, not enough resources available.

- Needed a more coordinated approach to delivering different elements of the bursary.
- Fragmented nature of delivery by multiple trainers/consultants.
- Need more support and follow up, lack of understanding of the project's real needs.

Future organisational needs

Three-quarters of organisations (52/69) identified additional future support areas at the end of the scheme. A very wide range of needs were identified (see Appendix 3 for the full list) but the most commonly requested are listed below:

- Fundraising and capacity building
- General training of staff, trustees, volunteers
- Handling mergers and culture change, procurement and franchise
- Marketing and PR
- Mentoring, coaching, additional support consultancy.

Some projects did not take up the bursary scheme. Support consultants suggested two possible reasons for this – either a lack of capacity to attend the training or conversely, already having sufficient existing resources within the organisation.

“Some of it was capacity, some staff had moved on and the relationships were not there. A lot of the offers were to do with extra staff training and there was a capacity issue. Some organisations take a long time to get stuff together.”
(Support Consultant Interview)

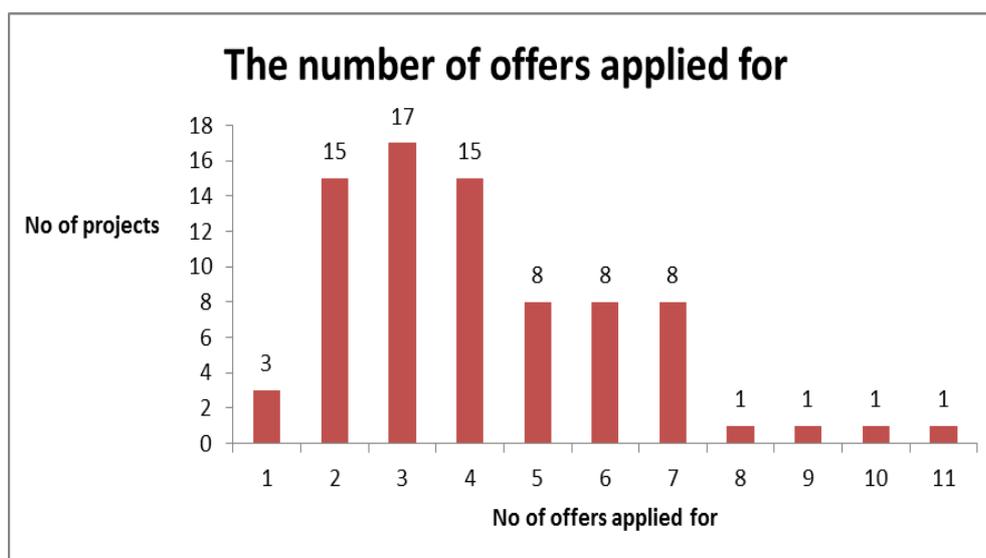
4.3 The Offers

This section draws on the Bursary Application Forms and qualitative telephone interviews.

The bursary offers were presented as a menu and credit system. There was a numbering system with four initial offer categories containing a number of offers. Projects were assigned a certain number of credits that equated to the number of offers they could apply for.

The number of offers projects applied for was extremely varied – see Figure 1. In total, 78 projects applied for 326 sub-offers, ranging from one to eleven each. The most common number of offers to apply for was three (17 projects) with 64% of projects applying for four or less.

Figure 2: Number of offers projects applied for



Popularity of Offers

Offer 2 was the most popular, both in terms of the number of projects who applied and the number of individuals assigned to it. Offer 4 had the least number of projects applying for it whilst Offer 1 had the smallest number of individuals benefitting.

Offer 1: Coaching and mentoring

43 projects applied for Offer 1 with 85 individuals allocated to it. Three quarters (73%) of projects assigned two or less people to the offer. The main reasons for applying were to address one or more of the following; organisational change, developing a business plan, fundraising & income.

Offer 2: On-site support from a subject specialist or support consultant

65 projects applied for Offer 2 with 446 people being allocated to it. Just under a half (47%) of projects assigned three people or less. The main reasons for applying were to address one or more of the following issues; marketing & communication, governance, social return on investment (SROI) funding & bid writing, organisational change, development strategies. The majority of people assigned to Offer 2 were; managers, volunteer coordinators and trustees or chairs of the board.

Offer 3: Training courses

41 projects applied for Offer 3 with 195 people allocated. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of projects assigned three or less people. The main purpose of applying was to address fundraising or volunteer management (VRQ volunteer management). The majority of people assigned to Offer 3 were; managers, project leads, volunteer coordinators and volunteers.

Offer 4: Other key areas of support activity not covered by offers 1-3

26 projects applied for Offer 4 with over 115 people allocated. The majority of people assigned were managers, project workers (including counsellors) and over 30 volunteers. The training requested was varied, including topics such as counselling skills, support consultancy and fundraising:

- More than four projects used Offer 4 to gain accredited training
- Five projects used the offer to attend conferences that could potentially enhance their knowledge and ability to deliver
- Two used it to focus on sustainability and funding, training and development and income generation
- One project used it to further their training around volunteer management
- One used it to develop new software application.

Overall, all offers were taken up by projects or individuals. Evaluation was particularly popular as it helped organisations 'prove' the value of their service. 'How to write funding bids', 'income generation' and 'communication strategies' all had high levels of uptake, indicating that organisations are conscious of the need for new sources of funding.

Providing **accredited training** was seen as important as it is not commonly accessed in the voluntary sector and helps add credence to an individual's skills (Key Partner Interview).

The menu and credit system

The menu system was seen as clear and easy to understand. The extensive range of offers meant there was **flexibility for projects** and they could tailor what they took to suit their needs. Where the 'standard' offers did not fulfil an organisation's needs they could utilise Offer 4 to define their own;

"They were flexible [the offers] one-to-one coaching could be used for a variety of purposes & option 4 was available." (Support Consultant Interview)

Box 1: Case Study by a Support Consultant

"Initially it seemed that the offers might not meet the organisations requirements, but after quite a lot of discussion it was agreed that we could interpret the specialist support as an external evaluation and also enable the key project worker to attend a conference. The range of offers did not seem to fit these needs but it was good that there was enough flexibility to adjust the offers to meet the organisation's needs. Both offers have proved extremely worthwhile."

