

Tools and Resources used in Place-based Working: Survey and Interview Responses



Background and Acknowledgements

The Place-Based Working Project grew a mutual understanding of what good place-based work is and sought to shift practice across Scotland to that good practice. As part of this work we undertook case study analysis in collaboration with Collaborate CiC and commissioned a report on measurement of place-based work through EKOS Consulting.¹

Thanks to everyone who participated in the survey and interviews and to the Scottish Government for funding this research into the tools, resources and behaviours surrounding these and for supporting the Place-Based Research Project at Corra Foundation.

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¹ Finding from these pieces of work and a summary of the first six months of the project can be found at: <https://www.corra.scot/place-based-working-project/>,

Summary

This report considers the tools and resources available and being used for place-based working by practitioners in Scotland.

We developed a survey and shared it via a place-based mailing list from Corra Foundation's cross-sector work and social media. The survey was completed by 37 participants. We then carried out fourteen interviews, nine covering ongoing programmes in Scotland and five organisations with an overview of the field to hear more from practitioners about what influenced the designs and evaluations of their place-based projects.

Key Research Questions:

- What are the most useful tools and resources for place-based working in Scotland?
- How are these used in the design and evaluation of place-based programmes?
- How collaborative are we at sharing learning and knowledge about place work?

Key Learning

- Learning about collaborating with other organisations was the most common form of learning that is not being written up and shared. Collaboration is central to place-based work. Sharing learning about how ground-up groups can connect into existing structures, or how top-down initiatives are supporting local communities to be involved in decision-making, is needed and lacking.
- Consolidation of the information we already have about place-based working and making that available is needed. Place-based work across Scotland have their own contexts, but sharing knowledge resources and including other sectors in our learning to a greater extent that what is currently being done would increase the likelihood of place-based work increasing and being undertaken with clearer-eyed focus.
- We need integrate different levels of evidence better, so that local knowledge and expertise from within communities is incorporated and valued as an essential part of our knowledge of what works in place-based working.
- We need to be realistic about what community and voluntary groups can undertake in measuring progress and impacts, so they don't have unrealistic expectations placed on them. Larger organisations could release more information on what is working or not, as they will be better able to demonstrate population-level changes or evidence aggregate change from the different initiatives that they are funding.
- Investment of resource into local community groups and staff to transform services towards prevention and place collaborations. However, this type of work also requires a broadening of organisational roles, so staff can take the time to work flexibly with others and become more innovative with what resource they have.

- We have a lot of resources and knowledge about place-based working. The challenge is: how to implement the new ways of working, embed them in our organisations and then share this learning so good practice can grow and evolve?

Questions

This report was developed to find the tools and resources used in place-based working, particularly focused on Scotland, and share them with a wider audience. During this exploration, and the project in general, we've come across many ongoing questions:

1. How do we integrate appropriate measurement approaches?

As the 'Scottish approach' to public policy moves towards co-production and participation our approach to the evidence we use to understand complex and interlinked problems needs to evolve alongside it. The potential of place work lies in local innovation and partnerships, which means measurement won't necessarily be uniform across different places, but comparability is still needed for learning and evolving practice.

2. How do we make place-based working a part of people's day jobs instead of additional requirements for already overworked staff?

Are we creating new roles or reimagining old ones? Are we expecting too much from staff and volunteers (in particular), or is going the extra mile – if that's what the right thing to do – a necessary requirement of place-based working? We know flexible line management (collective leadership) is key for place-based work so how do we encourage that in less flexible organisations?

3. How do we structure engagement at all levels over time?

How do we strike a balance between being 'radically inclusive' but avoiding consultation fatigue? We know that people in an area don't need to be involved all the time, as interest can ebb when no important decisions are needed (Davidson Knight & Rush, 2018). We also know conversations and choices need to be meaningful to communities and for sustainable change that goes past the lifetime of a project, engagement practices need to go beyond extracting information from communities to actively collaborating with them.

4. How do we assess who is doing place-based working?

Scotland is full of good examples of place-based working and the boundaries between different approaches are very permeable (asset-based approaches; Collective Impact; regeneration; place making; and, public sector reform) but few initiatives have all the characteristics of good practice. Who decides what counts as place-based working, or should we see initiatives as evolving as ongoing learning improves practice?

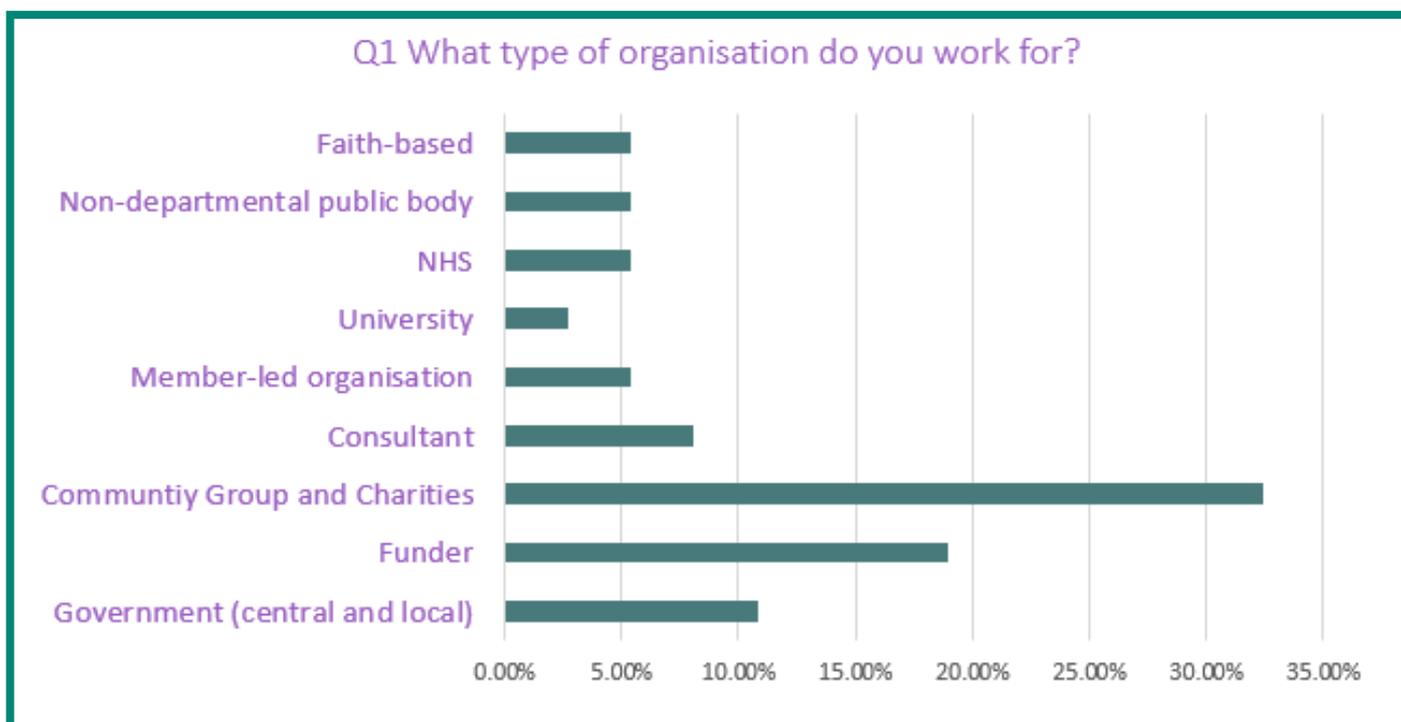
5. What is our end goal for place-based working?

