

Meet the Funders

SUMMARY

I am pleased to submit this report on progress of the **Meet the Funders** event which was part funded by the Community Planning Partnership Capacity Building Fund. The report highlights the achievements of Meet the Funders and further developments. A two part evaluation of **Meet the Funders** is attached.

BACKGROUND

Meet the Funders aimed to

- raise awareness of potential sources of funding, including income-generation and grant funding, and
- provide targeted support to increase the capacity of the voluntary and community sector to become sustainable

It was led by a partnership of agencies, (*Argyll & Bute Council, Federation of Council for Voluntary Service, Argyll & the Islands Enterprise, Argyll Volunteer Centre, Argyll Citizens Advice Bureau, and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations Highlands & Islands Capacity Building Project*) and toured six destinations within Argyll & Bute from Monday 27 Feb to Saturday 4 March 2006.

COMMENTARY

The main outcomes of **Meet the Funders** were;

- over 760 people attended
- over 70% of respondents identified new funding opportunities
- levels of satisfaction with the event were very high
- expected benefits were all realised esp. in three main areas, *networking, capacity building and awareness raising.*
- closer working relationships between agencies
- Shared resource development - funding toolkit for use with third sector and other project development clients

THE FUTURE

The **Meet the Funders** partnership agreed that the event should take place next year and that it should progress to include a wide range of capacity building workshops on topics such as monitoring and evaluation, filling out application forms and details of any new funding streams. Finance for this follow up event will need to be secured in order for this to progress.

A further evaluation of **Meet the Funders** will take place later in the year to monitor the longer term impact of the project and these results will be factored into next years event.

As a result of **Meet the Funders**, Argyll & Bute Council has set up a development group that aims to maximise project development skills and tools across Argyll & Bute Council and to use this to help build the capacity of groups to strengthen and develop projects. This group is running a capacity building event in Campbeltown in early October 2006 to launch the Campbeltown Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme and associated opportunities arising from this input of funding to the town.

CONCLUSION

Meet the Funders was a success and if funding can be secured, will take place again next year offering new opportunities for capacity building. The unexpected benefits of the event have been closer working relationships and shared resources between the agencies involved and it is hoped that this too can be fostered.

Many thanks to the Community Planning Partnership for their kind contribution to **Meet the Funders**.

*Arlene Cullum, Chair of Meet the Funders Working Group
Corporate Funding Officer, Policy & Strategy, Chief Executive's Unit, Argyll & Bute Council
Tel: 07979 214501, Email: arlene.cullum@argyll-bute.gov.uk*

Meet The Funders Roadshow Evaluation: Visitor Questionnaire

Key points

- The majority of questionnaire respondents were members of one or more groups or organisations.
- The organisations represented by respondents covered a wide range of interests and activities.
- Over 70% of respondents had submitted applications for funding in the past. A similar proportion of respondents had received advice on funding.
- The majority of enquiries were handled by funders on a 'drop-in' basis.
- Over 70% of respondents had identified new funding opportunities at the roadshow event they attended.
- Levels of satisfaction with the event were very high.

Context

The Meet the Funders Roadshow grew out of a request to the Voluntary Sector Policy Working Group from a few voluntary sector groups who wished to meet funders first hand. To take the idea forward, a new working group was set up. Partners in the project included Argyll and Bute Council, Argyll and the Islands Enterprise, Argyll Council for Voluntary Service, Argyll Volunteer Centre, and Highlands and Islands Community Capacity Project.

The Meet The Funders Roadshow aimed to:

- raise awareness of potential sources of funding, including income-generation and grant funding, and
- provide targeted support to increase the capacity of the voluntary and community sector

The benefits of this support were designed to:

- make organisations aware of the range of ongoing support available to them within Argyll and Bute, and make direct contact with those delivering capacity building support
- enable organisations more effectively to plan their funding over the longer-term
- enable organisations to write more successful applications
- enable organisations and funders to meet together to discuss projects
- support organisations in identifying their training needs
- increase the sustainability of organisations, thereby enabling them to deliver much needed services to clients more effectively.

The six roadshow events took place in the week of 27 February 2006 and visited the following towns: Helensburgh, Dunoon, Campbeltown, Bowmore, Lochgilphead and Oban.

The Research and Information team of Argyll and Bute Council were asked to carry out an evaluation of the roadshow.

The aims and objectives of the evaluation:

- To measure the successes / short-comings of the funding roadshow
- To identify reasons for successes
- To identify reasons for short-comings
- To identify potential areas for improvements for future roadshows.

This report focuses on one aspect of the evaluation only: the questionnaire circulated to visitors to the roadshows.

Methodology

The questionnaire forms were handed out to visitors as they arrived at the roadshow events. Respondents were asked to return their completed form as they left the venues. To encourage responses, all completed forms were entered into a draw for a chocolate hamper.