The **large size of the menu** with its multitude of options caused confusion for some participants. Some felt that there were too many potentially overlapping /duplicated offers and they suggested merging some;

"Because Ecorys wanted to make the menu so wide and rich the documents were quite lengthy but that was a consequence of something that had a lot of variety and flexibility in it." (Support Consultant Interview)

It was suggested that the offer document needed to include **further information** on what was included in each offer;

"There were probably a lot of options for a new initiative which was potentially confusing for the support consultant and the project who weren't involved in the initial design of the system; it's hard to actually sell the products, when you don't know what they are." (Key Partner Interview)

In addition it needed to be made clear how much time / commitment was required from projects and individuals to participate in each offer. A tendency of some organisations to apply for too many offers without fully realising the capacity issues this could create was highlighted;

"They'll try and grab as much as they can." (Key Partner Interview)

"There might have been something at the beginning to get support consultants being a bit clearer with the organisations about what they were signing up to and in terms of the commitment and did they have the capacity for it." (Key Partner Interview)

The credit system – and how it translated into 'time' and 'delivery of offers' - was hard to understand for some support consultants and project staff. It was seen as a 'complicated process' that could have been simplified if the offers consisted instead of hours/days of support time.

The role of the Support Consultant was critical in navigating the menu and credit system. They were able to explain the various offers and identify how they could benefit the organisations plus they helped projects identify implementation issues such as the amount of time staff members would need to dedicate to the offers.

4.4 Impact / Outcomes

This section draws on data from The End of Bursary Reports (x69), Yearly Narrative Reports (x41), case studies submitted by the lead and delivery partners plus the qualitative telephone interviews (x36). Outcomes have been categorised into themes with examples for each presented. The themes are Changes in Skills, Confidence and Mind-set, Changes to the Way Organisations Work, Changes in Organisational Sustainability (including funding) and Future Sustainability Plans.

4.4.1 Changes in Skills, Confidence and Mind-set

Having more **trained, up-skilled staff** in organisations increases the capacity of individuals and hence the organisations they work for. For each individual, their skills are potentially improved with many receiving accredited training. But taking it as a whole, the impact is wide-ranging with 841 individuals in total being

allocated offers. Allied to this is an increase in individual knowledge **and confidence**;

"The funding bit because I knew nothing about it, so it has given me a really good general knowledge about the lines of funding. My social work background, where I was a manager in children's services but I have not worked in managing volunteers which is very different to managing paid staff, so all of it helps to look at all those things, so yeah it has built my confidence to be a trustee." (Direct Beneficiary Interview, Trustee)

"Fantastic opportunity for extra training impacting directly on three members of staff around volunteer management and engagement, fundraising and attendance at (named conference). Indirectly (organisation name) benefits from all of these due to the increased confidence around volunteer issues, fundraising and the networking opportunity of the conference." (Yearly Narrative Report)

"The outcome is that now they can have sub managers who are now skilled up by the course with management techniques so the outcome is that they have better capability to grow volunteer base." (Support Consultant Interview)

"They have a much better understanding of funders, audit requirements and more confidence in their own ability to do things that were previously being done by a 3rd party." (Support Consultant Interview)

At an organisational level there are signs of **increased confidence and aspiration**. A national level interviewee said that access to a skilled support consultant meant organisations *"move a bit faster, feel more affirmed, more inspired"* encouraging them to take risks and be brave. One organisation expressed how the Support Consultant gave them increased clarity, leading to increased confidence. This had led to them expanding from one borough in London to a country in Africa;

"We now have confidence to say that (health condition) is everywhere, it happens globally and we have a unique service that could be done in other areas and we have a big shot internationally. The (foreign country) government are just at the moment of understanding to have study across the whole of (country). ... It is frightening, we are just in one borough and now we are going to a whole country! ... (The Support Consultant) gave us the clarity on how to move forward with the idea – that was directly linked. They gave us the confidence to approach the government of (foreign country)." (Project Staff Interview)

In addition **a change in the mind-set** of organisations whereby they realised the need for planning and to be more business focused emerged.

"There is some evidence of organisations now building into their thinking, the fact that they have to use some of their resource for some of these

future sustainability issues and their not just going to go to a fundraiser and say can you help us." (Key Partner Interview)

"It has given us a different perspective on the work that we do and the future. We thought the best thing was contracts and tenders but through the support and bursary we see there are much wider opportunities for us all ... looking to change the mind-set of the organisation over the next few years." (Project Staff Interview)

Working more as a team and 'pulling together' was demonstrated by some organisations. One project talked about how their new communications strategy *"gave a good foundation that everybody supports"* (Direct Beneficiary Interview, CEO). Others talked about how their trustees were now more engaged.

"With an outsider present it became easier to set aside petty attitudes of mistrust and talk them through rationally and openly." (End of Bursary Report)

"[the Support Consultant] helped with bringing the different teams together within the organisation, so that everybody has started feeling like they are part of one organisation, not they belong to a project which is here, so it has brought about quite a cultural change which kind of had to happen in order for our strategic plan to work – so that has been beneficial." (Direct Beneficiary Interview, CEO)

"It gave us the changes to get staff and trustees working together and that is hard to do." (Project Staff Interview)

4.4.2 Changing how projects work

In the End of Bursary Reports:

- 58 projects stated that they have changed the way they work as an organisation as a result of the bursary, 10 projects did not think they had changed, one project was unsure
- 42 projects said the bursary scheme had helped to build their organisational capacity, 25 said it had not, whilst one said it was too early to say.

Reviewing and amending existing **policies and procedures** is evident. One organisation had upgraded their payroll, invoicing and file management systems.

