Research e-mailing

Wales Voluntary Sector Research Network

Winter 2012

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Introduction

Welcome to the winter and final edition of the Wales Voluntary Sector Research Network Newsletter in this format. In 2013 WCVA will be launching a new website, where news items about events, publications and current research will be posted. You will be notified on a weekly basis about the latest news on the website, but you need to opt in to receive this service. In the next few weeks you will need to sign in to WCVA new website and tick the interest groups you wish to receive information about. You will still be able to notify us about research you have undertaken that will be posted on the website rather than in the quarterly newsletter.

Featured in this edition are articles on recent VSSN conferences and the Reith Lecture.

The newsletter is produced for the research network members who have signed up to receive information about research in Wales. You’re very welcome to share this publication with colleagues. In the new year the Wales Voluntary Sector Research Network will cease to function in the existing format. Anyone interested in third sector research in Wales is very welcome to contact us at WCVA.

The research team wish you all the best for Christmas and New Year!

Roberta Roberts
Research Advisor
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The feature articles are on the VSSN Day Seminar and Pan Wales Programme Supports Organisation /University Engagement by Strategic Insight Programme (SIP).

In the News, this edition has items on the Beyond 2011 reports, event held by the Wellbeing Network, join Children in Wales to celebrate their 20th Anniversary and A New MA course in Health, Ethics and Society.

There is a host reports from Joseph Rowntree Foundation on tackling poverty and Other Reports and Publications. Look out for WCVA’s new website in January.
Just over 30 people gathered in the Committee Room of Cardiff University (very posh) to discuss five papers relating to different aspects of the voluntary sector. First up was Alex Murdock, who challenged the audience with a paper reporting the negotiations between large private companies engaged in the work programme and sector representatives, to agree a 'compact'. This sparked lively discussion regarding issues of power and the desire for large organisations (like government) to deal with large organisations (of whatever sector). This was followed by Rebecca Rumbul's paper on the ability of third sector organisations to get involved in EU funded programmes in Wales. The thesis was that those organisations that had the capacity, and skills, to become embedded in the process were far more likely to receive funding from it. This had similar themes to Alex’s paper, where the ability of organisations to act like or mix with public or private sector organisations becomes an important factor in their ‘success’ or ‘sustainability’. After a break for lunch, we turned to the issues facing smaller organisations. The way a 40 year old campaigning organisation was adapting to social media and online campaigning was described by Amy Burbage, who appropriately used Prezi, an online presentation format, to guide us through her presentation. The tensions between older, founder, members and younger, more internet-savy campaigners were clear, and the question of whether the technology was driving the change, or the realities
of how effective campaigns work today was posed. Issues of democracy and digital exclusion were also apparent. This led on to a paper considering ‘critical incidents’ in the lives of lunch clubs. Eileen Spencer, showed evidence of the way grass roots organisations function, and some of the risks and vulnerabilities that this brought. Aiming to ‘break even’ is OK in a stable world, but current uncertainties mean it is unlikely to be a sustainable strategy. The potential for these community organisations to enable people to grow old healthily was also stated, making their sustainability a matter for public health planning. Finally, Lindsey Metcalf presented a paper on the experiences and views of trustees of small charities that mostly provided social care services. Their list of ‘things that keep me awake at night’ was instructive, as much for what was omitted as what was included. The need for good support, induction and ongoing training was highlighted. From the floor, wise advice about the need to train boards, not individuals, left us contemplating the very real issues that we research, and the need to make use of the learning to improve what we (the third or voluntary sector) do.

The meeting also had its bit of ‘real life experience’ as we took part in the VSSN AGM. A thank you was expressed to Chris Cornforth for his leadership and work as chair as he stepped down. Several participants indicated events or publications in the near future, so 2013 looks like a busy year.

The day conference was hosted by Wales Council for Voluntary Action with WISERD - the Wales Institute for Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods. Presentations and papers are available from the VSSN website at www.vssn.org.uk.

Pan Wales Programme Supports Organisation /University Engagement

The Strategic Insight Programme (SIP) is an innovative pan-Wales programme which supports and facilitates short term funded placements of university staff into public, private and voluntary sector organisations and vice versa.