The majority of the questions were closed questions, designed to allow for the quantitative analysis of the results. In addition, several questions were designed to encourage respondents to expand on yes / no answers.

Two questions asked respondents to comment on the roadshow. The results of these questions were subject to content analysis.

Response Rates

Overall, the questionnaire appears to have achieved a response rate of between 21 and 25 per cent of all visitors. A total of 163 completed forms were returned. (See Table 1.)

Table 1: Questionnaire response rates:

Venue	Estimated number of visitors		Number of questionnaires returned	Response Rate (%)	
	Min	Max		Min	Max
Helensburgh	150	150	29	19.3	19.3
Dunoon	200	200	52	26.0	26.0
Campbeltown	75	100	22	29.3	22.0
Bowmore	50	70	17	34.0	24.3
Lochgilphead	130	170	28	21.5	16.5
Oban	50	70	15	30.0	21.4
Total	655	760	163	24.9	21.4

Response rates were lower than anticipated. Although the research design required that questionnaires be distributed to all people visiting the roadshows, this proved to be impracticable during busy times. For the same reason, some of the visitor counts are approximate rather than absolute.

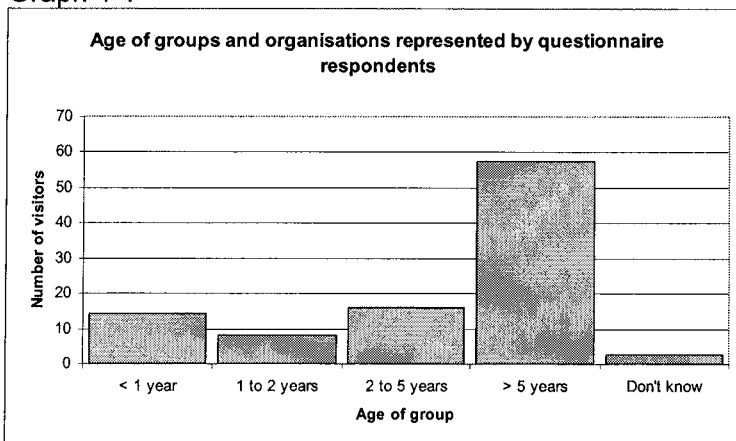
Analysis

As the analysis revealed very little difference between responses given by visitors at different venues (with regard to satisfaction ratings etc), this report concentrates on responses given across all roadshow venues. Where differences were noted, these have been highlighted.

The characteristics of people attending the roadshow

Only 6.2%¹ of questionnaire respondents had come to the roadshow as individuals. The remaining 93.8% were members of one or more groups or organisations (Graph 1).

Graph 1².



From the responses received, more than 130 separate organisations could be identified as having had representatives present at the roadshows. These groups and organisations covered a wide range of activities and interests. (See Table 2.)

¹ Percentages are calculated on the basis of numbers of responses to individual questions (i.e. valid percentages). Missing values are not included.

² Note that counts in this graph relate to the number of questionnaire responses rather than to the individual number of organisations represented. Several people from a single organisation may have filled in questionnaires.

Table 2: Focus of activity of groups and organisations

Focus of Activity³	Rank	Number
Cultural	1	21
Community groups	2	20
Environment	3	15
Sport	4	11
Health and carers	4	11
Facility specific (e.g. village halls)	6	6
Children / childcare (not education)	6	6
Housing - residents and tenants associations	6	6
Community and adult education	9	5
Support and advice groups	10	4
Children (education)	11	3
Business-related	12	2
Other	12	2
Social care	12	2
Transport	15	1
Housing - providers	15	1
Unknown	unranked	12

The majority of respondents said that they had submitted funding applications before (114 (71.7%)). 45 respondents (28.3%) said that they had not. Similar percentages had / had not received advice on funding (116 (72.5%) and 44 (27.5%), respectively).

Levels of preregistration for the roadshows

Those respondents who preregistered for the roadshows were in the minority. (See Table 3.)

Table 3: Number and percentages of respondents who preregistered for the roadshows.

	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Did preregister	65	40.6
Did not preregister	95	59.4

Of those respondents who did preregister for the roadshows, 40 (61.5%) indicated that prepared themselves for the event in some way. (See Table 4.)

³ Where a group's activities fell into more than one category, the group was counted in all categories that applied.

Table 4: Pre-event preparation

Preparations made	Number of preregistered respondents	Percentage of preregistered respondents
Made appointments	34	52.3
Looked at Funders' Roadshow website	24	36.9
Looked at other websites	18	27.7
Drafted an application	11	16.9
Other	5	7.7

Table 5: Number of appointments made by preregistered respondents

Number of appointments made	Number of preregistered respondents	Percentage of preregistered respondents
None	26	40.0
One	16	24.6
Two	14	21.5
Three	6	9.2
Four	1	1.5
Five or more	2	3.1

Allowing for the number of people who did not preregister for the event that they attended and for the number of preregistered respondents who did not make appointments, it is apparent that the majority of enquiries handled by funders were made on a 'drop-in' basis. Overall, only 41 (25.2%) respondents made appointments prior to attending their event.

