

ONE DIGITAL SCOTLAND PROGRAMME EVALUATION REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2016, researchers from the School of Media, Culture & Society at the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) were commissioned by the SCVO to evaluate the One Digital programme in Scotland. The One Digital programme is a UK wide, Big Lottery-funded consortium made up of six organisations delivering projects to develop digital skills through digital champions. The SCVO-led One Digital project in Scotland aimed to identify, develop and assess the contribution that existing frontline organisations in the third sector could make when delivering basic digital skills. To achieve these aims, the One Digital Project in Scotland focused on the provision three main streams of supported learning:

Action Learning Sets: Using principles and practices outlined by Revans (2011/1983) action learning sets were designed to bring together senior leaders over a short but intense period of time to tackle real problems or issues.

Making Digital Everyday: This one-day training workshop with ongoing support was aimed at staff and volunteers in third sector organisations and sought to facilitate the passing on of basic digital skills to service users, by embedding them within everyday encounters.

Making Digital Work: This one-day training workshop with ongoing support was focused on training staff in third sector organisations to disseminate basic digital skills within their work environment.

The Research Methods

The design of the evaluation followed a qualitative approach and drew on methodological techniques associated with both Realistic Evaluation and Appreciative Inquiry.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of action learning sets, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with participants working within a range of third sector organisations. These data were then analysed using the Context-Mechanisms-Outcomes approach associated with Realistic Evaluation.

In order to explore the effectiveness of Making Digital Work and Making Digital Everyday, the researchers conducted a desk-based review of materials from the workshops including participant feedback forms and post-workshop action plans and the views of third sector interface (TSI) organisations. Using Appreciative Inquiry methods, semi-structured interviews were then conducted with workshop participants, trainers and representatives from participating TSIs in three locations across Scotland where the activities were perceived by the SCVO to have been successful.

The Findings

Action learning sets

In relation to the action learning sets, the researchers found evidence of a strong peer support network being generated through participation in action learning sets. The evidence gathered as part of this evaluation suggests that, with support, this network could flourish but regular (face-to-face) meet ups will be required at the early stages to avoid the threat of inaction.

There was strong evidence that senior leaders have increased knowledge and understanding of the potential of digital and that the action learning sets were instrumental in several senior leaders deciding to direct resources towards a more strategic digital approach instead of the operational, short term focus they arrived at the action learning sets with.

There is evidence that the discursive style adopted for the action learning sets was welcomed and enjoyed by most participants, but greater clarity on the specific methodological approach being employed would serve to avoid, particularly at the recruitment stage, some expectations not being met.

The senior leaders involved in the action learning sets identified some concrete outputs that can, over time, be translated into longer-term outcomes:

- Allocating digital responsibilities to team members and having these as standard items on the team agenda for meetings
- Development of an organisational digital strategy
- Creation of a dedicated part-time digital post

- Recruitment of 'digital champions' within the organisation.
- Purchase of podcasting equipment to advance communication with end users, production of videos and using social media more to get out messages
- Piloting online counselling approaches
- Investing in staff social media training and recognising this as an opportunity to engage all staff in the long term digital development of the organisation
- Streamlining communication and feedback processes, using the 'gossip model' within the organisation
- Introduction of 20% time to enable staff to have more freedom to work on the digital agenda

There was, however, limited evidence to suggest that senior leaders had made significant progress in creating more digitally mature organisations within the timescales for the evaluation. It is unrealistic to expect immediate, transformational outcomes, especially as the senior personnel involved have many other pressing strategic and operational priorities to attend to in their existing roles. Third sector organisations engaged in this process are on a journey through digital evolution to achieve digital transformation.

Making Digital Work and Making Digital Everyday

The Making Digital Work and Making Digital Everyday interventions were delivered in partnership with network of local organisations, most commonly the Third Sector Interface.

In line with an appreciative inquiry approach, the research focused on identifying the factors that had contributed to successful delivery of the interventions. The following as 'key ingredients' were identified:

- a genuine willingness on the part of participants to enhance the digital skill-sets of their organisations and of their service users;
- the existence of mutual support *between* local third sector organisations;
- the creation of tangible outputs by workshop participants that are embedded within the third sector organisation's overall mission;
- strong working relationship between the SCVO and the local partner (usually the Third Sector Interface (TSI)); in-depth knowledge, on the part of the local partner, of the local third sector landscape.

The research also helped identify good examples of positive outputs that can be translated to other areas, including:

- organisations using Facebook and Twitter to engage with their client groups
- organisations developing digital strategies to inform operational decisions
- organisations using the learning resources delivered as part of the MDE course with their service users, helping them to gauge a better understanding of their own learning styles.
- development of a peer support strategy for service users incorporating the development of digital skills.

Participants across all three case studies spoke positively of the benefits of networking, the validation of their existing approaches and the positivity drawn from the combination of people 'in the room' that will sustain their interest in digital activity in the future.

However, as would be expected with a national training programme being delivered across a range of geographies there were a range of different experiences and views on the success of the interventions. In some areas One Digital faced challenges with recruitment, unfulfilled participant expectations and concerns about the practical applicability of the learning. Some of the local partners also struggled to fulfil their commitments due to capacity issues and competing strategic priorities.

Recommendations

In terms of areas for improvement, to ensure that the follow up activities (e.g. the buddy system, action planning and digital meet ups) are developed to their utmost potential, these should be introduced in a staged way throughout the training (rather than at the end of the day) and with clear details of what will be happening, who it will be aimed at, and how participants would benefit from being involved so that they can make the time available in advance to attend.

To facilitate effective networking, post-workshop, the TSIs and SCVO could seek to 'match' workshop participants who were working in similar sized organisations, in similar sectors, and had similar digital goals.

When seeking to build support networks post-training, the SCVO should look to work with, whenever possible, the TSI or similar local organisation in utilising and developing its own, pre-existing, network of third sector organisations and it should ensure the TSI has the capacity to offer ongoing courses and meet up opportunities to build on momentum.

To facilitate more enthusiastic and effective digital leadership, SCVO and its partners should continue to support emergent networks with resources to ensure the third sector locally owns the digital agenda and is empowered to lead change. Local leadership should also include sectoral leads to ensure these interests are represented.

To translate interest in digital 'possibilities' into digital 'action', SCVO and its TSI partners need to develop a programme of more practical courses. Consider identifying a pool of trainers, buddies and mentors within the sector and/or geographically to help individuals and organisations to lead on digital issues themselves rather than rely on the limited funds of SCVO to undertake that role.

Workshop and follow-up activities could also usefully be more stratified (in terms of beginners, intermediate and advanced) and provide room for greater specification i.e. an in-depth session on Google Analytics or making the most of Facebook groups and pages.

Overall Conclusions

Based on the data collected, the One Digital project in Scotland appears to have been successful in implementing supported learning activities that stimulated capacity for digital skills development, both within third sector organisations and amongst users of third sector services in Scotland. It is difficult, based on the data obtained, to ascertain, robustly, which of the supported learning activities were most effective or the degree to which substantial and long-lasting change will be achieved.