"In terms of strategic development, that has to do with payroll and invoice system, we got advice and changed systems. Payroll is now in house. The accountant was previously paying too much NI insurance; we found out, he was increase the tax relief every year (sic). That was embarrassing for the accountant. Because of this we have a new payroll in place and new invoicing system. We were not always very careful about the storage of documents and plans, the consultant saw this and helped us see the benefit

of it. In the past one of our computers crashed and we lost a lot of documents. Now we know if the computer crashes, it will be backed up somewhere." (Project Staff Interview)

Other systems that had been revised due to the bursary support include; risk management and procurement processes, databases, invoicing and payroll systems.

Attaining **quality accreditation** emerged as a bursary outcome. One project was working towards PQASSO³ with mentoring assistance from a Support Consultant. They wanted to make *"the organisation independent of reliance on particular individuals as far as possible"* feeling it would be good for them as an organisation and help *"certify us in the eyes of the outside world and potential funders."* (Case Study)

Improved communication and marketing was cited as a positive outcome by a number of projects. One organisation said how, prior to the bursary, their profile had been confusing whereas now, with help from their Support Consultant they had;

"Pulled everything together and given us one voice, one identity and a much sort of stronger profile within the city." (Direct Beneficiary Interview, CEO)

The bursary support had taught them to write better press releases leading to a local front page story. They had recruited a social media apprentice, developed a new marketing plan and their marketing material now had a *"proper health style"*. They attributed these successes *"entirely down to Support Consultant's training"*.

Other examples include;

"We have appointed two independent marketing people to help us make up our branding, logo. One consultant helped improve our website, to get traffic. One of the things that came out of it – in hospitals they have a TV by the bedside, how can we get into that so people in hospital will know about the services we provide. We are also thinking about going into a GP surgery where they have a TV for adverts." (Project Staff Interview)

"With Marketing we have focused on those groups who we have historically not been that successful with, and instead of telling them what we do we have turned it on its head and gone and asked them what they want from us and that seems to be working." (Project Staff Interview)

Improved management of volunteers emerged as an outcome for some projects.

³ "A quality assurance system developed specifically for voluntary and community organisations. It provides a system to self assess and improve all aspects of an organisation's work". <http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/>

"We also invited some of our more experienced volunteers to that training and we are now using them in a much more productive way and it is feeding our longer term plan of using volunteers to develop their skills and strengths, but working to their strengths and using them a bit more fully really but without scaring them." (Direct Beneficiary Interview)

"Investing in Volunteers has strengthened our volunteer practices and once gained will help us promote our commitment to our volunteers." (End of Bursary Report)

"The bursary has provided the training course VRO level 3 in management of volunteers to the staff member who has taken over the general volunteer management ... This has proved to be invaluable..." (End of Bursary Report)

Networking was seen by project leads as a key positive outcome with organisations learning from each other. This tended to be mentioned less by projects – though attending conferences was cited by some.

4.4.3 Changes in organisational sustainability / funding

In the End of Year Reports, 41 projects said the bursary had not made a difference to their current funding arrangements whilst 26 stated it had. Many gave examples of ways in which they had sought to increase their sustainability.

The qualitative data demonstrates how organisations are preparing themselves for greater, more long-term sustainability.

Examples of **organisations changing their structures**, in order to become more sustainable emerged. One had become a 'Charitable Incorporated Organisation' with trustees appointed and a Memorandum of Understanding (End of Year Report). Two had become social enterprise organisations – one via an online platform the other via a new model of working whereby self-directed payments are used to fund and maintain the service *"this may be a model that is used for development of other services"* (End of Bursary Reports).

Encouraging **Mergers and Collaborations** between organisations was a hoped for outcome from the bursary. In the End of Bursary Reports 32 projects stated an unexpected benefit had been "Collaboration with Other Projects or Organisations".

One example of a merger is where three organisations joined forces in response to commissioners wanting to deal with one body only - without doing this it was felt there was no long-term future for them. At the start of the process there was reluctance *"there was a sense that the organisations would only work together if they were forced to"* (Support Consultant). The bursary fund facilitated the process via workshops where areas of interest and the potential for collaboration was discussed. The role of the Support Consultant was critical; *"Without his help in setting up the organisational structures we would still just be talking about it ... It has been invaluable to have the support of an external and impartial adviser to help us to focus on key issues and move forward in partnership"* (End of Bursary Report and Support Consultant Case Study).

Another Support Consultant gave an example of a consortium being formed between four projects, all addressing the same health issue in the region. Whilst they had not fully merged they are now working closely together;

“The organisations are actively looking for opportunities to work together, providing joint responses to tenders, communicating consistent messages etc. There is also interest from other (health issue) organisations in the (regional area) in joining the consortium in the medium to long term which is extremely positive for the future sustainability of services in the region.” (Support Consultant Case Study)

Examples of **exploring new funding opportunities** are shown. One project described how they were now looking for support from the private sector (End of Bursary Report) whilst another said that they were looking to see *“whether we could generate income from our providers”* (Project Staff Interview).

Some evidence of **receiving new funding** emerged. One project had submitted two national and one international funding applications – one had been successful, whilst outcomes were awaited for the others. The support consultant had helped them look for people with skills in the right area and they had found a specialised consultant to help with the bids. Other successful examples included:

“It helped us attract £15K from a local Trust. The Trust was impressed by our effort to work collaboratively and wanted to help us collectively on our way to greater sustainability.” (End of Bursary Report)

“The project had no funding options, now it has a future as a sustainable service that can offer carers on-going service.” (End of Bursary Report)

“We have now gained an additional funding from a local business and have built further relationships with them.” (End of Bursary Report)

Having improved evaluation skills to demonstrate impact is key to ensuring better quality bids.

“(The bursary) allowed us to buy into Star Outcomes training and the training itself has been invaluable in evidencing our impact on clients.” (Narrative Report)

“Two staff attended an Evaluation impact assessment training off site. This enabled them to support SROI service assessments in the organisation.” (End of Bursary Report)

4.4.4 Future sustainability plans

In the End of Year Reports:

- 60 projects said yes, the bursary had helped their organisation to make future sustainability plans, seven said it had not, whilst one said it was too early to say.
- The ways in which it had helped projects become more sustainable included: helping them become more tender ready / position for funding challenges, looking at ways to improve activities and diversify income

streams, engaging the Boards in appraisal and future strategic direction, focusing on business plans, forging links with other groups/networks and improved communication.