Some respondents indicated that they had encountered problems making appointments for venues once the roadshow was underway. Had the period during which preregistrations and appointments been longer, it is likely that numbers of both would have increased.

Potential opportunities identified

Respondents were asked whether they had identified new training opportunities and / or new funding opportunities at the roadshow they attended. (See Tables 6a and b.)

Table 6a: New opportunities for training identified

	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Yes	48	32.2
No	101	67.8

Table 6b: New opportunities for funding identified

	Number of	Percentage of
--	-----------	---------------

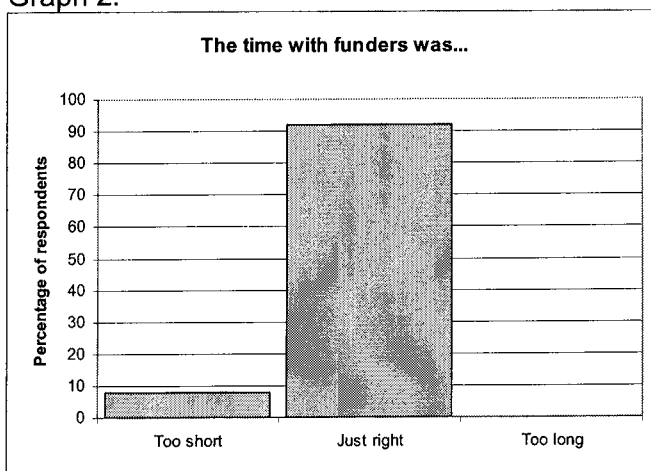
	respondents	respondents
Yes	110	71.4
No	44	28.6

A higher proportion of respondents indicated that they had identified new funding opportunities than had identified new training opportunities. However, as several respondents took the time to point out that they had not been looking for training opportunities, this may well be a reflection of their interests rather than a lack of opportunities on offer.

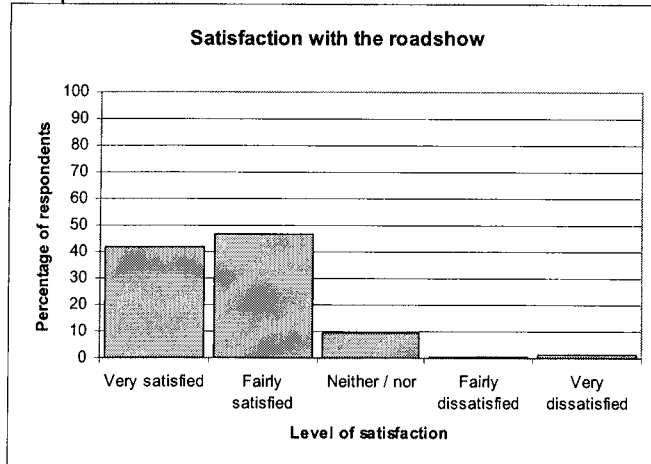
Satisfaction ratings

Visitor satisfaction levels with the event were very high. 129 (92.1%) of respondents who answered the question said that time allowed with the funders and advisors was 'just right'. 140 respondents (88.6%) said that they were either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with the event they attended. (See graphs 2 and 3.)

Graph 2.



Graph 3.



The overall high levels of satisfaction should be borne in mind when considering the findings of the content analysis of comments made by respondents.

Comments

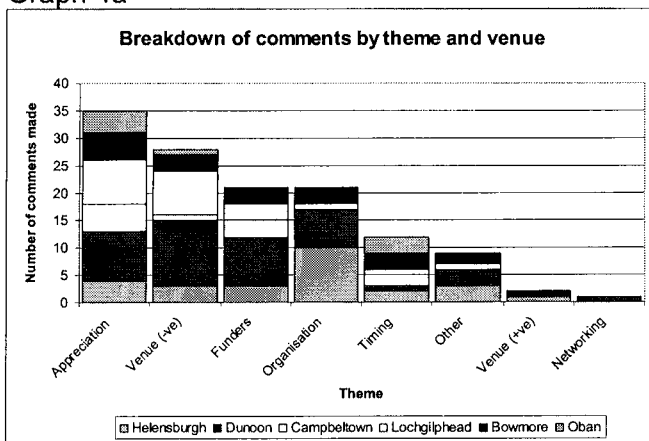
As there was noticeable overlap between questions 13 and 14, the two sets of comments were amalgamated during the content analysis. Comments could be largely broken down into seven broad categories, with each of these being subdivided further.