Conclusion #1: Our study has found that the action learning sets have produced strong peer support networks but that these will need to be supported through ongoing activity and perhaps financial resource if they are to be sustainable in the longer term. Furthermore, there exists the potential for members of the action learning sets to take on the role of digital leaders in their sector but this will likely require ongoing nurturing and, potentially, expert facilitation.

Conclusion #2: Our study has found clear evidence that senior leaders have increased knowledge and understanding about the potential of digital, for their organisations, and for the third sector more generally. There is evidence that strategic investment decisions have been revised on the basis of knowledge and understanding accrued during participation in the action learning sets. Digital strategies are now being viewed as a greater priority than short-term operational imperatives. Our study suggests that the action learning sets have been a valuable first step in moving senior leaders towards recognising that digital is a core activity rather than an add-on for their organisations. Further research would likely be needed, however, in order to ascertain the longer-term impact of this increased knowledge and understanding on the activities of third sector organisations.

Conclusion #3: Our study has found evidence that senior leaders have been able to translate their increased knowledge and understanding about the potential of digital into tangible outputs. However, progress on embedding digital 'possibilities' into digital 'action' will not be immediate. Greater awareness, more positive attitudes and explicit digital strategies are potentially useful outcomes from the action learning sets but their implementation into more digitally mature organisations will take time. Those senior leaders who have made a start on transforming their organisations need to be able to draw on continuing support from their peers, SCVO and others key agencies to ensure the progress made is sustained over time.

Conclusion #4: Our study found clear evidence of MDE participants using materials and approaches contained within the training to pass on digital skills to the organisation's end users. Examples of such activities ranged from helping service users to identify their own learning styles to encouraging service users to co-produce audio blogs about their lived experiences. Our study also suggests that, for such outcomes to be obtained, training needs to be targeted at individuals with a passion and enthusiasm for passing on digital skills and that working closely with well-networked and trusted TSIs is likely to be crucial in identifying such participants. Similarly, translating learning into targeted action likely requires that the post-workshop activities are introduced to participants in a staged and systematic way, offering flexible opportunities for participants to 'buddy' with others who they feel closely match their own priorities and experiences.

Conclusion #5: Our study highlighted clear examples of participants using materials from the MDW workshop to increase their organisation's use of digital technologies, most notably through the creation of digital strategies specific to the participant's organisation. As with the MDE workshops, identifying participants who are looking to develop their organisation's strategic approach to digital skills, rather than acquire tips and techniques on specific applications, is likely to be a key ingredient in producing long-term positive outcomes. Working closely with well networked TSIs and introducing follow-up activities in a staged manner is also likely to contribute to the effectiveness of MDW. Furthermore, given the aims of MDW, participants may benefit from sustained post-workshop support (facilitated by the SCVO and/or TSI) in implementing organisational change, in addition to the support available via the buddy system.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.2 One Digital programme



The One Digital programme is a Big Lottery-funded venture led by a partnership including Digital Unite, Affinity Sutton, AbilityNet, SCVO, Age UK and Citizens Online. Each One Digital partner delivered specific projects, though sharing a concern to use 'trusted intermediaries' to promote and deliver basic digital skills to end beneficiaries. The programme was based around the assumption that empowering, supporting and inspiring trusted intermediaries to be Digital Champions is a highly effective and sustainable way of delivering digital skills. More detailed information about the overall UK project can be accessed at www.digitalchampionsnetwork.com/one-digital-programme.

1.3 One Digital Scotland

SCVO is the principal One Digital partner in Scotland. The SCVO-led One Digital project aimed to identify, develop and assess the contribution that existing frontline organisations in the third sector could make when delivering contextualised basic digital skills to the people most in need of these skills in Scotland. In particular, it sought to:

- Identify which organisations are best placed to make the most difference for a range of scenarios
- Demonstrate how important it is for organisations to embrace basic digital skills and have strong digital leadership when it comes to helping their clients
- Understand what sort of engagement, training models and methodologies work best with the sector in order to realise the goal of improved basic digital skills
- The One Digital programme in Scotland explored the following questions when thinking about the most efficacious approach to imparting basic digital skills to people and communities most in need:
 - How important is it for charities and voluntary organisations themselves to embrace basic digital skills?
 - How important is it for charities and voluntary organisations to offer learning for their clients?
 - How important is it for charities and voluntary organisations to have leaders who are passionate ambassadors for basic digital skills?

These approaches were translated into three main streams of supported learning that the One Digital project in Scotland pursued through the work of SCVO and its partners:

- Training organisations to achieve organisational basic digital skills (Making Digital Work)
- Training organisations so staff and volunteers can pass on basic digital skills by embedding it into their natural interactions with clients (Making Digital Everyday)
- Action Learning Sets for senior leaders

1.4 Making Digital Work and Making Digital Everyday

SCVO's approach to the promotion and delivery of basic digital skills to end beneficiaries was separated into two main forms of training, delivered across Scotland in collaboration with local Third Sector Interface (TSI) or anchor organisations.

Making Digital Everyday (MDE) was concerned with training staff and volunteers in third sector organisations so that they could pass on basic digital skills by embedding them into their natural interactions with clients. The MDE courses were targeted at those working directly with people who lack basic digital skills. Participants received a one-day workshop within which they were expected to develop their own individual action plans to help them deliver digital support to their users. They were also linked up with a 'buddy' and given access to online learning tools and a digital mentor that they were encouraged to explore after their training day.



Making Digital Work (MDW) was focused on training staff in third sector organisations to disseminate basic digital skills within their work environment. The training was designed to build knowledge about digital participation and give participants a framework to use when deciding how to use digital more effectively in their organisations. Like MDE, the MDW courses were not focused on the development of IT skills per se. Participants in MDW were also expected to produce action plans, team up with a 'buddy' and access online learning tools and a digital mentor following the training itself.



1.5 Action learning sets

In Scotland, the One Digital project sought to go beyond training frontline staff within the third sector to support senior leaders of charities and voluntary organisations to become passionate ambassadors for basic digital skills. SCVO recognised that digital transformation is a major undertaking for any organisation, and unless the people at the very top have a sound understanding of the opportunity and a vision to grasp it then change will only ever be incremental. There was recognition that strong leadership and cultural change is essential to the generation of successful outcomes. Using principles and practices outlined by Revans (2011/1983), the action learning sets were designed to bring together senior leaders over a short but intense period of time to tackle real problems or issues. The format also offered a confidential space where senior leaders could talk openly about their fears. The SCVO recognised that the majority of senior leaders are not digital natives, and the imperative can feel threatening for those who either lack confidence in their own digital skills, or have not previously been exposed to strategic digital decision making.

In total, three action learning sets were created with a total of twenty-one senior personnel committing a significant amount of time to discuss the complex reasons why charities struggle to become more digitally agile, including time, motivation, resourcing and access to training and support. Originally, SCVO had sought to recruit two cohorts to the action learning sets – senior paid officers and Trustees. Ultimately, most applicants came from paid officers (circa forty-five) with only three applications received from Trustees. As a result, a decision was taken to run three action learning sets for paid officers (one of these funded by SCVO) and none for Trustees. Each set met for two full days, three half day and for one residential over a six-month period and external visits were arranged with Uber, Skyscanner, the Future Cities project from Strathclyde University and the Wheatley Group.