Is it new management that we are aiming for – reorienting public services but keeping underlying structures and potential inequalities? Or are we interested in transformational change – using the deepening of voices on local decision-making to change our democratic systems?

What we did:

The survey opened for three weeks from 18 July until 8 August 2018. It was shared via mailing lists (Corra Foundation's cross-sector place-based group; third sector interfaces) and on the Place-based Working Project's website and social media. The survey was completed by 37 participants.

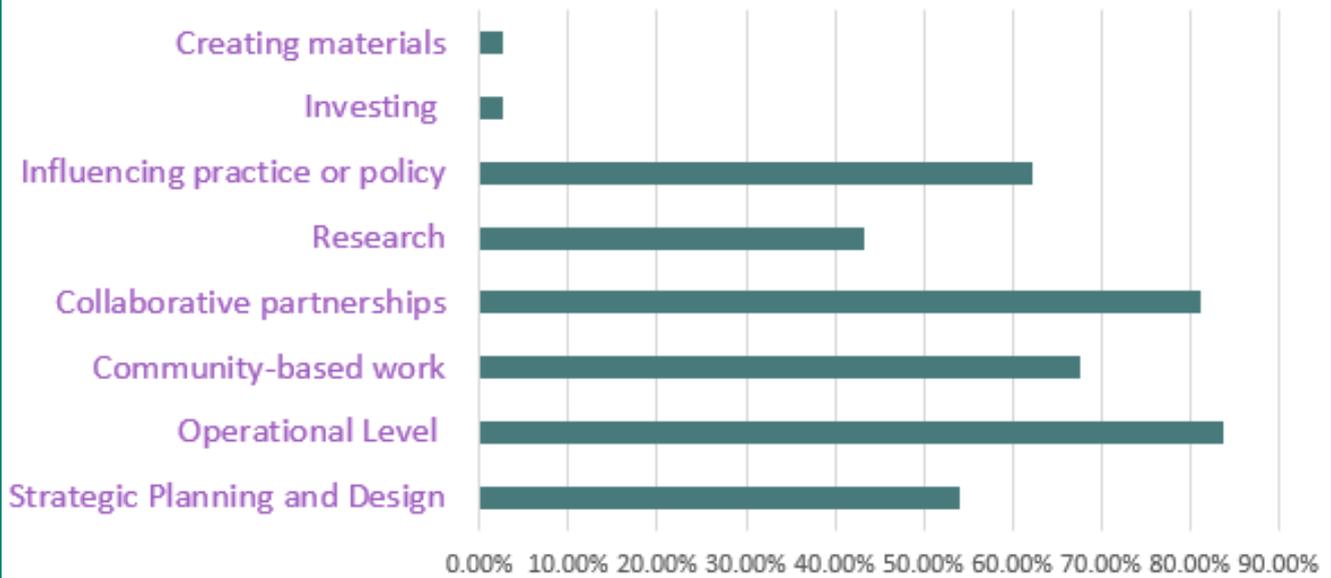
As recent research in Scotland relevant to place-based working has focused on ground-up approaches (Henderson, Revell and Escobar, 2018; Education Scotland and Development Trusts Association Scotland, 2018; Davidson Knight and Rush, 2018) and local authorities (Improvement Service, 2016), we wanted to understand how other place-based initiatives use tools and resources in their programme designs and evaluation. We interviewed nine place-based programmes in Scotland and five organisations with an overview of place work. The questions used in the survey and semi-structured interviews are in Appendix C.



For the survey, community groups and charities accounted for almost a third of responses (32%); followed by funders (19%); central and local government (11%); consultants (8%); while all other categories accounted for around 5% each.

For the interviews we spoke to three staff members from local authorities, two from independent funders, two from charities, two academics; and six staff from non-governmental national organisations.