The seven broad categories were:

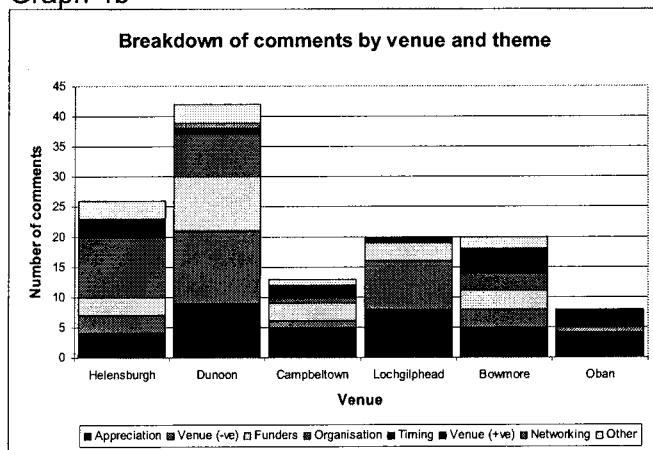
1. Praise and appreciation for the event and people involved with it (funders and organisers)
2. Venue-related comments, mostly relating to size, noise and layout. (For the purposes of Graphs 4a and 4b, this category has been divided into two, separating out the positive comments from the more numerous negative comments.)
3. Comments relating to the organisation of the roadshow
4. Comments about funders (excluding those dealt with elsewhere in the questionnaire. See below for information about 'missing' funders.)
5. Time issues, relating to both the events past and to any future events
6. The positive opportunities offered by the events for networking opportunities
7. Other: a catch-all category of suggestions, unrealistic demands, nonsense and whimsy.

See Graphs 4a and 4b for breakdowns of comments by themes and venues.

Graph 4a



Graph 4b



Given that question 13 asked how the roadshow could be improved in future years, a surprising (and gratifying) number of respondents chose to emphasise the positive aspects of this year's events, thereby reinforcing the positive satisfaction levels noted earlier. "Praise and appreciation" yielded the most comments of any of the seven themes identified.

The second most frequent theme related to the venues. These comments were generally critical, particularly from respondents in Lochgilphead and Dunoon, who identified lack of space and, to a lesser extent, noise levels to have been problematic. Another theme that came up was a general lack of signposting to help funders find the stalls they wished to visit.

Comments about funders included suggestions that visitors would like to see a wider range of funders in the future. This was particularly true of respondents from Dunoon. One respondent each in Campbeltown and Lochgilphead

indicated that they were disappointed that some funders had packed up and left before the end of the events. (Note that other comments were made about funders who left early as part of question 8. These separate comments are dealt with elsewhere.)

Five respondents raised specific issues about the Lottery. These related to understaffing of the stall and, in a couple of instances, concerns that information contained in the Lottery presentation conflicted with advice given by staff on the stand.

Comments about the organisation of the event emphasised the lack of advance publicity and problems with making appointments.

Although issues relating to organisation overlap with issues over timing, the comments have been separated out. Four comments were made about timekeeping. Eight comments were made suggesting changes to the opening hours and changes to the scheduling of future events. (Suggestions included having repeats of presentations through the afternoon so that people unable to make the opening time could still see them.)

“Missing” funders

Respondents were asked: “Are there any funders you would have liked to have seen at today’s event but who weren’t here?” (See Table 7.)

Table 7: “Are there any funders you would have liked to have seen at today’s event but who weren’t here?”

	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Yes	51	34.9
No	95	65.1

Respondents who answered “yes” to this question were then asked to specify which funders they would have liked to see. 41 respondents did so.

“Missing” funders fell into four broad categories:

1. Funders who were not scheduled to appear at any venue
2. Funders who were scheduled to appear at some venues and not others but who were not scheduled to appear at the particular venue to which the respondent went
3. Funders who were present but who the respondent did not get to see
4. Funders who were scheduled to appear at the venue to which the respondent went but who cancelled / left early.

Funders⁴ who were not scheduled to appear at any venue:

Funder	Number of times suggested
Specific funders	
Arts Council	1
Esmé Fairbairn	2
Lloyds TSB	9
Nadair Trust	1
Scotland's Heritage	1
Suggestions made by area of interest	
Any existing mental health funders / medical / alcohol and drugs	2
More national trusts / grantmakers / foundations	4
Sports	1

As these were funders who had never been scheduled to appear at the roadshows, these may be taken to be suggestions for future events.

Funders who were scheduled to appear at some venues and not others but who were not scheduled to appear at the particular venue to which the respondent went

Only two funders were mentioned in this context: Children In Need (respondents in Dunoon and Lochgilphead) and The Robertson Trust (respondents in Bowmore and Lochgilphead).

Funders who were present but who the respondent did not get to see

Three Funders were mentioned: The Big Lottery (by two respondents from Helensburgh); Scottish Enterprise (one respondent from Helensburgh); The Robertson Trust (one respondent from Dunoon).

