



The Scottish  
Government

The Evidence Base for Third  
Sector Policy in Scotland:  
A Review of Selected Recent  
Literature

Public Services and Government



social  
research

**THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR THIRD SECTOR POLICY  
IN SCOTLAND: A REVIEW OF SELECTED RECENT  
LITERATURE**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Aims and objectives**

This review provides an overview and evaluation of the literature and research evidence dealing with the third sector in Scotland. It draws on more than one hundred pieces of evidence. It focuses on material relating to the contribution of the third sector's work to the Scottish Government's five Strategic Objectives: Wealthier and Fairer, Smarter, Healthier, Safer and Stronger, and Greener.

The overall aim of the study was 'to review the research evidence and assess the current contribution of the third sector to the Scottish Government's purpose and priorities'.

The review's objectives were to:

- Review the recent research evidence on the third sector in Scotland and identify how it contributes to the Scottish Government's five Strategic Objectives
- Identify areas where evidence suggests that the third sector is having an impact, but where it is not aligned to government objectives
- Identify key gaps in the research evidence
- Make recommendations as to how the gaps in the research evidence might be addressed

### **Overview and contribution**

The literature indicates that there can be little doubt that the third sector makes a significant contribution to economic and social life in Scotland. The work of third sector organisations also has an important role in contributing to the Scottish Government's five Strategic Objectives. It is important to note, however, that the evidence relating to the impact of the third sector often cuts across a number of these objectives. Indeed, the cross-cutting nature of its work can be taken as a great strength of the third sector in Scotland.

The evidence we have identified points to a diversity of impact of the third sector. Our study outlines examples of the sector's economic contribution, its role in service provision, and the work of third sector organisations in identifying and responding to emerging social problems.

The existing research is varied. We identified a great deal of material emanating from the public sector, and the third sector itself, that provided evidence to support the third sector's impact. However, we identified little scholarly literature, and noticed a tendency to marginalise Scotland in favour of a broader discussion of the UK in the work that we did encounter. Running throughout the different themes of third sector work, we identified particularly strong themes of literature relating to the rural third sector, and to social enterprise, with a range of different sources of material highlighting the contribution of the third sector through these areas. A

number of gaps in the evidence base were identified. In most cases, these gaps are due to a lack of rigorous research evidence. There is often no body of research available and little cross referencing between studies on similar themes,

Overarching gaps:

- Lack of scholarly literature
- Most studies do not consider conceptual issues
- There was a UK (or English) focus in much of the relevant research evidence
- Variable research quality
- Relatively low number of large-scale datasets
- We identified little literature on international impact of Scottish third sector activity
- Lack of a developed conceptual basis

**Wealthier and Fairer:** *Enable businesses and people to increase their wealth and more people to share fairly in that wealth*

Of all the Strategic Objectives, Wealthier and Fairer was subject to the most attention in the literature. A significant amount of material was relevant to this objective, including several large-scale datasets, such as the Voluntary Sector Statistics collected by the SCVO, and the Scottish Household Survey. However, variations in definition and scope lead to distinctions in research findings. We identified particularly strong themes of literature relating to the third sector workforce, and its economic contribution, although there are few qualitative studies of employees' experience. The contribution of credit unions to financial sustainability and tackling financial exclusion was also evident. There is literature distinguishing between urban and rural Scotland, although rural Scotland is often marginalised, and an emerging theme of work relating to the impact of the third sector and the recession; although this was in need of further development. There is also a growing body of work on enterprise although this could be further developed.

**Smarter:** *Expand opportunities for Scots to succeed from nurture through to life long learning ensuring higher and more widely shared achievements*

A wide range of material was thematically relevant to this Strategic Objective, in part due to the cross-cutting nature of much of the work available. However, despite the wide range of literature available the body of research is not extensive, covering a wide range of issues without always providing the depth of analysis needed to illustrate the sector's impact. There is little scholarly literature and a UK focus to much of the existing material.

We identified strong themes of literature relating to the third sector's role in education provision, and its contribution to early years childcare, lifelong learning, facilitating access to learning, and promoting access to employment. However, the literature on adult numeracy is underdeveloped. Overall, there is a need for more methodologically sound research in this field.

**Healthier:** *Help people to sustain and improve their health, especially in disadvantaged communities, ensuring better, local and faster access to health care*

This Strategic Objective has been subject to a great deal of policy attention, and this is reflected in the wide range of material available. The strongest themes of material we identified related to the significant role played by third sector organisations in health policy, healthcare provision, health promotion (although the evidence here would benefit from further development), children and parental wellbeing, substance misuse, and sport, health and wellbeing. There is little work on multi-agency partnerships, particularly Community Health Partnerships. A greater discrete focus on the third sector is needed as third sector organisations were often not the direct focus of the studies we identified

### **Safer and Stronger**

*Help local communities to flourish, becoming stronger, safer places to live, offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life*

In all, the evidence base relating to this Strategic Objective is comparatively strong. We identified, however a wide variation in research quality, and a lack of scholarly literature. There was a wide range of material available but it should be noted that the scope of the objective contributed to the broad range of literature that related to this objective.