Essentially, the programme is based around knowledge exchange and creating mutually beneficial, long term collaborative relationships between HE and external organisations. Potential benefits for your organisation include;

- Access to academic expertise and graduate skills
- Access to further funding
- Creation of long term relationships with one or more Welsh university
- Helping to increase the employability of graduates
- Opportunities available to work with universities in Wales and receive funding for your organisation (criteria apply)

In 2011/12 over 100 placements took place with 65% resulting in the potential for a collaborative research bid. One participant commented “I have had a great amount of personal advantage but building a relationship with the University has benefited my organisation through the research that was undertaken”

Case studies and placement information can be found on our website. If you would like to find out more please contact us on the details below

Kate Slowinski
Strategic Insight Programme Manager

Wales Third Sector Research Network, December 2012. © WCVA.
Beyond 2011
Beyond 2011 Office for National Statistics has recently released the first of a series of ‘Sources’ reports to be published over coming months. Over the course of the Beyond 2011 Programme, regular reports will be published which will focus on the quality of potential administrative data sources. The initial report presents research reviewing the scope and quality of the NHS Patient Register as a potential source of data for use, within the Beyond 2011 Programme, by the Office for National Statistics:

If you have any issue relating to the Programme that you would like to discuss, please contact us at beyond2011@ons.gov.uk

Regular updates on progress and plans will be available via their contacts list and online - check here for up-to-date news:

News from Wellbeing Network

The theme of the event was “Measure Wellbeing to design and develop Policy”

Building on the Better Life Initiative, the Forum’s main goals were to promote discussions on the aspects that contribute toward creating a good life today and in future in different countries around the world, and also to promote the development and use the new wellbeing measures for effective and accountable policy design work.

Click here for the Forum’s conclusions

Children in Wales / Plant yng Nghymru
Children in Wales have announced that it will be celebrating its 20th Anniversary in 2013.

As part of the festivities they will be publishing a collection of short stories, from children, young people and adults alike, about their memories in Wales. You do not have to have been born in Wales, just have some recollections. So why not share your memories with them?
You can send your story in English or Welsh and include a picture if you wish. Your story should not be more than 500 words and they will be kept anonymous. Some of the stories will subsequently be used to produce a commemorative publication.

**New MA course in Health, Ethics and Society**
University of Wales Trinity Saint David is now offering a new distance-learning MA course in Health, Ethics and Society (available to start from Jan 2013), which may appeal to voluntary sector folks. More details in last WTSRN Bulletin November 2012.

For more details contact:
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**JRF Publications**

JRF published their annual edition of *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion*. The report shows that the proportion of children in poverty who live in a working household has reached 61 per cent:

**Is tackling in-work poverty the key for anti-poverty initiatives?**


JRF and the Child Poverty Action Group co-funded the Centre for Research in Social Policy to produce *new research on the cost of a child* in the 21st Century.

**A job in itself: thankless task for young people looking for work**

New research explores the difficulty of job searching for young people seeking low-skilled work in three areas in England and Wales.

The main problem for disadvantaged young people looking for work is fundamental - a major shortage of jobs.

Click here for the main findings:

There are many more papers about tackling poverty on JRF website:

http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications

JRF New calls for proposals

Area regeneration and localisation: evidence and policy review

This project aims to undertake a literature review about the links between area regeneration, localisation and poverty. The review would look at prior, current and potential policy and practice interventions and their impact on poverty, particularly where these have been costed and have robust outcome data.

(Part of the JRF programme to develop an anti-poverty strategy for the UK)

Closing Date: 23.59pm on 6th February 2013

International and historical anti-poverty strategies: evidence and policy review

This project aims to undertake a literature review about international and historical anti-poverty strategies and approaches. The review would look at prior, current and potential policy and practice interventions and their impact on poverty, particularly where these have been costed and have robust outcome data.

(Part of our programme to develop an anti-poverty strategy for the UK)

Closing Date: 23:59pm on 6th February 2013

Personal relationships and poverty: evidence and policy review

This project aims to undertake a literature review about the links between personal relationships and poverty. The review would look at prior, current and potential policy and practice interventions and their impact on poverty, particularly where these have been costed and have robust outcome data.