Funders who were scheduled to appear at the venue to which the respondent went but who cancelled / left early.

Three funders were mentioned in this context. Clearly the absence of Communities Scotland from the Bowmore event was an issue with respondents, with seven individuals pointing to the organisation's absence.

The absence of Community Transport was mentioned by two respondents from Dunoon and one from Campbeltown. One respondent from Dunoon mentioned The Robertson Trust, representatives from the Trust having left early.

Conclusions

Overall, the questionnaire analysis indicates that satisfaction levels with the roadshow were very high. The main issues related to

- the organisation of the event, particularly with regard to advance publicity

⁴ The names of these funding bodies have been transcribed from the questionnaire responses. They may not be wholly accurate, therefore.

- the venues that were used, particularly with regard to events in Lochgilphead and Dunoon.

A number of suggestions were made for future events. These ranged from suggestions of possible funders who might be persuaded to attend to suggestions about scheduling and timing.

For more information, contact:

Chris Carr
Research Associate
Policy and Strategy Department
Argyll and Bute Council
Kilmory
Lochgilphead
PA31 8RT

Tel: 01546 60 4260

Meet The Funders Roadshow Evaluation: Organisers' Evaluation Workshop

Key points:

- The consensus among organisers was that the Meet The Funders Roadshow was a success. This impression was borne out by the workshop discussion of planned and achieved outcomes, and reinforced the findings of the questionnaire survey.
- The workshop highlighted successful outcomes in three main areas:
 - Networking
 - Capacity building
 - Awareness raising.
- Lessons have been learned from this year's Roadshow particularly with regard to future organisational arrangements.
- Based on the workshop, a set of recommendations has been compiled for future events. These recommendations are listed at the end of this document.

Context:

Once the Meet The Funders Roadshow was over, a meeting of the event's organisers was arranged as part of the evaluation process. This meeting, after a couple of postponements, took place on 5 May, 2006.

In addition to the seven 'organisers' who came along to the meeting, two researchers¹, acting as moderators and note-takers for the session were also present. 'Organisers' identified themselves as coming from three separate organisations (AIE, Argyll and Bute Council and Leader+).

The meeting took the form of a workshop / group discussion, which lasted for one-and-a-half hours. Afterwards, the material generated by the discussion was compiled and subjected to a basic content analysis in order to draw out key themes and issues.

Results:

Broadly speaking, the content of the workshop's discussion can be broken down into two main areas. These relate to:

- The outcomes of the Roadshow. Actual outcomes were compared with those sought.
- The organisation of the Roadshow. This part of the discussion looked at how the Roadshow had been organised and considered how the organisational arrangements had helped to achieve the outcomes

¹ Chris Carr and Andy McKay-Hubbard, from Argyll and Bute Council.

identified. There was also discussion with regard to things that could have been improved or that should be changed for any future events.

All the workshop's participants agreed that the Roadshow had been successful and that similar events should be run in future years. The assumption that there would be future roadshows was implicit throughout the workshop.

The impression that the Roadshow was a success is supported by the results of the questionnaire as well as by the content of the workshop discussions.

Outcomes of the Roadshow

Table 1 (below) compares the outcomes that were sought by the event's organisers and actual outcomes as identified by the workshop's participants.

Table 1: The outcomes of the Roadshow compared to the outcomes sought at the start of the Roadshow's planning process.

Stated Aims and Outcomes of the Roadshow	Discussion
Aims	
To raise people's awareness of potential sources of funding, including methods of income-generation and grant funding	
To provide targeted support in order to increase the capacity of the voluntary and enable the community sector to become sustainable	
Anticipated Outcomes	
Organisations will be made aware of the range of the ongoing support available to them within Argyll and Bute.	All workshop participants agreed that this outcome had been achieved.
Organisations will have made / will make direct contact with those delivering capacity building support.	Although workshop participants were optimistic that this outcome will be achieved, there was general agreement that it is still too early to say that it has been. There is evidence to suggest, however, that visitors to the Roadshow have been making contacts with regards to capacity building activities as a follow-up to the Roadshow, building on contacts made at the time.
Organisations will be better able to plan their funding over the longer-term.	There was widespread agreement among participants that this outcome had been achieved. Visitors'