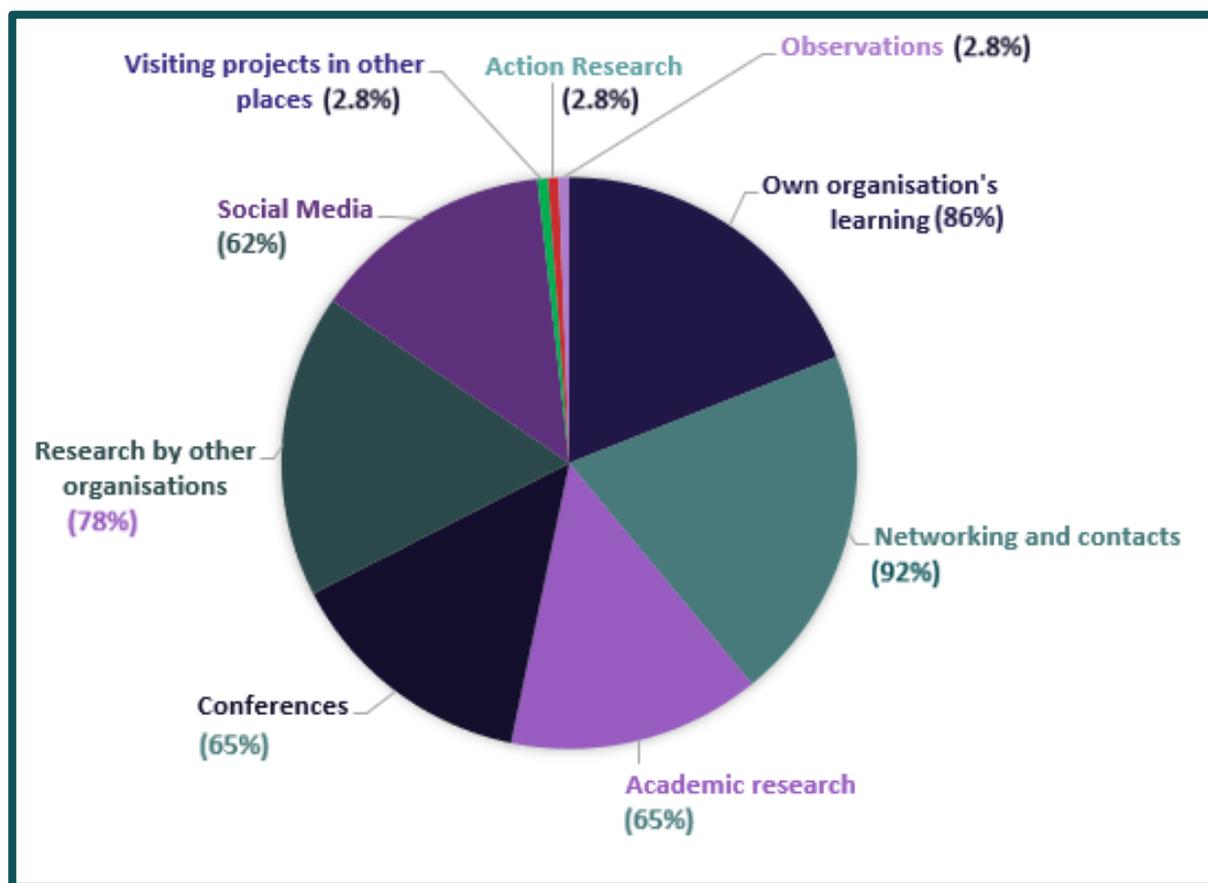
Q2 How is your organisation involved in place-based work?



Participants could mark as many categories as were relevant to their work. The most common type of place-based work from this sample was at the operational level (84%) followed closely by involvement in collaborative partnerships (81%). Community-based work (capacity building/ engagement) 68%; influencing policy 62%; strategic planning and design 54%; research 43% and 'creating materials' and 'investing in place-based work' were both mentioned under the category 'other' (less than 5% each). Most respondents marked more than one category (81%), the mean was four categories.

What We Learned:

Part 1: How do we find out about good place-based practice?



People

“This is an evolving field and human-based interaction to share knowledge is going to be far more useful than trying to codify resources and knowledge” (survey response).

Almost every survey respondent chose networking and contacts (92%) as an important source of learning about good place-based practice. An organisation's internal evidence and knowledge (86%) was another common source of learning and is likely to contain at least part of the learning that's exchanged through networks and contacts. The value of human-based learning was spoken to in both survey responses and the interviews:

“There is a good network amongst different people with different skill sets... People share and that's a strength - they are up for linking with others. Works across the whole of Scotland. People like to learn from one another” (interview response).

Our findings were corroborated during the interviews, with most of the programmes having spoken to and learned from each other, or from similar initiatives based elsewhere, during the development of their approach.

However, other survey respondents identified issues with this approach as they felt it excludes other sectors in knowledge that could be collective:

“In the third sector the gap is finding organisations willing to share good practice, collective resources and knowledge” (survey response).

Publicly Available Sources

A higher number of respondents reported using research and reports by non-academic sources (78%) compared to academic sources (65%). Research from Carnegie Trust shows while academic sources are viewed as the most trustworthy evidence, barriers still exist to accessing these sources, which reduces the frequency with which they are used (Carnegie UK Trust, 2013). Encouraging critical feedback and reviews of non-academic sources could be a useful way to increase the robustness of these sources.

The use of social media (62%) was at a similar percentage to conferences (65%), making it perhaps a more inclusive method of communicating knowledge of good place-based practice, although there are less rigorous controls over content. Carnegie UK Trust’s research into evidence exchange shows that while the internet dominates searches for evidence social media is catching up.

During the interviews we heard social media is an important tool that communities are utilising as a form of documenting their work and engaging with others:

“Some communities held events to say this is what we said we would do and this is what we have done. Now they’re using social media much more - communicating what you’ve done, how and what else you need” (interview response).

Compared to the costs of designing and attending a conference, social media could be seen as a very useful method of communicating good practice in the future and widening the informal networks of knowledge.

Additional sources of information reported under ‘other’ (8%) included observations, visiting and communicating with similar projects in other places and action research – it would be interesting to see how much the percentage of each of these might have risen if they had been represented as options.

Ongoing learning

Although it wasn’t directly commented on in the survey (and would have fitted within own organisation’s learning) the interview responses showed that people find out about good practice through the ongoing learning mechanisms within their place programmes. Any system of measurement used has to account for complexity, so most programmes rely on creating a learning and adaptive environment, underpinned by tools such as logic models and theories of change.

“The premise is there are intractable problems faced by certain communities and the silos trying to deal with them has disabled communities to help themselves... we’re trying to turn this model on its head and build from the bottom... The point of the

programme is local people choosing the direction of the projects and model”
(interview response).

Changing power, wealth and other systematic inequalities is at the root of many place-based approaches. Programmes often use a theory of change to form a hypothesis of what they believe will work and can then test their assumptions against the model. A theory of change is a visualisation of the logic behind a programme or intervention, which links the activities that will be taken to the desired outcomes, explaining how and why the desired change is expected to come about. These are frequently used in complex environments as the links can be tested, and programme adapted based on the learning coming back (Valters, 2014). This way of learning also encourages communities to feed in what is working, or not, from their perspective.