1.6 Research Design

Researchers from the School of Media, Culture & Society, University of the West of Scotland (UWS) were commissioned by the SCVO to evaluate the One Digital programme in Scotland. Specifically, the evaluation was based on two distinct, but interrelated, areas of investigation:

1. Participants' experiences and perceptions of the Action Learning Sets as an effective vehicle for facilitating organisational change.
2. Factors that contributed to the successful delivery of the Making Digital Work and Making Digital Everyday training across Scotland.

1.6.1 Action Learning Sets

SCVO was interested in assessing the functioning of the action learning sets (ALS), their effectiveness in meeting their original objectives and, particularly, to gauge the experience of the participants. Specifically, the research explored to what extent the following outcomes had arisen:

- Development of a strong peer support network that will continue to function after the project inputs have finished
- Senior leaders have increased knowledge and understanding about the potential of digital
- Senior leaders have made significant progress in creating a more digitally mature organisation

The UWS team utilised semi-structured interviews to assess the achievement of these three outcomes. In total, this included ten telephone interviews with a cross-section of the twenty-one action learning set participants, conducted from the start of August to mid-September 2016. These interviews generated insights from organisations ranging from smaller, locally-focused charitable organisations to representatives from larger national charities with a Scottish office. Interview data were collected and analysed according to the Context-Mechanisms-Outcomes (CMOs) framework associated with Realistic Evaluation (Pawson & Tilley 1997). This approach seeks to address the question of 'what works, for whom and in what way?' when evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. Thus, through the CMOs framework, both positive outcomes *and* the causal factors that brought these outcomes into being can be identified systematically. Face-to-face interviews were also conducted with the SCVOs One Digital Manager and the two Development Officers (North and South) and the action learning set lead facilitator. These interviews were used to surface key operational issues in the management and delivery of the action learning sets.

1.6.2 Appreciative Inquiry Case Studies

SCVO's second evaluation requirement focused on assessing the factors that contributed to the successful delivery of the Making Digital Everyday (MDE) and Making Digital Work (MDW) training across Scotland. Data generated from the MDE and MDW workshops highlighted generally positive responses from participants and other stakeholders (e.g. Third Sector Interfaces or anchor organisations) although deficiencies were also identified in qualitative feedback. Rather than focus on the barriers to successful delivery that were encountered in some workshops or in certain locations, the UWS team adopted the principles and techniques associated with Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to explore what was successful that could be implemented successfully elsewhere. AI is 'the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential' (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005: 3). It is an approach to organisational development that stresses the importance of strength-based factors, rather than focusing on deficiency and organisational barriers. AI typically involves investigators working together in a four-stage, cyclical process, commonly referred to as Discovery; Dream; Design; and Delivery. Discovery involves hearing, from a wide range of stakeholders, their stories of success and of what is possible when the organisations, people and interventions are operating at their best. The next phase, Dream, involves drawing on stakeholders' accounts to explore what could be, if the organisation (and/or intervention) was to achieve its full potential. The third phase, Design, involves creating bold propositions; statements of purpose that combine the best of what is with the best of what could be. And the fourth phase, Delivery, involves the creation of new systems and/or interventions designed to support continuous learning and improvement.

The UWS team used the data generated from the MDE and MDW workshops (participant feedback and action plans, and the views of trainers and hosting TSIs) and a Key Informant Interview with SCVO to orient themselves with potential success stories and to inform the selection of three case studies which were the subject of more in-depth empirical enquiry. The three cases selected for detailed scrutiny were:

- Orkney
- Dundee
- Glasgow

In each case, appreciative interviews were undertaken with the following stakeholders to understand successes and why they occurred (i.e. when contextual factors and intervention mechanisms aligned in order to produce positive outcomes):

- SCVO Development Officer
- Local Third Sector Interface (TSI) or anchor organisation
- Trainers for each area
- Course participants (for both MDE and MDW)

Our findings, conclusions and recommendations are based around what we discovered, what stakeholders viewed as their dream scenarios and what SCVO and partners would need to design and to deliver in order to realise their ambitions to build a cadre of digital leaders in the third sector across Scotland (i.e. combining the best of what is, with the best that could be).

1.6.3 Ethical considerations

The fieldwork conducted for this evaluation of the One Digital project in Scotland was conducted in full compliance with the research ethics principles and procedures of University of the West of Scotland. The design of the study was reviewed and approved by the School of Media, Culture & Society Research Ethics Committee at University of the West of Scotland. Each research participant received a Participant Information Sheet (PAS) detailing the purpose of the research, the research team, their right to withdraw at any time and the proposed reporting procedures. Participants also received a consent form that they completed in advance of interviews.

Interviews were audio recorded and a selection were transcribed. Participants were made aware that all information collected from them would be managed in strict accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

2.0 Findings

2.1 Action learning sets

The main findings generated from the action learning set empirical enquiries are categorised under three main headings: contexts, mechanisms and outcomes, drawing on the CMO approach associated with Realistic Evaluation.

2.2 Contexts

2.2.1 Awareness and application

Given tight recruitment deadlines that the project had to work to, the level of interest in the action learning sets from senior third sector leaders was encouraging. In terms of awareness, participants involved in the action learning sets became aware of the opportunity mainly through existing networks, word of mouth or a direct approach from either SCVO or the action learning set facilitator. The credibility of the action learning set facilitator attracted a number of participants who had already benefitted from workshops delivered by him in the past.

Participants were universally positive about the application process, with one participant suggesting it was “very straightforward with a clear sense of the commitment required in terms of time”. Some participants said they were less clear in terms of what to expect from the action learning sets themselves, mainly because of personal uncertainty about what they were hoping to achieve from participation. To address this pre-attendance uncertainty, some participants would have benefitted from more detailed information on what precisely the action learning set methodology entailed. Those who applied to participate in the action learning sets without previous personal contact either with SCVO or the facilitator were perhaps less well prepared for the style of action learning set delivery they then subsequently encountered.

2.2.2 Familiarity in use of digital technologies

Participants came to the action learning sets with a diverse range of previous experiences and levels of knowledge of digital tools and technologies. Some were at an early stage of development whilst others were more experienced in working with IT systems and viewed participation in the action learning sets as an opportunity to update their knowledge and to learn from others, “although I have relatively extensive experience as an IT specialist I wanted to update myself and create the headspace necessary to think more strategically about what my organisation requires to move forward”. Those participants experiencing planned digital transformation work in their organisation were particularly appreciative of the opportunity afforded by the action learning sets to ‘test’ their developing ideas and concepts with other senior leaders. Whilst the diverse mix of participants worked well overall, some of the more experienced practitioners felt there could have been more of a focus on issues including business transformation and culture change. Finally, there was one instance where a desire for more practical support was identified, drawing attention to the issues of digital literacy for senior leaders in the sector.