Stated Aims and Outcomes of the Roadshow	Discussion
	<p>awareness had been raised with regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of opportunities available. (One workshop participant said that the Roadshow enabled potential applicants to 'factor in' all the things people had to offer, many of which had they had not known about before.) • Increasing people's awareness of available funding. That funders and advisors could redirect queries to the most appropriate people helped to deliver this outcome. • Increasing people's awareness of the need to plan their funding activities.
<p>Organisations will be more successful in writing applications.</p>	<p>It is too soon to say whether this outcome has been achieved. Attendance at the workshops at the Roadshow was variable. However, workshop participants were nonetheless hopeful that the Toolkit would have an impact on the quality of future applications.</p>
<p>Organisations and funders will be able to meet together and discuss projects.</p>	<p>This outcome was achieved.</p>
<p>Organisations will be supported in identifying their training needs.</p>	<p>Despite the fact that training had not been emphasised in the Roadshow's publicity, the workshop participants agreed that this outcome had been delivered.</p> <p>Participants used a very broad definition of 'training', including both formal and informal activities under this umbrella heading. HICAP and CVS offered advice about training opportunities. AIE offered 'directors' training', but also considered that sitting down and advising visitors constituted a training activity.</p> <p>Participants were in agreement that the Toolkit should also be considered</p>

Stated Aims and Outcomes of the Roadshow	Discussion
	as a training resource.
Funders from outside the area will see first hand the geographical barriers affecting Argyll and Bute and gain a realistic picture of the added costs of delivering projects within the area.	Participants agreed strongly that this outcome had been achieved. The Roadshow was an 'eye-opener', particularly with regard to constraints caused by the ferry timetables and the lack of trains during the winter months.
Organisations will be more sustainable therefore, and better able to deliver services to clients.	It is too early to say whether or not this outcome has been achieved or will be achieved in the longer term.
Organisations will be better able to participate within local structures such as the Community Planning Partnership.	<p>While there was some suggestion that this outcome was rather ambitious, there was some suggestion that it might be achieved.</p> <p>In addition to gaining increased knowledge from the Roadshow, it was also suggested that visitors would benefit from increased confidence. Moreover, the development of initial contacts made at the Roadshow would enable people to engage more effectively in the longer term.</p>
Outcomes additional to those sought prior to the Roadshow	
Profile raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Toolkit has been well-received. Renfrewshire Council want to adapt it as does Communities Scotland, who wish to tailor the Toolkit specifically to social enterprises.
Bringing groups together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One workshop participant pointed out another positive outcome of the Roadshow was that it succeeded in getting statutory bodies to work together. This was seen as being an achievement. • Funders and advisors were offered exhibition training prior to the event. This increased the confidence of people looking after the stalls. The training event also served as a useful bonding and networking

Stated Aims and Outcomes of the Roadshow	Discussion
	exercise.
Overall, there was widespread agreement among the organisers that the Roadshow had delivered or, in the cases where it is still too early to assess successes, will deliver the anticipated outcomes. In addition to the outcomes that had been sought by the Roadshow's organisers, positive outcomes with regards to profile raising and bringing groups together were also identified.	

The workshop highlighted successful outcomes in three areas:

- Networking
- Capacity building
- Awareness raising.

At the beginning of the workshop, participants were asked to write down two positive things about the Roadshow. Of the thirteen comments that were returned, nine related to outcomes that fell into one or more of the above categories. (Other comments referred to positive aspects of the venues (2), enthusiasm of the funders (1), and positive feedback from the people who attended the event (1).)

When the full content of the workshop's discussion was examined, the overlap between the three categories became even more obvious (see Diagram 1). That so many outcomes fall into the 'capacity building' category suggests that the Roadshow will have positive impacts in the longer term.

A recurring theme throughout the workshop was the positive and friendly atmosphere of the event that was conducive to creating positive outcomes. This positive atmosphere appears to have been brought about by a variety of factors (see Diagram 2).

Of particular interest are the roles played by the venues and the geographical barriers in the area. Both of these are usually seen as being problems rather than assets yet, in this instance, both seemed to facilitate the creation of an atmosphere that was conducive to achieving positive outcomes.

While venues were seen as being of poor physical quality, all were community facilities with which visitors would have been familiar. As a result, they were unintimidating environments. Workshop participants saw this as a point in their favour and suggested that similar venues should be sought for future events. The alternative of using hotel function rooms was seen as being undesirable as function rooms could potentially be more intimidating to visitors who would not be familiar with them.

Although workshop participants were unsure whether visitor numbers lived up to their expectations, they were impressed by the quality of visitors. The distinction was drawn between 'purposeful' visitors and 'bag-fillers', with people coming to the Roadshow falling into the first category. This reinforced the perception that visitors came to the events with positive attitudes.

The organisation of the Roadshow

Workshop participants' comments about the planning, administration, publicity and timing of the Roadshow have been sorted into three broad categories:

- Venues (See Table 2, below)
- Organisational arrangements (See Table 3, below)
- Timing (See Table 4, below).

Each table looks at specific points that were raised during the workshop discussion, explanations for the problems or successes identified, and recommendations that came out of the discussions.