However, a:

“sanction and sanctuary for measurement is missing” (interview response).

Even for well-resourced programmes demonstrating population level change in outcomes is complex and strategies are generally not published or widely shared. Leaders *sanctioning* certain measurement behaviours, such as developing a theory of change, is essential to give people the *sanctuary* of taking the time needed to understand and articulate the logic of their work.

“The biggest opportunity is giving staff the time to do it. Tools and resources- we’ve got some really strong ones, but actually staff having the time to do it... It’s a time-consuming job and not factored into budgets” (interview response).

Although much place-based learning may be place specific, consistent learning can be identified from different places within a programme, and even across different programmes – building our collective knowledge about place work. For example, many of the interview participants noted deficit and needs-based approaches clash with how communities want to frame their future. Communities see statistics like the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) as damaging for the perception of their place, both internally and externally (Cooper, 2016). While other organisations noted the usefulness in using the SIMD for diagnosing local problems and creating a quantitative baseline (although as a marker of relative deprivation the SIMD does not necessarily map changes in the chosen area) it is beneficial to know that taking an asset-based approach with communities can contribute to a more positive discussion of how a place can be improved, rather than just looking at what is wrong.

Integrating different forms of measurement

“We bring a different position regarding types of evidence. We don’t support a hierarchy of evidence, but instead seek to integrate different forms into public services reform” (interview response).

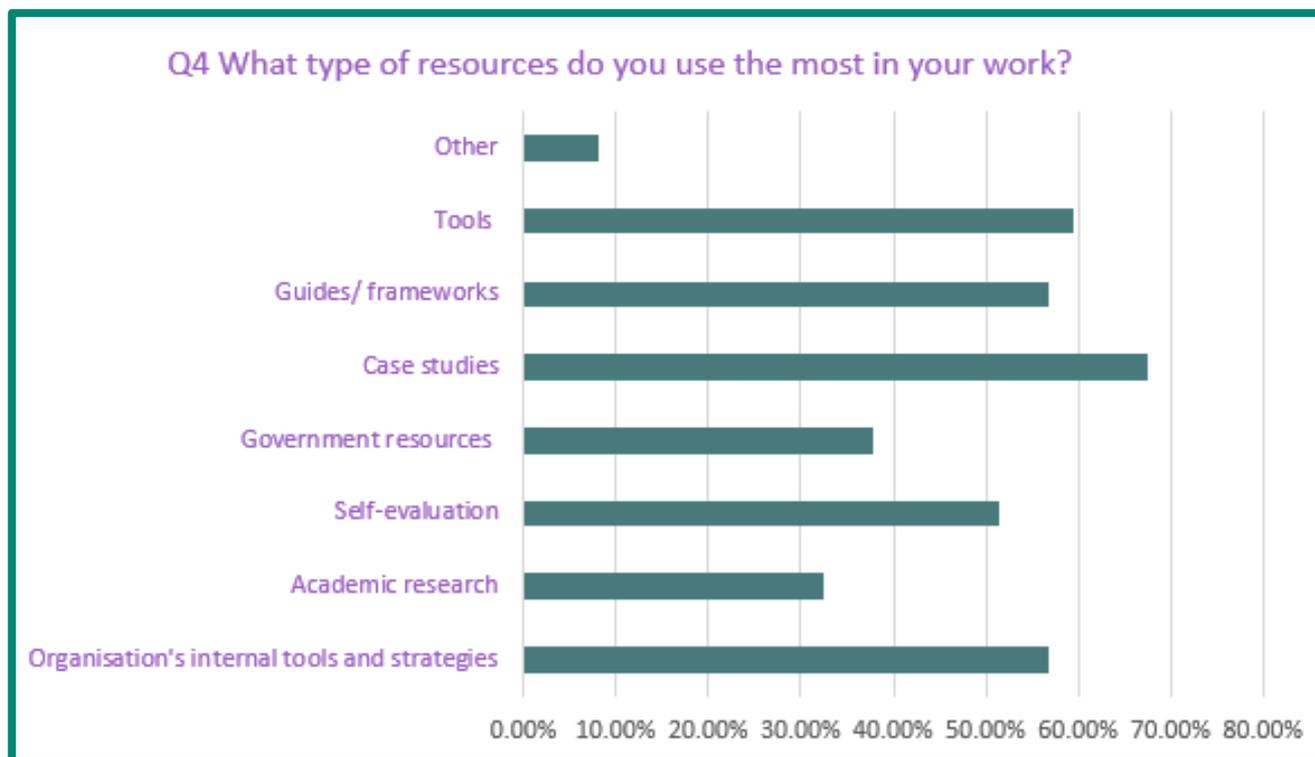
Developing an evidence base of the benefits of taking a place-based approach is hard, even for well-resourced groups. It can seem that questions about *how to measure* and finding *proof of the value* (often to convince those with resources) dominate the discussions, maybe to the exclusion of conversations about how different groups can collaborate and feed different levels of evidence into a bigger picture of what works and doesn’t. In particular, qualitative demonstrations of the benefits and potentials of community models don’t carry the same weight as statistical and economic validation despite acknowledgement that we are often measuring the wrong things.

“You need more than the datasets. You can develop knowledge of the local areas, but it’s not enough on its own... how does that help you? Conversations often don’t get past the data and sometimes it’s just report filler, we’re not really using it” (interview respondent).

Scotland’s movement towards participation, co-production and partnership in policy poses a challenge to traditional concepts of quality and comparability of evidence (Carnegie UK Trust, a 2017). Smaller partnerships face barriers to evidencing population changes in outcomes in their location due to scale, despite many having measurement systems in place by necessity of proving their impact to funders. An important question to think about is what are the expectations being placed on community groups, particularly the voluntary sector, about measuring impact, and what is their role in contributing to the evidence base for place-based working? Larger organisations tended to use measurement to understand how they were spending money and the impact they were having *internally* but could do more to share and promote the benefits of this work on local places and communities to a wider audience to demonstrate why others should consider working in a place-based way.