The qualitative data, both from support consultants and projects revealed that the bursary had given a large number of projects the impetus, focus and support to **develop business and strategic plans**. Less tangibly, there was a **sense of optimism** that the changes they had made, or were planning to, had increased their chances of a long-term future.

Project staff said:

"The support to do the strategic plan is a benefit to the whole organisation. It broadened out the support to a wider group of people. It brought trustees into a development session." (Project Staff Interview)

"Consultation process enabled time and focus needed (to) explore changes necessary in order to create a new sustainable service. Expert guidance was offered and the result is a business plan and project plan to develop new service." (End of Year Report)

Support consultants said:

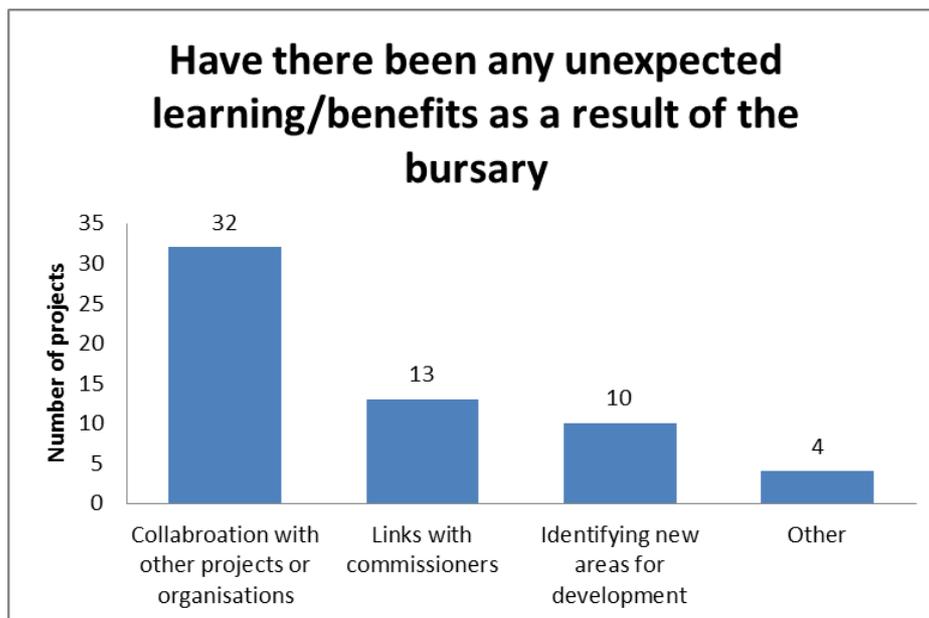
"The bursary funding is a more effective way of the Department of Health money to help organisations to move forward rather than the original grant funding. This helps organisations change rather than just doing another project. It helps capacity building and sustainability and was effective ... in terms of money it made more impact than the original grant." (Support Consultant Interview)

"The bursary enabled them to make it more sustainable and help with recruitment and helped internal staff get trained." (Support Consultant Interview)

4.4.5 Unexpected benefits

The End of Year Reports asked if there had been any unexpected learnings as a result of the bursary – see Figure 3.

Figure 3: Any unexpected learning / benefits from the bursary



Other unanticipated benefits include moving to new premises and an associate consultant becoming a project trustee and using his contacts with a local football club to boost their volunteer capacity.

Many projects talked about how the bursary gave them access to a **calibre of support** that they would never normally be able to afford;

“To get somebody at that level with that experience and knowledge, is completely beyond most voluntary sector organisations budgets and not least, we may not have even found somebody locally.... I don’t think we would have found someone locally who could have done that work and certainly if we had been paying for it, it would have been way beyond our budget, it just wouldn’t have been possible. To get an expert in through a Bursary Scheme is hugely valuable for the voluntary sector.” (Direct Beneficiary Interview, CEO)

One note of caution emerged from a Support Consultant. The consultant was strongly supportive of the scheme but felt it needed to be more selective and not support organisations that did not provide a quality product for the service user *“some organisations need to be able to fail as they are not fit for purpose”*.

5 Discussion

This section draws together the research findings and the reviewed literature to answer the evaluation objectives. Section 5.5 assesses the bursary model compared to the issues and factors for success identified.

5.1 Was the bursary scheme an effective way to deliver targeted capacity building to established projects? (Objective 1)

How does the bursary relate to other types of funding plus models?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of using this approach?

The bursary scheme utilised a model of one national lead partner and three delivery partners, each with their own network of Support Consultants. The Modernisation Fund and the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) also had one central body to oversee their programmes, but the former used 48 Local Delivery Advisers Agents to recruit Advisers locally whilst the latter employed Consultants direct.

The bursary delivery model was very well received by key stakeholders with high levels of satisfaction. Having one lead partner, independent of the offer delivery, was a key strength - they could co-ordinate delivery between the three partners and arbitrate if any issues arose.

Having three delivery partners was a positive feature of the model. It ensured that enough appropriately skilled consultants with relevant experience were available to deliver the scheme rapidly. A shared commitment and vision helped the partners pull together, as did having one lead partner to finalise decisions. It helped that a good working relationship between partners had already been established prior to the bursary. Having a reasonably small number of delivery partners meant effective communication could be maintained and any learnings shared.

The Support Consultants were key to the bursary's success – they helped the projects navigate the menu of offers and acted as mentors to the individuals involved. Their experience, insight and flexibility were greatly appreciated by projects.

Potential weaknesses of the model are three-fold. One is how to ensure high quality work across so many disparate projects. This was raised as an issue by CAF and, whilst satisfaction of the work was high in the HSCVF bursary scheme, the potential for inconsistency between consultants was flagged up. Secondly, a concern is that Support Consultants may 'play to their strengths' and advise action in areas they have the most experience of, as opposed to what projects most need. Finally, there is a potential conflict of interest given that the delivery partners both supply the Support Consultants and the offers – consultants could be motivated to advise their employers' offers be taken up.