2.2.3 Motivations and expectations

A majority of participants were interested in knowing more about what an engagement with the digital environment could do for their organisations, without necessarily having a clear set of expectations or outcomes in mind. As one participant commented, “I didn’t have any real expectations of what action learning sets would be like as hadn’t experienced them previously”. A majority of those interviewed recognised that digital tools, technologies or systems could help their organisation to address the challenges associated with making intra-organisational processes more efficient, but also to reach out to partners, users or clients to improve their service provision. Another motivation for participation in the action learning sets was to interact with fellow senior managers, to share the challenges they face, and to hear about how others have implemented digital solutions. A number of participants were also very positive about the platform for potential future collaboration, learning and support based on the networks formed during their involvement with One Digital.

Expectations of the action learning sets varied between participants. The majority wanted to come together with peers and other organisations to share ideas and learn *away* from the usual pressures of the office environment. However, others arrived with more focused, worked-up proposals that they hoped to advance towards implementation. This created some tension within the action learning sets. For example, one participant suggested that some people arrived with 'pen' as opposed to 'pencil' proposals, meaning they were less likely to adapt and revise their ideas after feedback from the group. Another participant positively relished the process of challenging sometimes entrenched ideas, recognising the value of the action learning method as a robust and flexible tool for the development of ideas.

2.3 Mechanisms

2.3.1 Action learning methodology in action

Depending on previous experience of action learning sets, participants provided varying accounts of the efficacy of the approach adopted in the One Digital project. There are different action learning philosophies and methodologies in existence, so it is to be expected that people's expectations will be informed by previous experiences. The approach adopted in One Digital was the five-step model for action learning. As the action learning set facilitator commented, *"It's basically a really simple model where the issue bringer talks about their issue. People get a few questions to clarify it. And then they ask more questions to challenge that person. The person comes back with an assessment of how they feel the process went so that the next person can think about how they might adapt it slightly. And then very specific on what they are gonna do next"*. A minority of those participants interviewed had experienced some form of action learning previously, either within their own organisations (for the larger ones) or in previous jobs.

Most participants were very positive about the overall 'approach' adopted for the delivery of the action learning sets. Participants almost universally agreed that the 'gossip model' – although sometimes challenging – was very effective because it kept emotion out of the discussion, whereby people were forced to listen, to remain quiet and were therefore *"less likely to defend their proposal or ideas"*. Notably, one respondent has introduced the gossip model into their own senior leadership team decision-making processes within their organisation. The action learning set facilitator also felt this approach worked because it was based on building trust and respect to talk about difficult issues, *"And that was quite daunting for a few people at first but actually was really, really powerful because for the first time as a Chief Exec, someone was really challenging what they thought"*. Many participants commented on the value of the relaxed, informal group discussions incredibly valuable as a means of providing peer support and feedback.

Operationally, participants were unanimous that the face-to-face interactions were of most value. The opportunity to meet up with fellow senior managers in a 'safe' space was welcomed by all. Whilst all respondents confirmed that there were opportunities to share information via 'WhatsApp' in between workshops, views differed on the value of these online interactions. Some felt it was an excellent medium for communication between meetings and the readings posted there were of interest and value. For another participant, lack of practical skills to use the platform meant that they did not take advantage of the WhatsApp group. A minority of participants commented on the variation between the One Digital approach to action learning sets and those experienced elsewhere. One participant felt that the action learning approach was overly group discussion focused, not adhering to the 'ask, reflect and revise' approach experienced previously. Another participant indicated it took time to grasp what was being expected of members because the approach was quite 'organic' and led primarily by group discussion. This participant had been used to training that had more formal learning objectives. Moreover, some participants felt the focus on 'solutions' or 'implementation' that a minority brought pre-formulated to the table was counter-productive to the ethos of the action learning sets. They felt that perhaps this problem could have been addressed with clearer guidance on expectations at the outset with a greater emphasis on planning.

2.3.2 Engendering a strategic approach to digital

Most participants arrived at the action learning sets with a 'big challenge', but after involvement in the action learning sets and being subjected to the views of fellow participants this was invariably revised and re-shaped. As the action learning set facilitator identified, "a lot of people have come with a very fixed notion of what their issue is. So classic ones will be 'we need an app. An app's gonna solve all our problems'. And then actually very quickly the right questions come from the group". In the main, participants viewed the challenge to their own 'big challenge' as a positive feature of the action learning set methodology and several people made significant alterations to strategic and operational activities within their organisations as an outcome of the discussions initiated in their set.

Crucially, the action learning set methodology brought about a shift in thinking from a reliance on a specific technology or application to a more holistic, strategic focus on what they were trying to achieve and which audiences they were targeting, "It's been good to have time away from the desk to think about what you do and why you do it". Another participant had made the move away from "a social media strategy and towards a [holistic] digital approach". The action learning set facilitators' skills created a relaxed, open group which helped to give confidence to individuals to consider changing their approach (a number of participants spoke of the value of having their ideas validated, receiving assurance that they were "on the right track").

2.3.3 Peer support and feedback

The trust and reciprocity engendered by the action learning sets was valued by almost all participants. They talked positively about the group dynamic fostered over the duration of their particular set, aided by the intense face-to-face sessions and the residential experience. Participants also spoke of the value accrued in forming trusted relationships and getting to know each other personally which made the experience more rewarding and productive. Peer support was an essential ingredient for participants to get the most out of the action learning sets experience, especially when dealing with challenging feedback. The strength of peer support enabled participants to cope with one of the most oft-cited interventions, the "gossip model". The action learning set facilitator also recognised the importance of trust to the operation of the sets, "the trust has been the biggest thing I think - that people feel they can talk about things that they probably wouldn't even talk about with their own directors". A noticeable feature of participant reflections was the credibility and expertise of the action learning set facilitator. A number of participants commented on the valuable insights and expertise he provided to the group – one of the main reasons some of the participants applied for the action learning sets in the first place.

2.3.4 External contributions: Thinking differently

Participants enjoyed and accrued real value from the external speakers and visits to external sites. Hearing from *Uber* and *Skycanner* was, for most, a rewarding experience that challenged the third sector organisations present to think about their activities differently. Specifically, both organisations' focus on 'data' was extremely enlightening for participants. In addition, participants identified the 'fleet footedness' of private sector responses to ever-evolving digital challenges as illuminating, helping them to recognise that the third sector might usefully adopt more flexible approaches to communication and introduce innovations more quickly. One participant felt that the involvement of private sector organisations was useful, because it helped the third sector think about the importance of the end user, for example.

The only negative comments about the external visits and speakers was that their ideas were unrealistic for most third sector organisations to implement because of the very limited resources available compared to their private sector counterparts. Also, one or two participants felt the external speakers could have been briefed better because they used terms like 'your digital teams' when most participants represented organisations that did not even have someone specifically responsible for digital within them.