Place-based working is supported by expert opinion that we need to shift towards prevention, coproduction, participation and partnership (Christie Commission, 2011), and it can be argued ‘place’ represents a fifth P (Bynner, 2016). There is qualitative evidence of huge potential in community models and place-based partnerships (Henderson, Revell and Escobar, 2018; Davidson Knight and Rush, 2018), and in the USA Collective Impact collaborations (an approach to collaborating for social change that shares many features with place work) are demonstrating population-level impact (Lynn et al., 2018). Place-based working is not a standardised approach that can be ‘proven’ to do x, y and z in every place, but a collaborative and context-specific problem-solving process. What we need to develop is an understanding of how different types of place-based evidence can build a multilevel framework to understand what is working for Scottish communities, rather than continue to use a hierarchy of evidence in policy decision-making (Roundtable report; Carnegie UK Trust, b 2017).

Part 2: What types of resources do we use the most?



Case studies and Local Knowledge

Case studies were the most widely used resource (67%). They are a useful way to understand particular contexts (for example, common opportunities and barriers) and to bring projects to life. The uniqueness and human quality they add to evidence may be what makes case studies so popular in place-based working:

“Much of it (knowledge about place work) still feels a bit ‘parachuted in’ and simplistic – it does not adequately account for the experiences of people who live in the places in question. I would be keen on approaches that prioritise the qualitative, lived experiences of place, capturing community relationships and networks, integrating the external environmental features with the social aspects” (survey response).

Participants being interviewed consistently mentioned that an important cultural change to their organisations since beginning place-based work is realising despite their ‘expertise’ the approach is about *listening to other people* and realising you don’t have the solution. Training can embed the new way of working within staff while outsourcing for facilitation and engagement may limit the change to the dynamics of relationships.

“The heart of this work is humility and courage- saying “I don’t know” and feeding findings and learning in” (interview response).

Other Resources

Many practitioners reflected that you *can only bring the principles* of an approach into a place and everything else is context specific and needs to reflect the needs and wants of people living there. Many approaches were *adapted to the area's need by local expertise* and placed a strong importance on staying rooted to core principles but allowing learning to adapt processes.

“We use an inhouse model as our general approach is all about locality-specific partnerships and context, but we do bring a shared set of principles” (interview response).

Tools (which we defined as following specific methodologies) 59%; frameworks and guides (57%) and internal learning and strategies (57%) all came in at around the same mark, which may reflect overlap between these types of resources.

Just over half of respondents used self-evaluation resources (51%), despite it being an important skill to cultivate when working in complex environments.

Governmental resources (37%) and academic research (32%) were less widely used – perhaps their value in terms of learning is undermined by being less accessible sources of information (consistent with Carnegie UK Trust findings).

The use of networks, training and other types of reports were mentioned under ‘other’ (8%). The average survey respondent used half of these resources in their work.

We Have the Tools- Place and Democracy

Consistent learning from the interview participants was that tools can give structure to a conversation, but the ability to be radically inclusive is more important. The danger of place-based work is that it will empower only the already strong community members or groups, and further exclude seldom heard voices and systematically disadvantaged places (Royal Society of Edinburgh Advice Paper, 2014). Many participants said that tools and approaches weren't pivotal in designing their programmes, but a “do with, not to” ethos was.

“Scotland has the legislative framework to support this, tonnes of tools and techniques and lots of ways of going into communities and using these. What we struggle with is the link between this work and the type of democracy we have and how to make the process more inclusive. The type of community engagement we see is a consultation type of thing- to help decision-makers make decisions without having to engage” (interview response).

Place-based working offers preventative solutions to drivers of future poverty, which can be place-specific such as education achievement gaps, while also offering a deepening of the democratic process. Crucially, it offers an alternative to the current disillusionment towards politics and the perception that people don't have a voice in politics, while governments are not acting in their interest (Democracy Perception Index, 2018). There are conversations in local and central government about the need to invest in community models and coordinate public services in a place, however, to make a real difference to our current systems

substantial resource has to be channelled towards local partnerships so they can set up the infrastructure needed to support new and innovative ways of working.

“We can see how under resourced it is, nowhere near the agreement with public sector we need and who is accountable for poverty? Scottish Government and the public sector don’t see the interface between opportunities and local places as a strategic imperative yet so how do we resource it?” (interview response).

A comparison between firefighting and place-based working was made by numerous participants:

“Place work is about prevention, not reaction... The fire service spent most of the time fighting fires, then got a huge investment for staff to educate communities about risks and preventative measures and now they spend majority of their time on that. Then the savings are immense because they prevented all those outcomes happening. But they got a lot of investment- to get extra staff so they could do both (teaching and continuing to fight fires) - expecting people to do both jobs at the same time is just not feasible” (interview response).

Leveraging resources for place work was a concern that came through the interviews, and measurement was frequently cited as the problem behind this. However, is this just a measurement issue that will be rectified if we demonstrate population-level changes (which can take generations) and the financial benefits of the approach? Place-based working challenges the processes of decision-making in modern democracies – processes that currently benefit the top tiers of society while exacerbating inequalities, often by ignoring local voices, especially those in more disadvantaged areas. An ongoing example of this is the protesting by local communities in the North of England following the UK Government’s controversial decisions to continue fracking (Vaughan, 2018). Place-based working also counters the influence of international ‘placeless’ corporations who make decisions that drastically affect whole communities, with no accountability to those people (p.90, Hambleton, 2015).

To follow the expertise of the Christie Commission (2011) and NHS Health Scotland and move towards prevention and participation there needs to be investment not just into local community organisations but into processes such as participatory budgeting and the mapping of local systems to better understand local places – rather than Scotland’s wealth going into less transparent processes (Briggs, 2018) or governments using tax-payers’ money to subsidise climate destruction (Watts, 2018). Place-based working is not a panacea, it takes time, vision and often involves having difficult conversations about power, but within the context of the ‘Scottish Approach’ to policy it can act to deepen democracy and increase the weight of local voices on decisions that affect them.

Part 3: Do we share and collaborate around this learning?

Producing and Sharing Resources

Two thirds of respondents (65%) don't produce resources- although many are likely to have internal learning and strategies that influence the design of their programmes.

