VCSS Camp 10

Monday 13th May 2024

Capturing Conversations

Contents

Penton Room – Space 1

Conversation 1 - Tools to enable good practice in Commissioning (VCS role as partner within Integrated Care Systems)

Called by Lucy

- Porter's 5 Forces
- Map VCSE orgs to understand motivations and threats to existence
- Hindering collaborations
- Good example of ICS collaboration - Southeast of England
- Wigan Model, Wirrel
- 80-20 rule does not happen in public and voluntary sector
- Together Sutton: 7-year contract given to 1 strategic and 6 delivery partners
- SEL Volunteering for Health joint bid (led by Kings College hospital)
- Agile project management / delivery
- - cultural shift needed on both sides
- - commissioning + model
- Looking at 'fair process' in different way - equitable processes / outcomes
- Can AI help?

Conversation 2 - Digital / data / tech skills in the workplace.
How can we motivate and encourage skill development?

Called by Abby and Makbule

More resources for VCS Organisations to invest in Digital Infrastructure.

CVS Organisation seem to have less funding for Digital & also as a result, staff skills need improving.

Catering internal training on tech to suit needs of limited capacity – how to support different tech needs? Catering to varying levels? What support do you get from managers?

- Playfulness is important to help people learn and make mistakes safely
- Make it easy
- Different formats for learning. Will some people watch a short video on how to do something? Step by step guides or prefer to learn together in a team meeting?
- Carrot (What we can do to make it fun / useful) and Stick (This needs to be done to keep people safe)
- Always go back to 'why' we need to learn tech, digital and data skills. What will learning this or changing this process help us to do.
- Isolated digital skills 'tutors' internally
- Is it led from the top?
- Getting past the "It's always been done this way".

Conversation 3 - Artificial Intelligence

Called by Marta and Sorrel

What are we all using or can we use in our work?

AI Safety and Tools.

- Free versus premium. AI free tools may give some useful information, but will the sector be priced out of the latest information?
- Use it in an area you know a lot about. This helps you to spot the garbage – e.g. easy-read
- [Ethical Uses of AI for Charities](#) (Webinar) Reason Digital
- [Artificial Intelligence resources](#) by Zoe Amar Digital (leads on Charity Digital Skills Report & Digital Code)
- [Charity Excellence Framework](#) (artificial intelligence policy resources and Ai bid writer)
- Bringing infrastructure and funders together re: AI funding applications - understanding need.
- How can we have a joined-up approach to what AI tools we use & advise on?

- Can we advise re digital / tech and be more agile in what we're providing?
- GDPR and artificial intelligence – what are the risks and responsibilities?
- Has significant potential to speed up info tasks
- Look out for biases that are inherent in the Ai systems e.g. if you ask generative Ai for an image of a disabled person it will give you a return of a "dark haired man in wheelchair looking sad"!
- Superhighways have [bookmarked links on Ai](#) – a roundup of tools, resources and blogs from the sector.

Conversation 4 – Inclusive Services

Called by Alex, Jubee and Lara

How can work, data, research, services and other things organisations do be inclusive and accessible for the diversity of the disabled people? What does this look like for different organisations?

How to ensure residents get information in spite of many not being digitally connected?

Inclusive digital journeys e.g. NHS App not holding appointment through the process.

- GDS government standard / WCAG
- info access guidance standard = government standard guide for disability and is a good starting point for anyone trying to make their website or database more accessible
- Test all databases for accessibility
- "If you want to do something differently - do it differently"
- Making things accessible for some actually makes it more accessible for all EG "easy read" over huge docs.

Penton Room - Space 2

Conversation 1 - Tools and techniques for making day to day work easier

Called by Abby, Clare, Mel and Paul

Resource: Microsoft 365 Package – how to ensure all staff know how to use it and how to capture data and effectively sort it.

Which digital / data tools do you use and how do you select the right ones for your org?

Pushback from staff on digital transformation – how do you get people onboard with digital? To trust tech? To get excited? To be open to change?

What tech would you advise small community groups to start with if they cannot access donated software?

- M365 vs Google Workspace – discussions around the M365 tools available but that everyone accesses these differently and has different set-ups. Not easy for staff to sync their desktops and One Drives themselves or to fully understand what the different set ups entail. People download docs to their desktops in order to edit, then re-upload and don't delete 'local' versions of docs which takes up space, can create confusion with versions and is not great for data security.
- People using Google Workspace (in our group – mostly independent consultants / small groups that CVSs work with) find it hard to share documents between M365 and Google platforms
- People who try to use open-source versions (e.g. of email providers) in order to be more ethical and to not use Multi-National Corporations (concerns about where data is stored) e.g. Thunderbird email - but face a potential lack of ongoing support for these options once set up.
- Both M365 and Google Workspace have a lot of great tools within them but people don't necessarily have the time and space to investigate how these might make their work easier and just jump in.