2.4 Outcomes

2.4.1 Tangible outputs and outcomes

Participants were able to identify concrete outputs emanating from their action learning set experience, whether for their own organisation, or for the third sector more widely. The tangible outputs identified were invariably linked in some way to the original 'big challenge' identified in the application process but was revised, re-focused or even changed completely as a result of participation in the action learning sets. Examples of concrete outputs shared by participants included:

- Introduction of Skype meetings with colleagues in office
- Investment in cloud based services as opposed to building an web application
- Allocating digital responsibilities to team members and having these as standard items on the team agenda for meetings
- Development of an organisational digital strategy
- Creation of a dedicated part-time digital post
- Inclusion of a digital strategy within the annual business plan
- Registration on a Change Management programme with MIT
- Recruitment of 'digital champions' within the organisation.
- Purchase of podcasting equipment to advance communication with end users, production of videos and using social media more to get out messages
- Investment in new document management software
- Piloting online counselling approaches
- Investing in staff social media training and recognising this as an opportunity to engage all staff in the long term digital development of the organisation
- Streamlining communication and feedback processes, using the 'gossip model' within the organisation
- Reviewing the functionality of their website
- Streamlining innovation, empowering staff to accelerate the introduction of ideas and improvements that do not require executive reports prior to implementation
- Introduction of 20% time to enable staff to have more freedom to work on the digital agenda

A small number of participants found it more difficult to identify specific outputs partly because the action learning methodology did not, in their view, help participants to implement and translate discussions into concrete actions. Specifically, one participant felt that they were not well prepared to be able to identify the right technological solution to invest in and why because of the absence of practical support within the sets. That said, it could be argued that thinking carefully about what the organisation needed strategically should help decide on the practical tool required.

2.4.2 Attributing 'value'

In order to assess the value placed on the action learning sets, despite their being no charge levied for participation, participants were asked to consider whether they would pay for the experience and, if so, what amount. Most participants made positive statements about the value they accrued from participation in the action learning sets though stopping short of attributing a monetary value to the experience. One participant suggested that they valued the supportive environment created which helped "give each other wings" to support other organisations in the sector, whilst another felt the credibility and connectedness of the action learning set facilitator was worth paying for. Another respondent made the point that there is a tendency in the third sector to support staff rather than invest in senior managers but that the senior management focus of the action learning sets was particularly valuable. Finally, another participant felt that by putting a monetary value on the action learning set experience those that she described as "passengers" would have thought more carefully about what they were hoping to get from participation.

Whilst most participants indicated that in an ideal world they would pay, affirming the positive experience they had enjoyed, a number said it was unlikely they would have been able to find the resources to sign up had places not been subsidised. One participant commented that there “were other priorities” that would take precedent over participation in action learning sets despite having enjoyed the experience.

2.4.3 Temporal limitations

Although participants were able to identify tangible outputs from their involvement in the action learning sets it is important to acknowledge the temporal limitations of evaluating the *outcomes* emerging from this initiative whilst it is in operation – or only recently completed. The action learning sets were focused on encouraging senior leaders to think differently and to consider the strategic opportunities enabled by digital tools and technologies. However, it is unrealistic to expect that the challenges posed will lead to immediate, transformational outcomes, especially as the senior personnel involved have many other pressing strategic and operational priorities to attend to in their existing roles. That said, because the action learning set approach taken by One Digital asked participants to commit to reporting back as delivery progressed, participants were able to give examples of outputs (e.g. new document management software, use of the cloud, draft of a digital strategy) that may lead in the future to meaningful outcomes related to a change in mind set or orientation. In this sense, the action learning sets helped most participants to see themselves, and their capacity to operate, as digital change agents. Consideration should be given to a follow-up survey of action learning set participants six-months after the completion of their activity to secure a more accurate assessment of the outcomes arising from their experiences.

2.4.4 Recommendations for improvement

There was some agreement that expectations for the action learning sets could have been managed a little more effectively and doing so might have avoided the situation whereby some participants expected to receive solutions to their digital challenges which did not then materialise. Moreover, clear expectations about the specific approach to action learning sets being adopted could also have avoided the feeling that the One Digital approach differed from other techniques. One participant felt unable to be a digital leader without having the expertise to demonstrate the tools and technologies to be used to others but this view was at odds with those of the majority. It was also suggested that a resource pack or self-help guide would have been useful. This call was also made by another participant who suggested that a library resource or equivalent containing recent articles and tools shared during action learning set workshops would be beneficial. One participant suggested that the residential element (though worthwhile) could have been delivered more locally to contain costs. At a more strategic level, there was a call for the SCVO to show greater leadership in supporting the third sector to know about what the key digital challenges are and what organisations can do to address them. In the main, participants offered few required improvements, reinforcing the positive experience enjoyed by most.

2.4.5 The Future

There was a positive sense that the action learning sets (or equivalent) should be continued in one form or another. Those who were positive about the action learning set experience felt that some mechanism should be found to enable senior managers to come together, in a structured manner, “not left to chance”, because the peer support, access to networks and time away from the ordinary pressures of the office were so valuable. Several participants intimated sadness at the action learning sets coming to an end and indicated a desire for continuation in some shape or form. One suggestion was for face-to-face meet ups two or three times a year, organised rather than left to online chats. Another participant felt that there was merit in exploring the use of action learning sets more generally for third sector senior managers as it was often very difficult to remove themselves from the ‘everyday’ challenges faced to consider strategic issues.

2.5 Conclusions: action learning sets

- There is evidence that a strong peer support network was generated as an outcome of the action learning sets process for senior leaders. The evidence gathered as part of this evaluation suggests that, with support, this network could flourish but regular (face-to-face) meet ups will be required at the early stages to avoid the threat of inaction.
- There was strong evidence that senior leaders have increased knowledge and understanding about the potential of digital and that the action learning sets were instrumental in several senior leaders deciding to direct resources towards a more strategic digital approach instead of the operational, short term focus they arrived at the action learning sets with.
- There is evidence that the discursive style adopted for the action learning sets was welcomed and enjoyed by most participants, but greater clarity on the specific methodological approach being employed would serve to avoid, particularly at the recruitment stage, some expectations not being met.
- There is limited evidence to corroborate the idea that senior leaders have made *significant* progress in creating more digitally mature organisations. There is evidence that the action learning sets helped initiate action, or strengthened the resolve of senior leaders to introduce cultural change within their organisations, but it is too early to quantify the amount of change likely to result from this catalyst.

3.0 MDW AND MDE: THE NATIONAL PICTURE

The focus of our evaluation is on the factors that contributed to the successful delivery of the MDW and MDE training across Scotland assessed through three appreciative case studies. However, before focusing on the success factors identified in each of the three areas, it is necessary to provide a brief account of the national picture emerging from One Digital activities with frontline staff. SCVO gathered a significant amount of data on both MDE and MDW training workshop attendance and satisfaction, action plan completion and online module participation. More detailed information on each training intervention is accessible on the One Digital blog (<http://digital.scvo.org.uk/onedigital/blog/onedigitalinnumbers/>) with specific monitoring information relating to the MDE and MDW training available at <http://digital.scvo.org.uk/onedigital/blog/onedigitalinnumbers/>. The infographic provides a graphic representation of the extent of activity across Scotland (over 400 participants), the need for One Digital (i.e. only 1 in 5 people organisations possessed all 5 basic digital skills in advance of their attendance at MDW workshops) and levels of satisfaction with the training provided (93% were either satisfied/very satisfied with the training). In terms of breakdown, fifty sessions were delivered across Scotland in all but one local authority area, with twenty-nine MDW and twenty-one MDE workshops.