Table 2: Venues

Topic	Comments	Recommendations for future events
Quality of venues used	<p>Some of the venues were in poor physical condition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor physical quality appears to have been offset by the benefits arising from their profile as community facilities. 	
Size of venues used	<p>Some venues were small and overcrowded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overcrowding helped to add to the 'buzz' of the events 	
Type of venues used	<p>Venues were all community facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors were familiar with venues. The venues added to the informal atmosphere of the event and were not intimidating. <p>The venues had a high profile in the communities.</p>	<p>Similar types of venues should be sought for future events.</p>
Location of venues within places visited.	<p>All venues were in central locations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venues were convenient. 	
Places visited.	<p>Only one island (Islay) was visited during the Roadshow.</p>	<p>Alternative destinations should be considered for future roadshows.</p>
Alternative venues.	<p>A few alternative options were discussed during the workshop: Campbelltown Town Hall; hotel function rooms; Calmac Ferry Terminal in Oban.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is limited choice with regards to available venues, especially in Lochgilphead. Hotel function rooms were seen as being undesirable venues as visitors might see them as unfriendly and potentially threatening environments. 	<p>Again, community venues should be sought for future events.</p>

Topic	Comments	Recommendations for future events
Floor plans / layout of stalls	<p>The organisation of stalls could have been better. This was especially the case in Lochgilphead.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The layouts of the stalls was difficult to organise, especially because organisers had not seen some of the venues ahead of time. 	<p>Organisers of future events should give more thought in advance of events as to how stall should be laid out.</p>

Table 3: Organisational arrangements

Topic	Comments	Recommendations for future events
The distribution of tasks between organisers	<p>Gwen and Ariene appear to have taken on the largest part of the workload involved in the organisation of the event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although having a central point through which all contacts and queries could be directed was seen as being very useful, this meant that tasks were unevenly divided. 	<p>Consideration should be given as to how the workload could be spread more effectively between organisers. Can the sharing out of tasks be reconciled with having a lead person or a central place for coordination of activities?</p>
Would this year's organisers be prepared to be involved in future events?	<p>Although organisers all agreed that the Roadshow should run again in the future, their overall willingness get involved in future events was slightly more cautious.</p>	<p>Consideration should be given as to how the workload can be spread more effectively between organisers.</p>
Publicizing the event	<p>Publicity was left too late</p>	<p>More time should be allowed for in the pre-event stage of organisation.</p>

Topic	Comments	Recommendations for future events
<p>Publicity appeared to be partisan</p>	<p>Publicity should have been more inclusive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-event reporting emphasised the role of the Council in the organisation of the Roadshow at the expense of partner organisations. • Reporters were given appropriate information with regard to who was involved in organising the Roadshow. Beyond ensuring that the media had appropriate information, the way local reporters chose to cover the Roadshow was out of the control of the organisers. • Although 'partisan' reporting was an issue amongst the organisers, this did not affect the running of the Roadshow. However, it might become an issue in the future. All partners need to get recognition for their contributions to the event. 	<p>Organisers should make sure that reporters are given information about the partners involved in the organisation of the Roadshow.</p>
<p>Content of adverts</p>	<p>Adverts were tailored to the individual venues. In order to help people plan alternatives in case they couldn't get to their most local venue, all Roadshow locations should have been listed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost of providing more information in the adverts made listing all alternatives impractical. 	<p>Organisers should give consideration to increasing the advertising budget, finding alternative modes of advertising, or reconcile themselves to having only local information in the adverts.</p>

Topic	Comments	Recommendations for future events
<p>The papers did not run stories about the Roadshow ahead of the event</p>	<p>The Roadshow was not publicised using feature articles. Instead, publicity ahead of the event was through advertising in the local press and posters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In fact, two waves of news releases were sent out before the Roadshow. The first releases, sent out before Christmas, garnered some press coverage. The next set were sent out in January. After the January press releases failed to generate any media interest, the roadshow organisers took out adverts in the local press to publicise the events. • Clearly, more information could have been conveyed to potential visitors had the organisers managed to get the local press to print more stories about the upcoming Roadshow rather than having to rely on advertisements. However, the failure to publicise the Roadshow via feature articles was out of the organisers' control. 	<p>Organisers should again try to get press releases issued ahead of the event. However, contingency plans for alternative types of publicity should be in place in case papers do not run the story.</p>

Topic	Comments	Recommendations for future events
<p>The appointment system.</p>	<p>The appointment system could have been improved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The problems with the appointments largely stemmed from the publicity having been left so late and the short organisational time scales. By the time some visitors heard about the Roadshow, the events were underway and it was too late to book appointments. 	<p>The period during which visitors can register for the Roadshow ahead of time should be increased.</p>
<p>Other administration Transportation of equipment from venue to venue</p>	<p>There were some delays in sending information out.</p> <p>Organisers borrowed a minibus for the week over which the event ran. There was limited advance planning of what would be transported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the course of the week, the range of stall-holders who asked to have material carried on the Stramash minibus increased. This had knock-on effects for the drivers in terms of their loading and unloading activities. 	<p>Organisers should plan who will use transportation facilities and make suitable provision for loading and unloading of equipment.</p>
<p>The Roadshow will be easier to organise the second time around</p>		