The model structure and the direct communication between Ecorys and projects meant there were checks and balances to counteract these potential weaknesses. It was suggested that there should be further monitoring throughout the delivery process to ensure a consistent, high quality, standard is followed.

What are stakeholders' perspectives on the appropriateness, relevance and accessibility of the bursary scheme in relation to the current context for VCS organisations?

The current context for the VCS is undoubtedly challenging, particularly for smaller organisations. Having to become commissioned providers means they need to become outcome focused, be able to demonstrate their effectiveness and market themselves. Their staff need up-skilling and their organisations potentially re-structuring – all without losing the key benefits of being a VCSE organisation.

The bursary scheme was, almost universally, felt to be both appropriate and relevant. It provided organisations with access to professional, high-level support in a wide range of areas and gave them the time to step back and consider how to progress in a sustainable way. Coming at the middle or end of the overall HSCVF was fortuitous and meant projects could start to prepare for a new era. The application process was reasonably simple to access and the Support Consultants assisted greatly. The only criticism (from one participant) was that perhaps the HSCVF needed to be more selective about who they provided the bursary to.

What learning is emerging that could improve the process of the scheme should it be used again within the programme or elsewhere?

Increasing the amount of time organisations have to utilise the offers was a key learning. In addition, simplifying the process and management systems associated with the application process would reduce the amount of paper work and feedback through the portal.

Ensuring projects have the capacity to engage with and participate fully in the offers they choose is important. Some took on too much given the short time-scales of the scheme. Having more information about the commitment needed to participate in each offer and perhaps being more stringent at the application stage could help.

Other improvements are to consider providing further opportunities for local and national projects to network and share ideas and experiences. Having a follow up on progress after the bursary ended would also be useful.

An option to consider in future schemes is to allow VCSE organisations more choice of Support Consultants. Giving choice may help address the power imbalance inherent in the funding environment (IVAR, 2011). Giving projects a short-list of potential consultants to select from has worked well for other similar projects (Cornforth et al, 2008, GrantThornton, 2010).

5.2 How well did the HSCVF bursary scheme work in practice (process evaluation)?

Timing / Range and number of offers / project journeys

More time to take up the offers was a consistent request from projects and Support Consultants. Smaller projects with not many staff struggled in particular and it risked creating tension between them and the Delivery Partners.

The range and number of offers was welcomed. The extensive menu meant projects could tailor their support needs. Having offers that are specific and relevant to projects was seen as critically important both in this scheme and

other literature. Some offers had broad appeal and could have been made more generalised - making it more straightforward to organise group sessions. Care needs to be taken though that the specific nature of the bursary scheme is not diluted by too many generalised offers.

The menu system was well received as it gave both structure and flexibility. The credit system however confused some and a simpler way of defining the quantity of offers allowed should be explored if the bursary is repeated.

The journeys of the projects were book-ended by the application form at the start and the end of bursary report. In-between an issue log, monitoring sheet and on-line portal were used. The quantity of data collected was high and it was done thoroughly. Arguably linking the data together to answer key questions could be explored in the future, for example, comparing satisfaction and outcomes by Support Consultant. A further follow up is suggested as many outcomes are long-term whereas the evaluation was conducted soon afterwards.

Was the involvement of the Support Consultant useful?

The Support Consultants were a key success factor - they established strong relationships with the projects. They acted as navigators to the sometimes complex bursary scheme and as mentors to the projects and the individuals in them. They also fed-back information to key partners. Levels of satisfaction from the projects were very high and feedback warm and appreciative. Having an experienced person from the sector, but outside the organisation, increased the confidence of projects and encouraged them to think differently and more ambitiously.

One challenge for any future bursary scheme is how to ensure some degree of consistency between Support Consultants and that the best 'fit' possible between VCSE organisations and consultants is achieved.

Has the management and delivery model been effective and efficient? And how has the partnership managed the bursary together?

These questions are mainly addressed in section 5.1. The only additional point is that Ecorys were praised for their professionalism, communication skills and their flexibility whilst the three Delivery Partners worked very smoothly together to address the challenge of delivering hundreds of offers to over 70 projects in a matter of months. The only substantial criticism was time slippage at the beginning that delayed the delivery of the offers. This could be attributed to the popularity of the scheme which, until it started, was an unknown quantity. Simplifying the range of offers may have helped.

What factors have influenced implementation?

The fact the bursary scheme was an extension to the overall HSCVF was significant - it meant there were existing relationships between the projects and the Support Consultants and between the four partners. In effect they were 'ready to go,' once the scheme had been approved. Any future schemes using this model would need to consider this.

Projects were ready for this scheme – a fact identified as important by Cornforth et al (2008) and IVAR (2011). The sheer number of applications testifies to their acceptance of the need for support. Why this is the case cannot be answered definitively but drivers include; the challenging funding environment, the Organisational Diagnostic already conducted and their existing relationship with the HSCVF.

5.3 Did the bursary scheme meet the immediate organisational needs of projects and has it responded to the flexible needs of each project in the changing climate within the sector?

The main evaluation of the HSCVF found that there was potential for the original Support Package to be better tailored to project needs and that it needed to fit with the development needs of the organisation and be timely (South et al 2013). The bursary scheme can be seen to respond to these issues. Satisfaction levels with the bursary scheme were very high. The tailored nature of the bursary model was appreciated as organisations felt it addressed their own particular needs and circumstances. A wide range of needs were identified by projects at the start of the process, many focusing on long-term issues such as Funding, Sustainability and Organisational Change. Nearly all projects, following delivery, said their expectations were met. Three-quarters of projects identified further support needs at the end - perhaps indicating an on-going process of change.

The bursary scheme was frequently described as flexible with interpretations of offers possible. Support consultants stressed how the needs identified at the start did sometimes alter once a more in-depth relationship had been developed and there had been time to consider and reflect on a project's needs more deeply. The flexible nature of the support meant this could be accommodated.