We identified clear themes of evidence relating to housing and homelessness, equalities groups, the third sector and the arts, and advocacy work. Research in this area tends to focus on specific themes, such as the arts, rather than collecting data on a range of relevant areas, suggesting that cross-cutting work is needed.

### **Greener**

*Improve Scotland's natural and built environment and the sustainable use and enjoyment of it*

Of all the Strategic Objectives this was subject to the least attention in the literature, and overall this area of the third sector's work would benefit from greater research attention. Although there were a number of clear areas where the material indicated a significant contribution from the third sector, we felt that the depth of evidence in this area could be developed, with more studies exploring the themes we have identified here. This area did include, however, a relatively large scholarly literature.

Despite this, it was clear that the third sector carried out significant work in this area. We identified clear themes of evidence relating to environmental volunteering, community recycling, and land management and heritage. Important gaps are the lack of broad, national studies, and statistics on environmental volunteering.

### **Conclusions**

Overall, there is clear evidence underpinning the contribution of the third sector to each of the Strategic Objectives. There is evidence of an important contribution to

wealthier and fairer and to smarter. There is a range of evidence on safer and stronger and on healthier – although as noted there are some important gaps. The contribution is hardest to assess in relation to the greener objective.

There were also some areas of research that did not fit discretely with any one objective. Typically these related to overarching trends in government policy, or to issues such as definition.

Our study therefore presents a mandate for future research. The weight of evidence underlining the contribution made by the third sector in Scotland is overwhelming. However, in order to fully understand the sector's contribution, the gaps indicated above need to be addressed.

## **Acknowledgements**

This literature review represents an attempt to synthesise a selection of the extensive literature and research on the third sector in Scotland, a country with a rich tradition of philanthropy and voluntary action. Given the focus of much of the scholarly literature on England, we were very aware of the dangers of writing it from London, albeit with several research trips to Edinburgh. Consequently, we are extremely grateful to the many organisations that helped to reduced the distance by giving up their time to talk to us about the third sector in Scotland, identify new sources of material and offer encouragement.

We owe a particular debt to the Research Advisory Group, and especially Ruchir Shah of SCVO, for their guidance and support throughout the process. We would also like to thank Professor Pete Alcock and Dr Rob MacMillan of the Third Sector Research Centre for their advice early in the review.

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Any errors or omissions are ours alone.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Aims, Objectives and Scope

1.1.1 This review provides an overview and evaluation of the literature and research evidence dealing with the third sector in Scotland. It begins with a brief outline of the size, scope and organisation of the Scottish third sector. The subsequent chapters specifically address the evidence in relation to the contribution of the third sector to the Scottish Government's five strategic objectives: Wealthier and Fairer, Healthier, Safer and Stronger, Smarter, and Greener. The study was commissioned by the Scottish Government's Local Government and Public Service Reform Research Team on behalf of the Third Sector Division.

1.1.2 The overall aim of the study is 'to review the research evidence and assess the current contribution of the third sector to the Scottish Government's purpose and priorities'.

1.1.3 The objectives of the review are to:

- Review the recent research evidence on the third sector in Scotland and identify how it contributes to the Scottish Government's five Strategic Objectives
- Identify areas where evidence suggests that the third sector is having an impact, but where it is not aligned to government objectives
- Identify key gaps in the research evidence
- Make recommendations as to how the gaps in the research evidence might be addressed

1.1.4 The review recognises that defining the third sector is a complex task, and by necessity it is not based on a particular, rigid approach to definition. In Chapter 2, it examines some of the different approaches taken to defining the third sector in Scotland, identifying some of the varying features adopted.

1.1.5 As a result of this breadth, the range of literature relating to third sector organisations considered within the project is wide, with a diverse set of organisations included in the analysis, ranging from formally-organised service providing organisations to small community groups. A focus, however, has been maintained on the contribution made to the Scottish Government's five Strategic Objectives. In addition, social entrepreneurship has been specifically considered in the review.

1.1.6 The review focuses primarily on the literature and data that have been developed post-devolution, although where appropriate older material has been used in order to establish a deeper historical context to the review. It draws on a wide range of material, including scholarly work and grey literature, such as policy briefings.