Table 4: Timing

Topic	Comments	Recommendations for future events
<p>The time of year when the event was held</p>	<p>The Roadshow could have been held at a better time of year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the weather did not cause any problems this year, there was a feeling that the organisers had been lucky that snow etc had not caused any problems. • The time of year and the possibilities of weather problems did seem to have discouraged some funders from attending and had prompted others to cancel. • The ferries and trains were operating on winter timetables, limiting the number of available services and making transport more difficult that might otherwise have been the case. • The Roadshow took place towards the financial year end which, for some organisations, added pressure to an already busy time of year. 	<p>Future events should be held during the summer months, preferably in June or September.</p>
<p>Frequency of future events</p>	<p>There was some debate as to whether future events should be held every year or every two years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No final decision was reached. 	

Topic	Comments	Recommendations for future events
<p>The pace of the Roadshow</p>	<p>The schedule was exhausting, especially for people who were attending every Roadshow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the Roadshow was exhausting, there was also a feeling among workshop participants that concentrating all the events into a single week had helped to foster a positive atmosphere and encouraged camaraderie between organisers, funders and advisors. 	<p>Organisers should consider putting in some kind of a 'breather' day during the Roadshow.</p>
<p>Programming of events at individual venues</p>	<p>There was a sense that events were rushed. Also, there were clashes between presentations and appointments made by visitors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of the problems arose from poor timekeeping. Because events tended to start late, this pushed the opening presentations back to clash with appointments. These problems could have been eased somewhat had the presentations been scheduled to take place half an hour or an hour after the events' opening times. 	<p>Organisers should consider refining the timetables of the individual days.</p>

Topic	Comments	Recommendations for future events
Opening hours of events	<p>Opening times were designed to attract both office and shift workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, the opening times were thought to have been appropriate. However, some funders did leave before the scheduled end times of events, which caused problems. • There was some debate as to whether holding the event on a Saturday had served to reduce visitor numbers in Oban. No conclusion was reached, however. 	<p>Similar opening hours should be used for future events. Stall-holders should be encouraged to stay until the scheduled end of the events.</p>

Future Meet The Funders Roadshows

This year's Meet The Funders Roadshow placed emphasis on raising visitors' awareness of funding opportunities that were available to them. Organisers suggested that the next Roadshow should be designed to build upon the awareness raising and capacity building outcomes already achieved. Thus, in addition to offering visitors the opportunities to meet with representatives from funding bodies, workshop participants considered the kinds of activities that could be offered.

One suggestion is to offer structured workshop sessions on how to write effective funding applications. (Children In Need have already offered to run sessions, using a course developed by the Scottish Grant Making Trust.)

Summary of recommendations for future years:

1. The Meet The Funders Roadshow should run again.
2. Organisers should consider visiting different places.
3. Events should be held in community-based facilities, similar to those used in this year's Roadshow.
4. Future Roadshow should be held in the summer months. Thus the next Roadshow might be scheduled for June or September 2007.
5. More time needs to be allowed for pre-event organisation (e.g. to allow visitors to register for the event).
6. The workload needs to be shared out more between the organisers. This will require commitment from both individuals and organisations to take tasks on.
7. Organisers should consider changing the format and content of advertisements to see whether more information can be provided with in them. Press releases should be put out prior to the event in the hope that the media will run with the story.
8. Organisers should refine the timetable for the programme of events. This will relieve problems of clashes between presentations and appointments. Funders and advisors should be encouraged to stay until the end of each day's events.
9. Organisers should give thought how future Roadshow can build upon the outcomes of this years Roadshow. Offers made by Children In Need / the Scottish Grant Making Trust to offer structured workshops on the most effective way to write applications should be taken up.

Conclusions

- The prevailing view of the workshop participants' was that the Meet The Funders Roadshow had been very successful with many of the desired outcomes having already been achieved. Participants were optimistic that the remainder of the outcomes will be delivered in the longer term.
-

- The Roadshow's successes fell broadly into three main areas: networking, capacity building and awareness raising.
- The friendly and positive atmosphere surrounding the events helped to reinforce the successes of the Roadshow. Factors enabling the creation of this atmosphere have been identified and lessons for future events should be learned from these.
- Comments with regard to specific organisational arrangements have been considered and recommendations with regard to improvements or changes for future events have been made.

For more information, contact:

**Chris Carr
Research Associate
Policy and Strategy Department
Argyll and Bute Council
Kilmory
Lochgilphead
PA31 8RT**

Tel: 01546 60 4260