Overall both MDE and MDW were well received. The end-of-session data gathered by SCVO demonstrates that the majority of participants gained confidence, motivation and ideas from the courses. For example, the feedback on MDW comprised 116 written comments, well over half of these were positive, including comments such as “Excellent, valuable day for both my organisation and others that I support. Has given me positive solutions for issues I’ve tried to resolve for a number of years”. Those expressing reservations about the workshops were primarily focussed on the difficulty encountered in the formulation of an action plan, on the overall level of the information imparted (too basic) or the pre-course expectation that more practical content was to have been delivered. Three commenters noted that – in their view – more case studies and examples of best practice would help them to identify “what makes a good digital organisation?” and to plot “how to get there” with more clarity. Some of these less positive comments are perhaps inevitable when not delivering a tailored programme across the country.

MDE also generated written feedback (in addition to multiple choice answers) though to a lesser extent than MDW (90 additional comments). Again, the majority of these were positive, pointing out the satisfaction that participants gained from undertaking the course, the benefit of being able to take time out from one’s ordinary duties to consider the issue of digital skills in a relaxed environment providing food for thought on a couple of occasions. For example, one commenter noted “I hadn’t thought about the fact that people are pushed online by various agencies for benefits etc.” and another “I really enjoyed this training. It raised a lot of questions as well as providing answers. It really made me think about what digital skills training could accomplish and the limitations of our resources. I’ve radically simplified [my planned approach].”

Less positive comments were again concerned with the challenge of defining an action plan (2 comments), pre-course expectations and the desire/potential for a more practical approach (9 comments). There were also some differences of opinion on the level (too basic) and pace (too slow vs. well-paced) of delivery. This is a theme that also arose during UWS’s data collection.

Action plans were prepared by participants in both MDW and MDE courses. Action plans were developed using the 'pacer technique' to assist participants to identify a step-by-step approach to achieving the desired outcome of the plan. The action plans generated for the MDW arm of the One Digital programme were chiefly concerned with improving digital communication, setting up digital filing and archiving, introducing more 'joined up' work processes across an organisation for improved productivity, improving training for employees and volunteers and, improving an organisation's public engagement and/or social media profile. It is noticeable that a number of action plans outline very specific practical proposals (i.e. learning to set up a Facebook page or to gain confidence in using the site in order to boost profile and increase recruitment or, how to produce "professional newsletters and leaflets") rather than more strategic objectives (such as how to approach digital issues effectively by breaking down and addressing each component rather than saying 'it can't be done.')

Action plans drawn up on MDE courses were predominantly concerned with augmenting one's ability to introduce digital skills to others in a comprehensive and comprehensible manner in order to encourage digital independence for service users and address issues of community engagement and counter isolation. Participants were asked to estimate how many people they expected to disseminate their learning to. Some action plans were very specific regarding how this was to be achieved (i.e. learning how to set up an email account or, learning how to use Skype) while others were termed more generally (how to approach equipping service users with skills so that they might be able to better digital problem-solvers as a result). A review of the action plans produced across the One Digital programmes reinforces the findings regarding pre-course expectation (practical vs strategic) and therefore, the difficulties that some course participants identified with regard to preparing an action plan/ identifying an appropriate topic for an action plan. It is clear, however, that the majority put significant thought and effort into their plan and our further narrative findings reveal that so doing was an important step in the process of refining and focusing digital aims and objectives that many respondents in the evaluation discussed.

3.1 Case study highlights

In order to preserve the anonymity of participants, qualitative data from across the three case study sites were combined and analysed thematically. Our cross-case analysis, (summarised below) served to highlight that the MDW and MDE training was most effective when:

- There was a strong working relationship between the SCVO and the Third Sector Interface (TSI) based on a shared understanding of the aims of the One Digital programme and the design of the MDW and MDE workshops.
- The TSI had in-depth knowledge of the local third sector landscape, as well as effective channels for communicating with local third sector organisations.
- There was a willingness on the part of workshop participants to enhance the digital skill-sets of their organisations and end users, and workshop participants were open to new (digital) possibilities.
- The workshops enabled and enhanced mutual support between local third sector organisations which continued beyond the workshop interventions into online learning and mentoring support.
- Participation in the workshops led to the creation of tangible outputs, that were subsequently embedded within the organisation's overall mission, and which could serve as catalysts for change.

Effective delivery of the MDW and MDE programmes most likely occurred through the combination of these five key ingredients, as each was able to enhance the contribution of the others, as opposed to each operating in isolation. Each of these five key ingredients will now be discussed in more detail.

3.2 Relationship-building

Success Factor: The success of the MDE and MDW interventions was associated with the development of strong working relationships between the SCVO and the Third Sector Interface (TSI) based on a shared understanding of the aims of the One Digital programme and the design of the MDW and MDE workshops.

In Orkney it was apparent that the TSI lead staff member was open and proactive, seeking out information and receiving valuable senior leadership support. Importantly, the SCVO had face-to-face contact with the TSI lead

person which helped generate trust between the two. That meant that subsequent online interactions were based on a strong interpersonal relationship and ‘ownership’ on behalf of the TSI. In Glasgow both the representative from SCVO and the TSI commented on the quality of communication between the two organisations, with face-to-face meetings between the two representatives and regular email and phone contact. This appeared to prove instrumental in developing a shared understanding of the aims of the One Digital programme and who the workshops were ostensibly aimed at. Indeed, it appeared that the TSI made several requests for clarification regarding the aims of the workshops and the differences between the two. This, seemingly, enabled the TSI to target information about the workshops to representatives of local third sector organisations who the TSI thought would benefit most. This, in turn, appeared to have a positive impact on the number of people turning up on the day as well as the quality of their participation.

In Dundee it was found that citing the SCVO as the originator of the One Digital initiative was helpful for recruitment purposes but that the TSI was ultimately crucial to successful recruitment – or allocation – to courses. It was noted that the One Digital initiative coincided with work that the TSI in Dundee was already trying to do through their extant Social Enterprise Network. Thus, participation in One Digital was seen as a “luckily invaluable” opportunity to “upscale” work on digital awareness that the TSI had already begun. The close relationship between the TSI and the participating third sector organisations was highlighted as crucial to successful recruitment to the courses in a “small city where everyone knows everyone else” and, indeed, the MDE and MDW course spaces were filled within a week of first advertisement with a substantial reserve list on standby in case of cancellations. It is notable also that – in addition to recruiting participants to the MDE and MDW courses – a representative of the Dundee TSI also took part in the courses. The Dundee TSI was arguably less focussed on the nuances between the MDE and MDW workshops and perhaps more focussed on practical rather than strategic outcomes from participation. This also emerged in discussions with a course participant whose organisation was focussed on providing a community café/ outreach service. Practical digital/IT support comprised one of these services but was not a key strategic driver of the support work undertaken.

3.3 ‘Local’ credibility of main stakeholders

Success factor: The Third Sector Interface had in-depth knowledge of the local third sector landscape, as well as effective channels for communicating with local third sector organisations.

Related to the importance of strong working relationships between SCVO and the TSIs, the credibility of the TSI locally was also an important indicator of successful MDE and MDW recruitment and participation in each of the three case study areas. As one TSI representative explained, “We’ve got a really good local knowledge because, you know, my project delivers training all the time. We’re quite aware of the audience that we have. So that bit of local knowledge helps. And then SCVO having the, the flexibility within the project sorta criteria to, to allow for that was really good.”