“We do make the learning very external by word of mouth, relationships, events, blogs. It sits on my shoulders – I may not be writing things down but I'm very open to sharing” (interview response).

97% said they promote and share resources about place-based work produced by other organisations, demonstrating an understanding and willingness to share more widely. When asked what gaps exist in our collective knowledge and resources, a space to consolidate the information already out there was the most frequently mentioned gap.

“It's almost like there is so much knowledge out there and the overcrowding makes it feel like there are gaps. What is missing is a place or resource that collates and organises all this information in a way that is helpful” (survey response).

What is not being shared?

65% of respondents reported having internal resources that would be beneficial to share, compared to 35% who stated they did not.

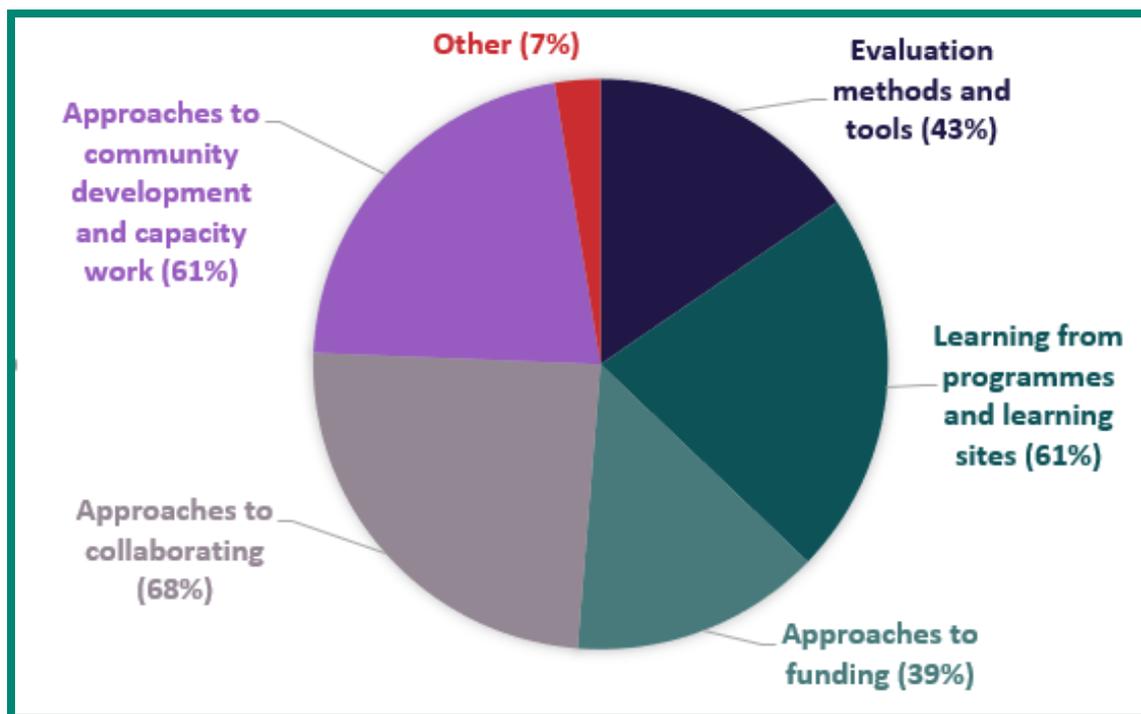
If the resources are believed to be helpful then *why don't* people share more?

What internal resources could you share?

When asked what internal resources they could share, survey respondents reported approaches to collaborating was the most common (68%), followed by approaches to community development (61%), ongoing case study knowledge from learning sites (61%), evaluation tools (43%) and approaches to funding (39%). 7% specified 'other' which included knowledge about networks and local knowledge.

Some organisations stated their internal knowledge from learning sites, approaches to place-based work, and evaluation techniques are being developed and written up, due to be released within the next two years. Internal learning around collaborations was not mentioned as due to be released, despite being the most commonly cited form of internal resource.

“While we could provide case study information on projects we have funded that demonstrate place-based work, it would not explicitly state this. I expect we will be better placed to provide something when our evaluation has progressed further” (survey response).



Whether due to lack of capacity in organisations to document learning or the relative ‘newness’ of current iterations of place-based working, most learning remains within organisations or informally shared via personal networks. This forms a silo of knowledge, inaccessible to those outside of the network groups or particular sectors. While there is evidence to suggest there is inherent value in learning about place work from people rather than reading about it, community and voluntary groups in particular struggle to get access to this collective knowledge and there are benefits to greater collaborations;

“Some sharing on what hasn’t worked as well as the successes would be good. I think there is still a level of siloed approach, probably due to the competitive nature of funding and the overlap of some of our work in a small country. Having said this, we could probably all make a greater impact if we were willing to share ideas and resources – this is not to say that we become an amalgamated mass, but that we may learn where to best collaborate, and where it is most productive for us to focus our work” (survey respondent).

Individuals and organisations need to be willing to share emerging learning. While place-based approaches are not necessarily replicable in other contexts due to unique makeups of partnerships, they can learn from one another and need space for debate and conversation, rather than continuing to work through the inherent complexity in isolation.

There is a larger question here about where this knowledge currently sits – within an organisation or individuals? What happens when a key individual leaves their organisation, and how much of their expertise will be captured for the next person? This reliance on key people sharing information across the sector is reminiscent of the reliance place work often puts on key individuals and relationships to develop collaborative relationships with others and drive activity in their locality (Davidson Knight & Rush, 2018).

Collaborating

The most common form of unpublished internal learning was about working in collaboration, a crucial component in place work, and more learning about how ground-up groups can connect into existing structures, or how top-down initiatives are supporting local communities be at the heart of decisions that affect their places would be welcome.

Pressure is being put on partnerships between third sector, community sector and the public sector in particular as austerity measures have had a severe impact on local council spending, which has meant the other sectors are needed to “plug the gap” of services for local places.

“We’re getting criticism from other services and also being called a service... we’re there because we’re needed to support more people to be within the system” (interview response).