Whilst each offer was taken up Offer 2 (on-site support from a subject specialist of support consultant) received the most number of applications. Offers relating to evaluation, funding bids, marketing and organisational change were particularly popular, which perhaps reflects the need for VSCEs be able to make a case to commissioners in the new funding landscape. Offer 4, delivered by external parties, was utilised by approximately a third of projects. Importantly it symbolised the flexibility of the scheme and the fact that support outside of the Delivery Partners could be accessed if needed.

5.4 Has the scheme led or is it likely to lead to any changes in organisational and / or project sustainability?

Some projects had made large changes that they attributed to the bursary. Examples of organisations changing who they are (for example merging with others) and where they receive funding from in order to become more sustainable exist. At the point in time of the evaluation (a few months after the bursary scheme finished) these are in the minority.

The majority of projects show signs of changing how they do their work – for example altering policies and procedures, developing communication and marketing plans and how they manage their volunteers. Most organisations exhibit signs of preparing for future sustainability by developing strategic plans and considering potential collaborations.

Increased skills, confidence, aspiration and a change in mind-set are cited by many organisations as a key benefit of the bursary scheme. All of these could

lead to future improved sustainability. There are signs of optimism from projects with many looking for new income streams, new collaborations and making future plans. Some are still cautious but this is perhaps not surprising given the uncertain nature of the environment for VCSE organisations. Overall the bursary scheme can be seen to help VCSE organisations prepare to engage with new commissioning structures and processes.

5.5 Summary tables

Table 4 compares the issues raised in the literature with those experienced by the bursary scheme. Table 5 examines whether or not the bursary model features the success factors identified in the literature.

Table 4: Capacity Building Issues: the literature and the bursary scheme

<i>Issues identified in the literature</i>	<i>Was this an issue in the bursary model?</i>
Organisations not ready to participate –resistant to support or mid-project / crisis	<i>No –support welcomed</i>
Lack of capacity within organisations to utilise the support offered	<i>Yes –lack of time and available staff to take up offers identified</i>
Organisations initially unaware of their support needs	<i>Partly – an assessment took place but needs still changed as work progressed</i>
Ensuring a ‘good fit’ between consultant and organisation is challenging	<i>No – use of 3 delivery partners ensured a good spread geographically and in skill-set. High satisfaction levels. Support consultant key.</i>
Consultants may focus on their own areas of expertise, as opposed to what their clients need is raised	<i>Partly - identified as a potential issue</i>
Inconsistency in how support is delivered	<i>Partly – some concerns raised that this was a possibility</i>
Ensuring quality - judging from a distance not straightforward	<i>No – high levels of satisfaction with quality of work</i>
Ensuring the right mix of tailoring and be-spoke support	<i>No – positive feedback on support package</i>
Assessing the impact - complex and demanding	<i>Partly –range of outcomes assessed but long-term impact not fully felt</i>

Table 5: Success Factors: The literature and the bursary scheme

<i>Factors for Success identified in the literature</i>	<i>Did the bursary model feature this success factor?</i>
Adequate time for the VCSE organisations to utilise the support	<i>No – deadline extended which helped but some struggled to utilise longer offers</i>
Comprehensive assessment of needs at the beginning of the process using external help and advice.	<i>Yes –Support Consultant and project discussed and agreed needs together</i>
Efforts are made to ensure a good ‘fit’	<i>Yes –consultant matched based on</i>

between consultant and VCSE organisations	<i>expertise, skills and suitability</i>
Support provided is tailored to the organisation, albeit with some standard features	<i>Yes - wide choice of offers plus tailored offers. Potential for more standardisation.</i>
Support provided "comprehensive but targeted"	<i>Yes – high satisfaction levels with range / targeting of offers</i>
Flexibility of support	<i>Yes – menu gave flexibility plus requests to change accepted</i>
It is not only organisations that are supported – but individuals	<i>Yes – Offer 1 largely for individuals</i>
Opportunities to build networks with other VCSE organisations are built into the support package	<i>Partly – group training encouraged networking plus umbrella bodies membership</i>
Combines both local and national elements	<i>Yes – national plus 3 partners.</i>
How to evaluate the success of the programme needs to be carefully considered	<i>Yes – though potentially needs later evaluation to assess long-term impact</i>

6 Conclusion

The HSCVF's bursary scheme provided nearly 80 VCSE projects with much valued support and assistance during a time of great change.

The involvement of Support Consultants was particularly positive; they helped projects navigate the menu of support offers and acted as mentors and advisors. The flexible nature of the scheme was a key strength and allowed projects to meet their needs in context. The menu of offers gave structure whilst allowing support to be tailored to projects' individual needs. Whilst some process issues were identified, the scheme generally operated efficiently and effectively.

A wide range of positive outcomes were recorded. For some organisations substantial changes had already occurred with new funding opportunities or structures realised. For the majority it had allowed them time to prepare for change and establish new ways of communicating, managing volunteers and preparing bids. It had helped them to improve their organisational confidence and develop strategic plans.

Critically which outcomes are most important and which will lead to future sustainability is unique to each project. The flexible, personalised nature of the scheme meant the support could be individualised to each project.

Whether organisations are sustained depends not only upon schemes such as the bursary but also upon commissioning organisations recognising and appreciating their worth.

6.1 Recommendations

The Model

- Maintain the structure of one national organisation co-ordinating and leading the project working with a small number of delivery partners. Invest time in establishing a positive, working relationship between the four partners.
- Maintain the active, personalised involvement of the Support Consultants. Efforts to ensure a good fit between project and consultant need to be continued.
- Consider a way of ensuring there is consistency of quality between the various Support Consultants and the work they deliver. Be aware of the possibility of a conflict of interest between the Support Consultants both defining the projects' needs and providing the training.
- Consider allowing national projects to participate in the bursary scheme.

The Offers

- Maintain the menu system of offers but consider reducing the number by standardising some of the more popular options.
- Devise an alternative, simpler way of defining how many offers projects can utilise (in place of the credit system).

- Encourage organisations to reflect on their capacity to utilise the various offers – via the Support Consultants, the application forms and the menu of offers clearly stating required input.
- Ensure networking opportunities are built into the offers.