- How can we encourage staff curiosity to explore tools and implement time saving aspects into their work. E.G looking at tools in the 9 dots in office.com and trying out some of the options like Power Automate (flows)in M365.
- How can we get our systems watertight - keeping all data created and stored by all staff and vols in one, contained, protected online environment? Not using personal versions of tools e.g. Canva, survey monkey, Otter etc. Moving to using only organisation versions of tools and saving data safely and securely

Next Steps

- How to assess basic digital work skills in staff members & design training or recruit and support. Checklist for new starters – what they need to know and understand how to use safely in everyday work
- Use MFA (multifactor authentication) for everything – incl. personal data.

Resources

- SCVO website great for templates - https://scvo.scot/support/digital
- National Cyber Security Centre - https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/advice-guidance/all-topics

Conversation 2 - Impact Storytelling

Called by Hannah, Nissa and Paola

What questions should we ask of our data? How do we make our data collection not extractive? Collaborative reporting – Accessible flexible requirements.

Social impact communication tools (to engage corporate sector)

What stories does everyone want to share and tell publicly and why?

How to communicate Impact (and why it's important!)

Demonstrating Impact and value (to funders) especially when not directly providing services.

- What can we do to help smaller organisations show their impact
- Focus on storytelling for smaller groups to show impact
- Data can come from other external sources so better use of small groups' time on the stories
- Need to be communicated as a story
- Canva is a great tool but some accessibility challenges
- Smaller organisations are doing amazing work especially reaching into communities - help them to tell their stories
- Maybe rather than smaller organisations that struggle to effectively gather data – utilise their time and resources to focus on telling the brilliant stories of their work and then access external datasets that can be used to quantify scale of issue / impact
- Often more holistic support
- Understanding the audience
- What makes a good impact report?
- Able to tell honest stories in an impact report not just all the positive ones
- Impact of work if we can scale up
- Longer term impact of CVS work vs short term
- Funder reporting timeframes

Next steps

- Common statistics on what £1 invested in a housing / youth crime initiative saves in ££ spent in other publicly funded services
- Sharing good practice on accessibility
- How we can measure the impact of collaboration and the impact on communities of better collaboration
- What makes a good impact report for infrastructure - more sharing
- Share good data stories e.g. sector bodies / need / SROI

Resources

- The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone – by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett is a good read

Conversation 3 - Effective Information Sharing

Called by Andrew, Besma, Lucy, Marta and Mike

How to effectively reach small charities, community groups, CICs for projects and support?

Weekly and ad-hoc e-bulletins

Information sharing! Hubs, platforms, and systems that are actually used by VCOs and residents – to know what's on, increase engagement, signpost etc.

Alternatives to Mailchimp (Newsletters, tracking)

Copyright including image rights

- Octopus and Brevo - possibly more cost-effective mailing
- VAI get very positive feedback about Google Group
- Tap into networks (CVS forums / Events) to talk directly to their members
- PR? Is media / journalism something we should engage in more actively?
- Influencer marketing (local mapping of influential people who could promote)
- WhatsApp communities - scope to negotiate terms with Meta to make these work more effective for VCS promotion and outreach
- Understanding corporate support offers - but tensions around ethics
- Tech 4 good - explore
- Media trust

Conversation 4 - Learning about news in our sector

Called by Amie and Kate

How do we learn about news in our sector? E.G Videos, podcasts, Blogs and which are most useful and easily digested?

How can we collaborate on social media postings to maximise reach and impact?

What resources are you using or signposting groups to?

- Charity excellence - paid an effective newsletter feature
- Newsletter tips:
    - weekly, structured, monthly, fortnightly
    - edited, new content
    - visually engaging
    - higher up = more engagement FLAG
- Google News Group / Teams
- WhatsApp - newsflash info between newsletters (communities)
- Social media
    - best times to post (10:00 AM & 2:00 PM)
    - cascading information
    - LinkedIn
    - social listening using momentum
    - awareness of political issues
    - trusted network of peers, building relationships
- MailChimp, Brevo, Octopus Mail
- In-page scrolling
- Analytics
- Charity to charity comms
- Social media to support reports
- Canva - publish document / report as interactive website - magic switch

Next steps

- Superhighways to do Canva training
- Look out for Charity Digital Skills Report

Living Room – Space 3

Conversation 1 - Qualitative & Quantitative Data

Called by Andrew and Jubee

Best digital method to capture community engagement and development?