While this crisis is an opportunity to reduce silo working between sectors, and align activity in places for the benefit of local people, it is also fragile. Smaller charities and community-based organisations are often under-resourced to take on the risk and liability that goes with service provision, and in historically ignored places local people often don’t have any desire to get involved in governance of their places if their voices have previously been ignored by those who make the decisions.

“We’re starting to change the dynamics - we put all staff through mediation training as these skills are needed to bring people forward. People can be hurt or defensive - we’re very conscious of that” (interview response).

An awareness of these power dynamics and radical inclusiveness toward seldom heard communities is needed in place partnerships to sustain collaborations and embed a different way of working.

An important piece of learning from the interviews was the importance of encouraging decision-making abilities in all staff to allow a flexibility in approach that is invaluable when collaborating with other organisations and communities. The ability to be flexible is affected by the source of financing (for example regulations around public money) but it also comes down to encouraging leadership at all levels and mandating that staff wrap around people and places, and learn to innovate within their constraints, rather than passing responsibility to others.

“...difference in language came up so we just changed to match their language... it felt like we had more freedom and not everything had to be legislated and go up and down the ladder of management. It’s more easy going... you can’t be hung up on things like language as the gains of taking a middle ground and collaborating are priceless” (interview response).

Conclusions

We examined how resources and learning about place-based working has shaped some of Scotland's initiatives. From both the survey and interviews, the overwhelming answer is that place-based working goes beyond *an* approach that uses proven methodologies to get proven results. It is a creative and holistic process, that when used well, critiques the current processes from the perspective of our least heard voices, and enables new collaborative ways of working to evolve.

There is growing knowledge about how to measure the benefits of good place-based work. There is evidence that: some Collective Impact initiatives in the USA are demonstrating population-level impact (Lynn et al., 2018); asset-based approaches benefit individuals in many ways (ODS Consulting et al., 2014); and, both academic and third sector research demonstrates that there is a huge potential in community models and place-based partnerships (Henderson, Revell and Escobar, 2018; Davidson Knight and Rush, 2018). While place-based working may currently be built on expert approaches (for example Christie Commission 2011, and NHS Health Scotland), the potential of local innovations to further support place-based working requires new understanding of how to incorporate a range of measurement practices (Carnegie UK Trust, 2017).

While community empowerment is key to evolving democracy it risks increasing the inequalities between places who are 'ready' and those who facing challenges, often exacerbated by the places they live in. One critique against current place-based practice in Scotland is that, without targeted funding into areas that are not ready, to build capacity and enable more seldom heard groups to participate in shaping their places, those that already have capacity will simply acquire more.

Current world events demonstrate our current systems are not protecting our communities from the environmental and social damage that economic bottom-lines and place-less corporations enable. Understanding and articulating the need to change 'business as usual' models requires listening to a diverse set of voices and experiences to shape a new and preferable, inclusive future together.

Appendix A- Collection of frameworks, tools and resources for place work. Links are provided – click the title of each tool.

[Building Stronger Communities;](#)

This resource from Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) is aimed at supporting community groups to self-reflect on their capacity and assess where it could be improved, and to provide a tool for support agencies to assess their ability to build the capacity of communities and community organisations. It is ultimately aimed at helping community groups and support agencies to jointly develop a strategic approach to community capacity building.

[Community-led Action Planning Toolkit](#)

Argyll and Bute Council developed a website dedicated to helping local communities develop their own action plans, and it is relevant to community groups from any locality. It provides guidance, templates, and even advice and ideas for how to keep track of developments.

[Community Toolbox](#)

Developed by the University of Kansas, this website has resources for developing community skills and taking action. It covers everything from guides, principles, links to databases of promising practices (particularly community health and development) and toolkits for most topics.

[EKOS Collection of Secondary Data Sources](#)

A spreadsheet of potential sources of secondary data for measuring place-based working in Scotland with details such as the remit, usefulness and limitations. There is also a report containing a summary of the current state of measurement in place-based work, including: why measurement is hard; the importance of doing it; examples of effective measurement of place-based working initiatives from America and Scotland; and, an outline of what elements an evaluation model needs to contain to effectively measure place-based working initiatives.

[Inclusive Growth Diagnostic Tool](#)

Developed by Scotland's Centre for Regional Inclusive Growth, this excel based tool uses local authority data to identify key trends in data in the area. It looks at 5Ps (Productivity, Participation, Population, People and Place) which are each represented by 2 core indicators – although different indicators can be substituted in thus making the tool adaptable to local priorities.

Participatory Budgeting

A process of democratic decision-making where people have a direct say in how local money is spent. Council leaders have committed to putting 1% of local government budgets into participatory budgeting in Scotland. PB Scotland (in link) is a hub for sharing and learning in Scotland, including updates on events, policy and resources.

Place-based Summary Checklist;

The Improvement Service's checklist covers key questions and issues to consider if planning a place-based approach. Some of the questions will be more relevant to people designing a programme rather than community groups, but others can support any group to think strategically.

Place Principle

The principle was agreed in February 2018 by Scottish Government and COSLA. In much the same way as the Town Centre First Principle, the Place Principle provides a call for focused activity and thinking from those engaged in tackling issues in places. A wide range of Scottish Government policy makers alongside local authorities and other public and third sector organisations have developed a **Place Principle**. Coordinated and collaborative place-based ways of working are needed at a local level and more widely across public services to tackle inequality. Solutions need to deliver across a wide range of economic, physical and social outcomes and involve utilising available resources from across different budgets.

Place Standard

Co-designed by Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland and Architecture and Design Scotland, this tool is useful in generating and capturing localised knowledge about a place. Using fourteen components that cover the physical landscape to communities' feelings about belonging to a place, the place standard is a useful framework to structure conversations about a place and develop a community vision of how a place should develop. It can also be used as a valuable qualitative baseline, and is available as a phone app or in paper form.

Making Places Initiative (formerly known as charrettes)

A process where different groups of communities and professionals come together to discuss a place and design a vision for what it could be. The evolved version encourages community-led design. It usually takes place over multiple days for accessibility and there needs to be a long run-up designing the day, and a long follow-through period so the momentum is not lost. Funding is required for this process, and has a strong emphasis on tackling inequality.