The Process

- Allow sufficient time for the offers to be utilised – whilst short time scales can encourage action, they can also lead to increased stress and potential friction between the Support Consultants and projects.
- Consider ways of simplifying the application process and the use of the reporting portal where possible.
- Consider whether there are ways of utilising existing data to compare outcomes by organisational type or bursary input.

Evaluation

- Consider undertaking a follow up evaluation with projects at a later date to assess longer – term outcomes, ensuring a wide range of outcomes are considered.

Advocacy

- Advocate on behalf of VCSE organisations to ensure their skills and capacities are appreciated and understood by commissioning and funding bodies.
- Market the value of tailored support through funding plus approaches that allow VSCE organisations to grow and prepare for commissioning.

7 References

Big Lottery Fund (2011) **Building capabilities for impact and legacy: a discussion paper**

Cornforth, C., Mordaunt, J., Aiken, M., Otto, S. (2008). **The Charities Aid Foundation Grant Programme, Learning from capacity building and lessons for other funders.** Charities Aid Foundation.

Curry, N., Mundle, C., Sheil, F., Weeks, L. (2011) **The Voluntary and Community Sector in Health: Implications of the proposed NHS reforms.** The King's Fund & NCVO.

Ecorys, PrimeTimers, BtoB, Catch 22 (2011) **Supporting a Stronger Civil Society: What Development Tools work best?** Briefing Paper 2 of 11.

GrantThornton (2010) **Modernisation Fund Grants Programme delivered by Capacitybuilders.** Phase One Delivery Review.

HSCVF (2012) **Building Sustainability: Extended Support Package - Local projects 2010 and 2011**

Institute for Voluntary Action Research (2011) **Beyond Money: A study of funding plus in the UK.**

Ludlow J. (2010) **Capitalising the voluntary and community sector: a review.** For the NCVO Funding Commission.

Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1994) **Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook** Sage Publications

NAVCA (2010) **The local economic and social value of grant making with the voluntary and community sector.** An edited version of a 2010 paper by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies and Voluntary Sector North West.

Northmore, S., Pearson, S., Morgan, G., Taylor, M. (2003) **An Evaluation of Community Fund Grant Making to Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Organisations. Final Report.** Sheffield Hallam University, University of Brighton

Onyx J., Dalton, B., Melville, R., Casey, J., Banks, R. (2008) **Implications of government funding of advocacy for third-sector independence and**

exploration of alternative advocacy funding models. American Journal of Social Issues, Vol. 43, No. 4.

South, J., Giuntoli, G., Cross, R., Kinsella, K., Warwick-Booth, L., Woodall, J., White, J. (2013) **An evaluation of the Department of Health's Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund. FINAL REPORT.** Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan University.

Appendix 1 Participant Information Leaflet

Evaluation of the Department of Health's Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund

Please read this leaflet carefully. Please ask if you do not understand or would like any more information.

Lead Investigator: Professor Jane South, Centre for Health Promotion Research, Leeds Metropolitan University.

You are being invited to take part in some research as part of an evaluation of the Department of Health's Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund (HSCVF) that is being carried out by a research team from Leeds Metropolitan University. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this leaflet.

What is the purpose of the evaluation?

The HSCVF was established in 2009 as a capacity building programme with the aim of supporting voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations to play a more effective role in addressing health and social care needs. 'Building sustainability: extended support package' is a bursary scheme that has been introduced in the 2012/3 financial year in order to help increase the sustainability and capacity of 2010/2011 HSCVF projects. As part of the main evaluation of the HSCVF, we want to evaluate the implementation and the immediate and projected long term impact of the bursary scheme as a means of focused capacity building for existing HSCVF projects.

Overall, the HSCVF evaluation is aiming to identify effective capacity building approaches.

The specific objectives of the bursary evaluation are:

- To examine whether the bursary scheme is an effective way to deliver targeted capacity building to established projects.
- To determine how well the HSCVF bursary scheme has worked in practice.
- To assess whether the bursary scheme has met the immediate organisational needs of projects and has responded to flexible needs of each project in the changing climate within the sector.
- To identify whether the scheme has led or is likely to lead to any changes in organisational and/or project sustainability

Why have I been chosen?

You are being invited to take part in the evaluation because a project that you are involved in has agreed to take part in this research study. The Ecorys team or the project leader has given us a list of everyone who is involved in the bursary scheme and we have picked a sample from the list to represent everybody who is involved.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You will also have chance to talk to one of the research team before you make up your mind. You are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

The research involves taking part in a telephone interview between May and June 2013. The interview will follow a schedule and will be led by one of the research team. The researcher will be asking open questions about your involvement and experiences of the HSCVF bursary scheme. The interviews will be recorded, although you may refuse permission for this. The interview will normally take around 30mins to 45 minutes. The interview will be held at a convenient time for you.

What will happen to the information that I provide?

After the interview, information will be stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act and only the research team at the University will have access to it. Anything you tell us will be kept strictly confidential - this means that your name will not be used at any point in written reports or in any feedback to the project.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There should be no risk from taking part in this study. We hope that being interviewed does not raise any concerns with you, but if it does then please get in contact with either myself or my colleagues – our details are below, or speak to your project leader.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You will be making a valued contribution to the development of knowledge in this field of work but there are no personal benefits.

What will happen to the results of the evaluation?

The results of the study will be used in a report that will be given to the Department of Health. The results may be shared with other researchers and professionals through journal articles and conferences. You will not be identified in any report or publication about the evaluation. Everyone taking part in the evaluation will receive a summary of the results.

If you have a concern about any aspect of this evaluation you should ask to speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions. If you remain unhappy and wish to speak to someone independent from the study, you can do this through Professor Alan White, Faculty of Health & Social Sciences Tel: 0113 812 4358

Email: a.white@leedsmet.ac.uk.