Creating a bespoke database on consultation and engagement outputs.

- Transforming qualitative into quantitative data
- Thinking about outputs and outcomes throughout the engagement process
- Using small datasets to the maximum to advocate
- Building in ways to integrate into communities and recognising your organisations limitations and leaning on other stakeholders

Conversation 2 - Funder requirements dictate data collection we are missing the gaps

Called by Amie, Lucy, Shirin and Toby

What questions to ask from data?

How to collect data from / with community groups without being extractive?

Equity-led, anti-racist approaches to supporting our communities and members (data-led)

Reporting on collaborative projects. How to keep flexible for each organisation but also with similar enough data points?

- Ask research participants how they want to receive updates about e.g. outcomes
- Analyse what you are gathering and map it!
- Dig into what's missing.
- Superhighways Power BI user network. Power BI is brilliant for visualising living data

- Do we understand why funders and commissioners are gathering certain information and what do they do with it?
- Limitations of self-reporting
- Invite negative / constructive feedback
- Effectiveness of being in the room to capture data
- Is there untapped potential within academia? PhD students
- Importance of racially sensitive data gathering and representative / peer researchers
- Can you pay to cover the time spent by people providing feedback? ££
- PCAP - policy centre for African peoples
- Clarity around how data will be used and demonstrating reporting back
- Superhighways - 10 ways to share training

Conversation 3 - Research Challenges

Called by Jeremy, Ruman and Zorka

Research with small datasets (drawing conclusions)

Harnessing tech for research projects.

Research and data challenges how to capture it and turn it into a story?

- What tech could streamline research processes? E.g. Analytics
- Analysing large datasets - Datawrapper to visualise data; SurveyMonkey Filter / Compare function; Microsoft forms / Google for free alternatives
- Sample changes over time
- Survey exhaustion & how to work around that? Minimise questions? Prize draws? Poll alternative? (WhatsApp) Creative methods (Spoken word), Qwirkos for colour coding themes; Social Research Association recommended tools
- AI for transcription (Otter) or question design
- Condensing data (especially qualitative)
- Exploratory research (don't know audience)
- Piloting survey questions with representative sample in person to identify gaps / survey questions; Reconsidering expanding target group
- Online surveys require mobile phone data / internet access
- Integrate mentimeter as part of session (positive bias)

Conversation 4 - Online / hybrid / in person

Called by Colin, Jamie and Sorrel

What's working and why?

How do you work in an office with multiple hybrid meetings? People on their individual laptops or meeting room systems?

How to bring VCSE's together meaningfully, using tech to help facilitate stronger support networks?

- Preference for online with occasional online for charities etc.
- But charities / groups doing more face to face.
- Networking better face to face - people linger / stick around Stick
- Training is online for groups; communities - in person
- Paying for time - who has capacity now? What gets prioritised? How can we pay for time?
- Liberating Structures - Participatory techniques.
- Cameras on
- Can be disconcerting delivering to an unknown audience
- Skill of the chair or the trainer
- Big lists of people online - good for numbers but lower levels of engagement
- Virtually joining but checking out for parts
- Webinars are more scripted
- Digital wellbeing?!
- Asynchronous comms
- Meetings with actions (doesn't happen with Council)!

Amwell Room – Space 4

Conversation 1 - CRM

Called by Marta, Paola, Sara and Shirin

How to link different CVS databases / CRMs?

Using CVS CRM software effectively.

Moving to a new CRM.

Systems for data capture, monitoring and reporting. (CRM's versus Excel).

3 main takeaways:

- The group thought **a forum for CVS organisations on CRM use** would be useful. The suggestion was a Whatsapp group and a twice yearly meet up.

  Superhighways follow up: Since we're well placed to take this forward as an action from the day, please let us know if you'd be interested in being in the group by completing this form & we'll get in touch to arrange a meeting to decide how best to approach this together.

- Create anonymous case study for CVSs to use as reference for setting up / using a database
- Standardising lists for data so that we can standardise data & work collaboratively
- A database is just a tool and only as good as the team behind it. Mature data culture and leadership are the key to success.
- Feeling that there is a drop in number of people with digital skills within CVS'S / some CVS's and key decisions are being made (like need to change CRM) by people who don't always have the full knowledge or history

Conversation 2 – Kumu Network Map – show and tell

Called by Sara, Tsigereda and Rosemary

Connection map, Network map for networking connection and directory.

Mapping of VCSE groups within ICS systems rather than boroughs.

We want to collect data on the community youth sector in London. What sources of data could we use? What data do CVSs have?

