

# Sustainability workshop programme

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Sustaining nonprofit organisations,  
leaders & impact

# Sustainability workshop programme

Sustaining learning from  
your responses to Covid-19

Sustaining your work and/or  
its impact, using the five  
capabilities

Improved readiness for  
transition, with clearly  
identified exit strategies



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# Revisiting the paradoxes and principles



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# The Change paradox

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**Only by changing can organisations be sustained.**

**Principle:** *Sustainability does not mean 'sustained'.*

**Practice:**

*Learn, adapt and evolve purposefully.*



# The Yes/No paradox

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The things that an organisation needs to survive can also kill it. Saying 'yes' to everything is fatal.

**Principle:** Sustainability is about more than just money. Capacity and quality matter.

## **Practice:**

Understand that every yes is a no!

Learn when, how and what to say 'no' to.

# The Octopus paradox

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Organisations need to reach out in new directions to grow. But growing in too many directions pulls them out of shape.

**Principle:** Diversified income does not necessarily mean reduced risk.

**Practice:** Focus on your organisation's core purpose and structure.

# The Efficiency paradox

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Efficiency preserves resources but can impair development.

Principle: Organisations cannot evolve, adapt or respond without spare capacity.

**Practice:**

**Balance strategy and scrutiny.  
Invest in capacity building.**

# The myth of perpetual motion

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**The Myth of Perpetual Motion: Work can continue without inputs being replenished.**

**Principle: Sustainability does not mean self-sustaining.**

**Practice:**

**Prepare for funding to end.**

**Invest in capacity building.**

Paradox	Principle	Organisational practices
The paradox of change	Sustainability $\neq$ sustained	Adapt and evolve purposefully. Test, pilot, prototype.
The yes/no paradox	Sustainability $>$ money	Understand when, how and what to say 'no' to.
The octopus paradox	Diverse income $\neq$ reduced risk	Focus on the core - purpose and structure
Efficiency paradox	Sustainability needs capacity	Balance development and delivery. Invest in capacity.
Myth of perpetual motion	Sustainability $\neq$ self-sustaining	Build capacity to make a lasting difference. Inform and influence funders and policy makers.



**The capacity  
of an organisation, service or system  
to make a lasting difference**

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Thinking about the paradoxes & principles:

- 1. Has Covid brought new challenges and opportunities, or has it just intensified them?**
- 2. How has your organisation responded to these?**

# Guest interview



Steven Marwick, Director  
Evaluation Support Scotland

*Using your learning from the last four years – and the current crisis – to identify what to sustain.*

@EvalSupScot

[www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk](http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk)

# Breakout activity – sharing learning, planning ahead

1. What *evidence* does your organisation have about its *effectiveness* and *impact*?
2. What has your organisation *learned* over the last four years and its Covid response?
3. How can this learning and evidence be *used* to help the organisation into the future?

Developing the capabilities  
9<sup>th</sup> June

[https://corralastingdifference  
session2.eventbrite.co.uk](https://corralastingdifference<br/>session2.eventbrite.co.uk)

Following the exit signs  
25<sup>th</sup> June

[https://corralastingdifference  
session3.eventbrite.co.uk](https://corralastingdifference<br/>session3.eventbrite.co.uk)



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Questions, comments, feedback?

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