The credibility of the local TSI was a crucial factor in the perceived success of One Digital in Orkney. This credibility was partly due to the size of the island where more people know each other but also because they were able to reach out to the right organisations and individuals during the recruitment phase. The TSI was clearly well respected and embedded locally. In Dundee, the fact that third sector organisations (and workers) were well acquainted with the TSI contact meant that he was particularly engaged in ensuring that third sector participants in the programme had a positive and beneficial experience. He took personal pride in witnessing the progress that some participants were able to make and observed his satisfaction at “seeing people use applications they hadn’t used before and that I’d [previously] tried to implement personally [as part of the TSI’s own digital skills initiatives]”.

Similarly, the TSI in Glasgow was a unique amalgam of three separate organisations. As such, the TSI representative highlighted how they were already very well networked within local third sector organisations and, between the three contributing organisations, had extensive contacts within this space. This seemingly proved instrumental in targeting organisations that would likely benefit from the MDE and MDW workshops. In addition, one MDE participant specifically highlighted how they like to “keep their ear to the ground” for activities being delivered by the TSI, suggesting that the involvement of the TSI served as an indicator of quality.

3.4 Openness to digital 'possibilities'

Success factor: There was a willingness on the part of workshop participants to enhance the digital skill-sets of their organisations and end users, and workshop participants were open to new (digital) possibilities.

Across all case study sites there was evidence of a willingness on behalf of participants and support agencies to learn together. For example, in Orkney it was noticeable that all agencies and participants identified 'openness' from those involved in MDE and MDW workshops to enhance their digital practices. There was evidence of a real willingness to embrace the possibilities of digital activity to help their organisations or to better deliver services to their clients. There was a sense that organisations and individuals were keen to learn and embrace the digital opportunities availed to them, generating a "warmth" that provided the right atmosphere for learning to take place. This openness to learn about what digital could do for their organisation was important as participants viewed the workshops as the beginning – rather than the end – of a journey.



A Dundee-based MDE participant suggested that although measures of success would be different in each instance, much could be learned from the opportunity to discuss how others had applied what they had learned within their organisation. Moreover, the respondent placed great emphasis on the idea that MDE "makes you aware of what you can do, even though you might have been doing it for a while". This was a significant gain from participation in One Digital, further enriched by the group discussion of the ideas that were introduced to participants by the workshop leader.

In the Glasgow context, the SCVO representative commented that one of the key factors in the perceived success of the programme was the active participation of workshop attendees, with a number of participants becoming actively engaged in the digital skills network following the training. One of the workshop participants specifically highlighted their proactive nature in seeking out digital opportunities and two workshop participants reported already looking to build their organisation's digital capacities prior to learning about the workshops. In Dundee, respondents were most enthusiastic about the networking and associated learning opportunities that emerged from participation in the workshops. Organisational networking was repeatedly mentioned by all who contributed to this part of the evaluation; this is valuable as it provides a platform for collaboration to develop and – potentially – exceed the lifespan of the One Digital intervention. Furthermore, it was noted that One Digital presented a very effective opportunity to signpost digital applications and approaches that had the potential to make a significant difference to the organisational and data management approach that participants took within their home organisations (i.e. using cloud services instead of printing and archiving documents).

3.5 Digital legacies

Success factor: The workshops enabled and enhanced mutual support between local third sector organisations, which continued beyond the 1-day training.

Although findings from Orkney suggest some significant ongoing 'challenges' for those living in island communities in relation to connectivity and remoteness, there was also an acute sense that these potential obstacles could also be turned into positive motivation to make the most out of opportunities for networking when they arose. Both the MDE and MDW training provided individuals and organisations with the opportunity to make new connections and strengthen existing ones – building on the groundwork undertaken by the TSI in the area. There was a tangible sense of dynamic engagement and openness to



networking amongst the group of participants recruited. This view was repeated elsewhere and the opportunity to find out about the work of other third sector organisations - and about their approach to digital issues - was seen as a crucial benefit of MDE and MDW and potentially, as sowing seeds for future formal partnerships. As one Dundee based respondent noted, *"The danger is, if you start an initiative, you think you're the only person doing it but you're not, there's other people doing it as well. And by working, forming informal relationships, partnerships between organisations that can in time become formal and [such partnerships can] only provide a platform for increased success"*.

Building on the value of networking, the design and delivery of the training was also identified as a real strength in both Orkney and Dundee. Participants found that the openness, flexibility and informal nature of the training invaluable, especially as some had low levels of confidence in their own digital skills. As one Orkney based participant suggested, *"the training was 'spot on'... 'one of the best training I've been on for a long time". Another simply commented that "the whole day actually was brilliant" and followed up by indicating that "the two people who took our group in Kirkwall were fantastic, absolutely fantastic"*. A number of participants commented on the importance of networking, to generate new contacts and follow up on those as part of the 'buddy' approach adopted.

Participants from the MDE course in Orkney were extremely positive about the relationship between the one-day workshop, the completion of action plans, the appointment of a 'buddy' and, finally, directed online study. Participants felt the balance was excellent and some had undertaken a number of modules following the training. The appointment of a buddy was also viewed as a really positive outcome for participants, encouraging them to follow up on actions detailed in their plans with another person. An MDW participant from Dundee was able to be very clear that the action plan element of the workshop was an excellent way of ensuring that people remained motivated and focussed after the end of the workshop as *"it [the plan] gives a focus to carry on after that and not just to go for a workshop and 'that's it, you're done' and you forget about it"*. Enthusiasm was also expressed for the Meet Ups planned for One Digital participants. These were viewed as a good opportunity to catch up with course mates, review progress and give feedback on the benefits of participation thus far. Such events also afford the opportunity to revive the face-to-face informal interactions that participants often noted as crucial to the success of the delivery of MDE and MDW. As a MDW participant in Dundee observed, *"I think that that face-to-face meeting really makes a big difference. I do know that to keep us updated with things, you could just send me a newsletter, a YouTube link... but I guess it makes a big difference when we actually sit down in the room and brainstorm on different things and how different charities can help each other. I think even though you're focussing on being digital that face to face interaction, that is still important"*.

In addition to promoting mutual support between third sector organisations, participation in the MDE and MDW workshops could also generate cooperation within organisations. One participant from Glasgow, for example, actively sought out a colleague from within their organisation to attend the training and the asked to be partnered together in order to develop their action plan. As these colleagues occupied very different roles within the organisation, working together enabled them to produce an action plan that was not only perceived to be specific to the needs of the organisation but also highly feasible, as it combined strategic priorities with a sense of what was achievable on the ground.

3.6 Transformative outputs and outcomes

Success factor: Participation in the workshops led to the creation of tangible outputs, that were subsequently embedded within the organisation's overall mission, and which could serve as catalysts for change

For the three case study areas, the overarching feeling was that the structure and style of training, when accompanied by clear follow up support, had produced rewarding experiences for participants, the TSI and SCVO alike. Though not always immediately turned into tangible outputs, there was certainly a 'will' amongst participants to follow up on learning emerging from the workshops and to talk with others about how they might improve either their internal organisational activities or service to end users.