- [Octopus Community Network & Collaborators map](#)
  This Kumu network map developed during Covid 19 shows relationships between organisations in a borough. It was developed to create an overview of what was happening in the borough and to show who is working with who in an attempt to spot organisations outside the network who might benefit from linking up with other organisations.
- Kate's blog re using Kumu in various projects [A journey through network mapping](#)
- [London Youth Data Tool](#)– Youth Organisations in London
   A great example of an organisation sharing their data more widely to enable other organisations to benefit from it.
- GLA – [Civic Strength index](#)
  A research project across London to measure the strength of our communities.
- London Plus Mapping infrastructure including services – decline of community accountancy
- We need to map the mapping initiatives!

Conversation 3 – Data from the sector

Called by Alice, Juliana and sara

Where do you go for data? What issues do you have? How have you overcome them? Is a shared tool / dashboard for London a solution?

How can we have a data conversation with other similar VCSE organisations?

A Bank of insights for the voluntary sector (Best practise, reports.)

- London plus CVS survey
- NCVO data
- State of the Sector Reports
- How can we pool questions and provide templates to CVS is to make process easier?
- Create a question bank – with required questions so that we can analyse data across the whole of London
- Data Kind – 'You've asked the question' guide for how to analyse the response data effectively
- Organisations and companies across the sector always want to know four things:
  - Are they doing a good job?
  - Are they providing the right services?
  - What and where are the bottlenecks?
  - What are the unmet needs
- Always look at:
  - what is the purpose of the survey?
  - What will we do with the data collected?
  - How will we share back the data collected
- Borough Wide data from the charity commission onto an interactive Power BI dashboard: https://datawise.london/resources/small-charity-data-journeys-la/data-about-the-sector-workshop/

  Superhighways call out: We are working on bringing data from the Charity commission into a public interactive dashboard to make their data easy and accessible to everyone. So far our target audience has been CVSs doing State of the Sector research in their boroughs but it obviously has wider application. We would really welcome anyone interested to get involved – we'd love to have you test the tool and hear your ideas for how to improve it. Please get in touch with Alicelinell@superhighways.org.uk

Conversation 4 – Approaches to influencing lobbying e.g. funders / local and national government

Called by Lucy

- Gathering insights and using the info to effect change
- User testing of a London funders platform
- Grenfell & COVID funding model worked: Why did ways of funding go back to before
- Using AI for fundraising - Charity Excellence Framework / Plinth
- Kcsc.org.uk/funding & Grant Finder
- Funder / recipient connections - have conversations first to make sure applicants are happy about applying and know what to do
- Why are funding application processes by big funders not catching up - make the process is easier for groups
- Funding priorities - seem to go in fashions for example care leavers had a focus and then nobody wanted to fund care leavers
- Data lead approach - Kensington and Chelsea
- Community sector IVAR - 6 principles of funding: https://www.ivar.org.uk/better-reporting/
- Funding working group
- Multiyear funding - funders engaging in a longer-term process
- Difficult monitoring reports to complete:
  - NHS commissioning
  - Children in need
  - Advice funders
- Do funders rule out AI applications or see them as a way of making the process more equitable?
- CIC's are starting up with similar activities to existing groups - flooding the market
- How much funding is actually available for groups? Are funders struggling to offer the same amounts each year?
- Who has tested the plinth AI funding application process and been successful? Please could you share your experiences? Equally who has used the charity excellence framework AI funding processes and been successful? Please include any funder feedback?

Blue Hall - Space 5

Conversation 1 – Budgeting for future tech

Called by Nine and Rachel

How do we support communities to create / set the bounds for the tech future they /we want? Or use existing tech in new ways for common good.

Budgeting for future tech for your organisation.

- How can we help organisations be creative and safely make mistakes?
- Can funders and infrastructure help organisations have more agency in their digital, data and tech choices and project adaptation?
- Open source is great, but it can be complex and not as intuitive or competitive with big tech
- How can we help keep systems simple for small organisations - to be safe, to get support without too high a cost (but also help budget)
- No IT Support for Google but that is where small groups and communities are.

Conversation 2 – Safeguarding and security

Called by Mike

- We'll come back to this :)

Conversation 3 - Measuring impact

Called by Alex, Jubee and Sara

The challenges organisations experience in demonstrating their impact.

How to provide numbers retrospectively for community work once it is finished - if you didn't have the numbers while doing the project.

Measuring impact of better - connected communities with systems of support.

Conversation 4 - How can we make better use of community-led insight (tools) across London?

Called by Rachel

What are the best tools for community led insights at a very local level and easier than i.e. Excel for data?

CVS role to buddy up groups working locally that overlap and share and learn from each other as well as avoiding setting up new groups focused on similar outcomes.

How can we access and use the data that funders hold better?