Contact us

The team members are:

Dr Jane South

Director of Centre for Health Promotion Research

Tel: 0113 812 4406

E-mail: J.South@leedsmet.ac.uk

Jenny Woodward
Research Fellow
Tel: 0113 812 5856
E-mail: J.L.Woodward@leedsmet.ac.uk

Ruth Cross
Senior Lecturer, Public Health - Health Promotion
Tel: 0113 812 4452
E-mail: r.m.cross@leedsmet.ac.uk

Karina Kinsella
Research Assistant
Tel: 0113 812 7651
E-mail: k.kinsella@leedsmet.ac.uk

If you have any questions please call or email a member of the evaluation team above. Or write to us at the address below:

Centre for Health Promotion Research
Faculty of Health & Social Sciences
Leeds Metropolitan University
Queen Square House
Leeds LS2 8NU

Appendix 2 Interview Schedule: Support Consultant

Introduction

Hi, name's Karina /Jenny. I'm a researcher from the CHPR at Leeds Metropolitan University. We've been asked by the Volunteering Fund to conduct an evaluation of the bursary scheme. We're therefore looking at all the documents relating to the bursary scheme and interviewing some key stakeholders – including the support consultants that worked with the local projects accessing the scheme. The interview will take between about 30 minutes. Are you happy to take part? (Check all consent etc.)

Capture:

- Name of interviewee, who they work for and their position in the organisation

1. Background

- Can you tell me a bit about your role as a support consultant for HSCVF?
- Can I ask you which projects you are the support consultant for?
How long have you worked with them?
- When did you become involved with the bursary scheme?
- What do you think projects were hoping to achieve by getting funding from the bursary scheme?
- Did it come about at the right time for this sector?

2. Process

I'm going to ask you some questions now about the process of applying and being allocated the support on offer.

- What was your involvement in terms of helping organisations apply for the scheme?
 - At what point did you get involved?
 - How did you assist them?
 - Was your assistance appreciated?
 - Was there anything they needed but you couldn't help them with?
 - Did any issues arise in terms of your involvement?

In terms of the process of applying for the offers, was it a fairly simple process or not?

- Was the guidance clear?
- Was it a fairly simple process or a complicated one?
- Did any issues arise? If so, what?

In terms of the process of hearing back and then having the offers delivered, again, was that a fairly straightforward process or not?

- Did it take long for projects to find out?
- Did any issues arise or not?

Overall, do you have any comments to make about the process of organisations applying for or receiving the offers?

Moving on to ask about role of Ecorys and the other partner organisations. Did all partners in the process work effectively together?

- Did they perform their agreed roles efficiently and effectively? If not, in what ways?
- Did you have sufficient support in your role?

3. The offers

- Was the range of support on offer appropriate for the organisations you were working with?
 - What offers were most popular?
 - Were there any other types of support that you think should have been offered?

Did any of the projects you work with not apply for any offers?

- If so, why was that?
- What would have encouraged them to do so?

In terms of the support actually received. Did it deliver what the organisations expected? If not, why not?

Do you have any other comments about the offers themselves?

4. Outcomes

Do you think the organisations gained from the support they received? Why?

- In terms of immediate benefits?
- And more long-term benefits?
- If there weren't benefits/only minimal benefits – why?

Do you think the additional support made a difference to their funding arrangements?

Do you think it made any difference to their ability to deliver community activity?

Has it helped them achieve greater sustainability?

Overall, are there any other outcomes from the bursary scheme either for individuals or the organisations that you can think of?

5. Summary / Recommendations

Do you think this model of delivering support for organisations like the ones you work with was effective overall?

If yes, why was that?

If no, why was that? What would have been better?

Is there anything else that could have been improved?

Are there any recommendations you'd like to feedback to the DH / Ecorys or the partner agencies?

Thank participants and clarify next steps

Appendix 3: Further support required as described by HSCVF projects

- IT support
- Recruitment of and training of volunteers.
- Quality assurance, training needs of staff and volunteers
- Sustainability making the service chargeable and making use of self-directed payments. The support consultant has written a 3 year business plan and project plan for the new service. Without this involvement the service would have ended
- Development of the management team, organisational culture, handling mergers
- Communications, environmental support
- Need to bring staff and volunteers on board with what trustees are undertaking
- The Board effectiveness support was really useful- have identified the need for outside facilitation for such events. The support consultant did a mini SROI report, we would like to expand on this and bring up to date.
- Helped us to explore different volunteering models and select one that worked for us
- Bit more coaching and mentoring support, possibly face to face
- Change to management style
- Personalisation – how to engage individuals with personal budgets effectively and sensitively.
- IT audit done by supporting organisation
- Staff training and development support. Need good value training at limited cost
- Ensure staff and trustees understand where organisation is going in the future
- Marketing, fundraising, communications
- Board and governance development, membership strategy and outcomes measurement and reporting
- Additional support needs in future
- Support consultant provided the additional capacity we required to take sustainability ideas forward
- Funding like this to attend similar events
- New ways of working. PR to be the first choice of marketing
- Training on fundraising and managing volunteering with old people 'Note didn't have time to take up these offers
- Community fundraising activities
- Support in developing a fundraising strategy and capacity. Consultancy support needed through the competitive tendering process
- Through engaging existing businesses to fundraise for us.
- Commissioning and fundraising
- More support in marketing and I.T.
- Support: communications and messaging
- Develop suitable roles for volunteers
- Evaluation, evidence based research and Social Return on Investment
- Strategic planning at a management level
- Rural area, can become isolated- More support is needed to keep networks open and engage with other professionals
- How to use data/statistics to sell ourselves and how to present these when bid writing
- Continued support from support consultant
- Staff qualify as supervisors' this will increase our flexibility and capacity and will increase and enhance the clinical governance of the project.
- Coaching; HR
- Record social value, use of volunteers and board members, staff support and development

- Marketing, communications, employing support consultants when applying for tenders
- Income generation
- Training for trustees
- Identified a need to consider how we can best promote our service based on quality of our services.
- One to one mentoring with support consultant develop quality
- Procurement, franchise
- Training to volunteers in the facilitation of support groups for carers.
- Support to develop a system to measure the progress we make in delivering our 3-5 year
- Communications plan need further work and support
- Support to manage the database for future fundraising
- Internships, the consultant worked hard to build these relationships for the future