Good examples of positive outputs were found for the Adult Befriending Service in Orkney who had already started to explore extending the 1-2-1 support they provide to reach older adults in more remote islands

with volunteers from the mainland to address issues of isolation and loneliness. Crucially, the MDE training encouraged this service to think more widely about the possibilities of digital tools and technologies for activities that are presumed to be dependent on face-to-face interactions. The Orkney arm of a national charity sent three people on training and they embraced the use of Facebook and then Twitter to engage with their client groups. Despite having limited previous experience they were open minded and proactive, embracing the possibilities of social media in particular to improve their service. In Glasgow, two workshop participants reported that at the time of the workshop they were already thinking about developing digital strategies for their organisations (MDW) or looking to pass on digital skills to their end users (MDE). Thus, where this seemed to be effective was when participants were able to 'lift' the techniques and materials used in training and build them into their own, routine, practice (s). Another Glasgow participant presented a very good example of this – they reported using some of the learning resources delivered as part of the MDE course with their service users, helping them to gauge a better understanding of their own learning styles. Since the workshop, the participants have developed a peer support strategy for service users which *incorporates* the development of digital skills. Two service users have since become very involved and have 'championed' digital skills to other clients of the organisation.

Finally, other participants across all three case studies spoke positively of the less tangible outcomes of their One Digital experience that they viewed as the most important from their perspective. These included the benefits of networking, the validation of their existing approaches and the positivity drawn from the combination of people 'in the room' that will sustain their interest in digital activity in the months ahead.

3.7 Dreaming, designing and delivering

In order to ensure that the successes of the MDW and MDE training summarised above could be replicated across Scotland, SCVO could consider the following areas for action:

- In order to ensure that the follow up activities (e.g. the buddy system, action planning and digital meet ups) are developed to their utmost potential, these should be introduced in a staged way throughout the training (rather than at the end of the day) and with clear details of what will be happening, who it will be aimed at, and how participants would benefit from being involved so that they can make the time available in advance to attend.
- In order to facilitate effective networking, post-workshop, the TSI and SCVO could seek to 'match' workshop participants who were working in similar sized organisations, in similar sectors, and had similar digital goals.
- When seeking to build support networks post-training, the SCVO should look to work with, whenever possible, the TSI in utilising and developing its own, pre-existing, network of third sector organisations and it should ensure the TSI has the capacity to offer ongoing courses and meet up opportunities to build on momentum.
- In order to facilitate more enthusiastic and effective digital leadership, SCVO and its partners should continue to support emergent networks with resources to ensure the third sector locally owns the digital agenda and is empowered to lead change. Local leadership should also include sectoral leads to ensure these interests are represented.
- In order to translate interest in digital 'possibilities' into digital 'action', SCVO and its TSI partners need to develop a programme of more practical courses. Consider identifying a pool of trainers, buddies and mentors within the sector and/or geographically to help individuals and organisations to lead on digital issues themselves rather than rely on the limited funds of SCVO to undertake that role. Workshop and follow-up activities could also usefully be more stratified (in terms of beginners, intermediate and advanced) and provide room for greater specification i.e. an in-depth session on Google Analytics or making the most of Facebook groups and pages.

4.0 Conclusions

Based on the data collected as part of this evaluation, the One Digital project in Scotland appears to have been successful in implementing supported learning activities that stimulated capacity for digital skills development, both within third sector organisations and amongst users of third sector services in Scotland. It is difficult, based on the data obtained, to ascertain, robustly, which methods were most effective in this regard. However, what the evaluation does serve to highlight are some of the outcomes that can realistically be expected from these supported learning interventions, as well as the factors that are likely to contribute to their effective delivery. These aspects are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

4.1 Action learning sets

The SCVO sought to ascertain whether the action learning sets led to the: development of a strong peer support network that will continue to function after the project inputs have finished; senior leaders have increased knowledge and understanding about the potential of digital; and, senior leaders have made significant progress in creating a more digitally mature organisation.

Conclusion #1: Our study has found that the action learning sets have produced strong peer support networks but that these will need to be supported through ongoing activity and perhaps financial resource if they are to be sustainable in the longer term. Furthermore, there exists the potential for members of the action learning sets to take on the role of digital leaders in their sector but this will likely require ongoing nurturing and, potentially, expert facilitation.

Conclusion #2: Our study has found clear evidence that senior leaders have increased knowledge and understanding about the potential of digital, for their organisations, and for the third sector more generally. There is evidence that strategic investment decisions have been revised on the basis of knowledge and understanding accrued during participation in the action learning sets. Digital strategies are now being viewed as a greater priority than short-term operational imperatives. Our study suggests that the action learning sets have been a valuable first step in moving senior leaders towards recognising that digital is a core activity rather than an add-on for their organisations. Further research would likely be needed, however, in order to ascertain the longer-term impact of this increased knowledge and understanding on the activities of third sector organisations.

Conclusion #3: Our study has found evidence that senior leaders have been able to translate their increased knowledge and understanding about the potential of digital into tangible outputs. However, progress on embedding digital 'possibilities' into digital 'action' will not be immediate. Greater awareness, more positive attitudes and explicit digital strategies are potentially useful outcomes from the action learning sets but their implementation into more digitally mature organisations will take time. Those senior leaders who have made a start on transforming their organisations need to be able to draw on continuing support from their peers, SCVO and others key agencies to ensure the progress made is sustained over time.

4.2 Making Digital Everyday and Making Digital Work

MDE training was concerned with training staff and volunteers in third sector organisations so that they could pass on basic digital skills by embedding them into their natural interactions with clients. Making Digital Work (MDW) was focused on training staff in third sector organisations to disseminate basic digital skills within their work environment.

Conclusion #4: Our study found clear evidence of MDE participants using materials and approaches contained within the training to pass on digital skills to the organisation's end users. Examples of such activities ranged from helping service users to identify their own learning styles, to encouraging service users to co-produce audio blogs about their lived experiences. Our study also suggests that, for such outcomes to be obtained, training needs to be targeted at individuals with a passion and enthusiasm for passing on digital skills and that working closely with well-networked and trusted TSIs is likely to be crucial in identifying such participants. Similarly, translating learning into targeted action likely requires that the post-workshop activities are introduced to participants in a staged and systematic way, offering flexible opportunities for participants to 'buddy' with others who they feel closely match their own priorities and experiences.

Conclusion #5: Our study highlighted clear examples of participants using materials from the MDW workshop to increase their organisation's use of digital technologies, most notably through the creation of digital strategies specific to the participant's organisation. As with the MDE workshops, identifying participants who are looking to develop their organisation's strategic approach to digital skills, rather than acquire tips and techniques on specific applications, is likely to be a key ingredient in producing long-term positive outcomes. Working closely with well networked TSI and introducing follow-up activities in a staged manner is also likely to contribute to the effectiveness of MDW. Furthermore, given the aims of MDW, participants may benefit from sustained post-workshop support (facilitated by the SCVO and/or TSI) in implementing organisational change, in addition to the support available via the buddy system.

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