National Standards for Community Engagement and VOiCE

The National Standards are key principles for supporting and informing the process of community engagement while VOiCE (visioning outcomes in community engagement) is a planning and recording software that assists individuals, organisations and partnerships to design and deliver effective community engagement. Both have been designed by SCDC with support from Scottish Government.

Open Space Technology

A non-standardised approach to meetings, events and conferences which uses the energy of those in the room to discuss and make sense of complexity together. It follows a simple structure that encourages creativity and collaborative innovation about topics that are chosen by those involved during the process.

Scotland's Improvement Districts (SIDs)

The new generation of Business Improvement Districts, SIDs are a mechanism by which local businesses can work together (and with other sectors and local communities) to improve and strengthen local economies. By pooling and sharing resources and working in collaboration with other sectors SIDs are a vehicle to improve outcomes in an area. There is a formal statutory process requiring balloting of businesses within the defined area, following consultation on a BID proposal and business plan.

Sociocracy ('Collaborative Governance')

A system of governance that seeks to make collaboration, self-organisation and distributed authority practical and effective. It is a whole systems approach to designing and leading organisations, and an effective method of organising collaborative partnerships and decision-making processes. It comes from applied sociology as a response to majority vote, and instead looks for consent (no objections) from an entire group to embed deeper processes of democracy. Particularly useful for navigating power dynamics with collaborations and ensuring everyone's voice is heard in decision-making.

Talking About Our Place toolkit

A useful resource for communities as the toolkit provides guidance, resources and ideas to think and act on local places from Scottish Natural Heritage. While it has a particular emphasis on the environment, the toolkit covers everything from assessing a place, developing delivery groups to suggestions of where to bid for funding for projects.

Thriving Places Index

Happy City's place-based index that seeks to "measure what matters". It builds on Kate Raworth's "doughnut" by combining measures of equality and sustainability with local conditions and uses publicly available data for the indicators - which are based on the drivers of wellbeing.

[Town Centre First Principle](#)

A call to central government, local authorities, communities and our institutions to put the health of town centres at the heart of decision-making processes by aligning policies, public sector investment decisions, and targeting available resources to prioritise town centre sites and encourage vibrancy and diversity.

[Town Centre Toolkit](#)

A collection of ideas and examples of how people and organisations can look holistically at their town centres based on three themes- attractive, active and accessible. It also contains guiding principles, signposting to other resources and a 'making it happen' section which includes information about funding.

[Understanding Scottish Places toolkit and USP Your Town Audit](#)

Developed by Scotland's Towns Partnership, Carnegie UK Trust, the University of Stirling and the Centre for Local Economic Strategies, this is an online platform for towns' practitioners and communities to view and audit the social and economic profile of their town, and compare and contrast a town to others in Scotland (currently 479 towns). The USP Audit feature guides you through the process of gathering a range of 50 relevant indicators which can then be analysed and compared year on year.

[World Towns' Framework](#)

Created through engagement with communities and public, private and third sector organisations across the world and a conference convened in Scotland in 2016 this framework is a call to action which promotes four key principles; the unique identities of place; local economies; governance and citizenship; and the environment.

[Working in Place: framework summary;](#)

Developed by the Institute of Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) to support funders in the planning and implementation of place-based approaches, it is a useful resource to quickly identify the types of questions and issues that funders need to be aware of.

Appendix B: References

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Appendix C: Survey and Interview Templates

Survey Questions

1. What type of organisation do you work for?

Government (either national or local)

Funder

Community group/ charity

Consultant

Other (please state)

2. How is your organisation currently involved in place-based working?

Strategic Planning and Design

Operational Level (doing work in a place, eg engagement activities, community work)

Capacity building and consultancy with communities

Involved in collaborative partnerships

Research

Influencing practice or policy

Other (please specify)

3. How do you currently find out about good place-based working practice?

Own organisation's evidence and learning

Networking and contacts

Academic research (UK and international)

Conferences

Research/ reports by other organisations

Social Media

Other (please specify)

4. What type of resources and learning do you use most in your work?

Own organisation's internal tools and strategies

Academic research

Self-evaluation

Government

Case-studies

Guides/ frameworks

Tools (such as specific evaluation methodologies)

Other (please specify)

5. Does your organisation produce resources to promote good place-based practice?

Yes

No

6. If yes, would you be able to provide details of the resources below.

7. Does your organisation promote or share good place-based practice resources produced by others?

Yes

No

8. Do you have internal resources that would be beneficial to share in order to grow good practice in the field?

Yes

No

9. What internal resources could you share with this project?

Methods/ tools used for evaluation

Learning from past or ongoing learning sites/ programmes

Approaches to funding

Approaches to collaborating

Approaches to community development work (e.g. capacity building)

Other (please specify)

10. What gaps do you think there are in our collective resources and knowledge about place-based working?

Semi-structured Questionnaire Template

Specific Programme:

1. What was the overall objective behind the programme?
2. How did you identify the areas and/or set the criteria for your programme?
3. What resources and tools did you use? Who did you speak to?
4. Did you have a set of pre-determined outcomes identified as part of the design for use in evaluation?
5. Did you intend to work in collaboration with others in the area? Eg other funders, existing community groups.
6. Who did you work with?
7. How did that collaboration work in practice? (*collective funding/ partnership structure/ shared tools and templates/ separate measures and reporting times*)
8. How (if at all) has your understanding of the work changed? (intended difference/ unexpected results)
9. What tools/ resources/ approaches do you use to evaluate initiatives and gather learning?
10. How involved are the community in this learning? What do you use this information for?
(dissemination strategy)
11. Do you get help from others? Who?
12. Is there anything else that might be helpful? (*internal learning or approaches that could be shared?*)

Overview of Field

13. What support does your organisation give to groups doing/ interested in adopting a place-based approach?
14. What tools, resources and frameworks does your organisation recommend for designing place-based approaches (approaches to evaluations, engagement, collaborations)?
15. Do you have guides for what outcomes to measure (pre-determined), or guides for how to make this decision? (shared measurement, community goals)
16. How involved are the community in the learning? Can communities be more involved in the evaluation, and drive decisions about what is measured?
17. What tools/ resources/ approaches do you recommend for evaluating initiatives? Do you have a framework you could share with us?
18. Is there anything else that might be helpful?



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