(Part of our programme to develop an anti-poverty strategy for the UK)

Closing Date: 23.59pm on 6th February 2013

Return

Other Publications and Reports

Community Co-operatives in Wales
The Wales Co-operative Centre has published its fourth and final report for the International Year of Co-operatives, 'Community Co-operatives in Wales'. Based on the results of a survey of 23 Welsh community co-operatives, it highlights the economic, social and environmental
Historic Welsh perspective on public services debate
The Bevan Foundation and the Wales Co-operative Centre has published 'Co-operation: A post-war opportunity missed' (subtitled 'A Welsh perspective'), which considers the role of the state and various forms of voluntary collective organisations in delivering public services as discussed over 60 years ago. The author gives some context at http://www.bevanfoundation.org/blog/individual-streams-collective-channels/, or see download page (pdf, 297KB).

Latest UK Education Research

Best practice case studies - Treorchy Comprehensive School - Bilingualism boosts grades at Treorchy Comprehensive
This English-medium comprehensive has boosted GCSE and A Level results by introducing a ‘fast-track’ bilingual stream for more able pupils. More

Qualifications alone will not ensure learners find work (Ofsted)
The report shares the experiences of 15 high performing colleges who excel in teaching their students enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability. More

Developing Key Competences at School in Europe: Challenges and Opportunities for Policy (Eurydice)
The need to improve the quality and relevance of the skills and competences with which young Europeans leave school has been recognised at EU and national level. More

Association of Colleges (AoC) Beacon Awards 2011/12 Announcement (AoC)
Read the full list of this year's Award-winning Colleges. More

Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools (Estyn)
This report is a good practice guide to help schools tackle the impact of poverty and disadvantage. The report outlines a series of recommendations and showcases best practice case studies. More

What is the research evidence on writing? (DfE)
This paper reports on the statistics and research evidence on writing both in and out of school, covering pupils in primary and secondary schools. It includes domestic and international evidence, and makes references and comparisons to reading where appropriate. More

New report - 'The Enabling State: A discussion paper'
Nfp synergy
Ever since the review of the Charity Act recommended some charities should be able to pay trustees, the debate has raged with strong cases being made on either side.

Those in favour claim the creme de la creme can now be attracted to the charity boardroom. Those opposed say it could further erode the ethos of the voluntary sector.

Read on for the potential 'trustee arms race' and a stark warning for about the risks charities could face to their trust levels.
http://nfpsynergy.net/trust-me-im-paid-trustee?utm_medium=email&utm_source=nfpSynergy&utm_campaign=1663817_October+1+non-client&utm_content=intership&dm_i=6BS,ZNT5,KNFPJ,304Q3,1

Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC)

Evaluating the Health Social Enterprise Investment Fund
Third Sector Research Centre has published the final evaluation report for the Social Enterprise Investment Fund launched by the Department of Health in 2007 in England, finding that investment in social enterprise, although not meeting all its aims, helped to challenge health inequalities and tackle unmet need. From http://www.tsrc.ac.uk/Research/SEIFEvaluation/tabid/757/Default.aspx.

Community action is not about formal training, says research
New research by the Third Sector Research Centre finds that learning and skills-development within small community groups has little to do with formal training, but more to do with learning from similar groups and social networks. http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/news/1164342

TSRC launches third Sector Futures Dialogue 3
Futures Dialogue discussion paper we aim to take forward debate by asking whether the Third Sector has special or distinctive characteristics. Is the sectors ‘uniqueness’ being threatened by professionalisation, contracting with the state or the development of market-like features? http://www.tsrc.ac.uk/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=7%2bKUjEnc54M%3d&tabid=964

Website
Look out for WCVA’s new website in January.
Contact details of members of the Wales voluntary sector research network are held and processed by WCVA on computer. The information is used by WCVA in the interests of assisting and promoting research within the voluntary sector and other organisation interested in the voluntary sector. The information may be disseminated to others with similar interests.

Membership of WCVA

Disclaimer
Inclusion of third party information in WCVA's members' email briefing does not constitute an endorsement by WCVA. WCVA takes no responsibility for the quality of third party events, products or services featured in this briefing. Whilst every care is taken to provide accurate information, neither WCVA nor the editor undertakes any liability for any error or omission.

If you have any queries, or wish to send news/articles for inclusion in the next mailing, contact:

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