## 1.2 Methodology

- 1.2.1 The review identified relevant literature by drawing on a wide range of resources, including the Evidence Library maintained by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations<sup>1</sup>, scholarly collections and official statistics. The work was undertaken in partnership with an advisory group comprised of staff drawn from the Scottish third sector and Scottish Government. Material was also identified in consultation with the wider research community. Details of organisations contacted and resources used can be found in Appendix 1.
- 1.2.2 The study is not a conventional systematic review of the literature, due to the diversity of the material available, the lack of appropriate tools for meta-analysis, and the numerous questions which the project sought to address. However, our approach did include an evaluation of the strengths of different sources of literature and research we identified.
- 1.2.3 The review takes a range of approaches to examining the material, noting gaps in the literature and evidence base, highlighting any caveats, including missing and conflicting evidence. It also identifies new issues raised by the most recent literature. Beyond this, individual pieces of work have been assessed on their merits – for example, whether a survey is methodologically sound, or if a piece of literature pays attention to previous work in the field.
- 1.2.4 The literature has been evaluated according to four themes:
- The overall body of evidence concerning the third sector in Scotland. This includes:
    - Literature concerned with conceptualising and defining the third sector in Scotland
    - Literature and data on the size and scope of the third sector
  - The third sector's contribution to the Scottish Government's aim to achieve sustainable economic growth and its five Strategic Objectives. This includes:
    - An examination of the impact of social enterprise
  - Areas of literature that highlight the value of the third sector in Scotland but do not fit with the Scottish Government's existing objectives
  - Gaps in the existing material and areas for development
- 1.2.5 There were two stages to our analysis. The first stage involved an initial appraisal of the material, focusing on the literature itself. This included the author(s) and their affiliation (distinguishing, for example, whether the author is a professional researcher or a practitioner), the date of publication, and the publisher.
- 1.2.6 Where possible, the initial appraisal reflected the quality of the material available. To aid us in this task we drew on a number of formal tools. For

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.scvo.org.uk/EvidenceLibrary/Home/Browse.aspx>

scholarly work, we referenced the work on the ISI Web of Knowledge Citation Index, which distinguishes between scholarly work on the basis of impact. For peer reviewed journal articles, we also used the Association of Business Schools Journal Rankings List, which ranks scholarly journals according to a range of criteria of impact and quality. This enabled us to add context to the content analysis which followed by assessing, for example, the number of scholarly studies that cite the research.

- 1.2.7 The second stage of the analysis of the material involved a content analysis of the literature. This focused on the issues addressed, the theoretical basis (if any), the kind of material used, the approach taken and its rigour, the intended audience (where this was clear), and the key findings.

### **1.3 Overview of existing research**

- 1.3.1 There is a formidable amount of material available that relates to the third sector in Scotland. This review references over one hundred pieces of literature and research. This is a small proportion of the material available and a great number of organisations and researchers are involved in undertaking research and evaluation, providing commentary and developing policy, in this field.
- 1.3.2 The literature available covers a wide range of topics, many of which cut across a number of the Government's Strategic Objectives. Indeed, it is a feature of the material that we have gathered that much of it touches on a wide range of thematic areas, and does not necessarily fit neatly with any one objective. The literature varies greatly in approach, including small scale qualitative studies and large surveys, and in purpose, from detailed scholarly reviews to practitioner briefings.
- 1.3.3 From the literature, it is clear that the third sector has a considerable impact on a great number of different areas of social life in Scotland. Its economic contribution (dealt with in Chapter 3) is significant. Elsewhere, the existing research reveals that it makes a clear contribution to each of the Scottish Government's five Strategic Objectives.
- 1.3.4 Despite this clear trend, there are areas for development within the literature. Usually, this is where the literature we identified is either focused on small-scale studies, or lacks empirical rigour. This is not to say that there is evidence to suggest that the sector is not a major force in society, but rather, it provides a mandate for future research. In this report, we highlight these gaps in each thematic chapter, and in our conclusions.
- 1.3.5 An examination of the scholarly literature reveals a small, but growing body of academic work concerned with the third sector in Scotland. Largely this is in the form of articles published in scholarly journals, and predominantly takes its disciplinary cues from social policy or geography. Some of this literature is based on original empirical work, normally in the form of local case studies. There are a number of articles, however, which take the form of commentaries on trends in public policy. As a caveat, however, it should be

noted that some of the more recently published studies (for example, Harrow and Vincent, 2009) are based on data collected prior to devolution.

- 1.3.6 Much of the scholarly literature discusses Scotland in the context of developments in the UK. While this approach is often relevant, starting analysis of the third sector in Scotland with the situation in Westminster seems almost a default setting for much of the existing academic work. Indeed, most articles tend to marginalise discussion of Scotland in favour of broad discussions of wider UK (or specific discussion of English) policy.
- 1.3.7 It is worth noting that most international comparative studies tend to treat the UK as a single, coherent entity (and many predate devolution). The major studies in the field (see Kendall and Knapp, 1996; Salamon and Anheier, 1997; Evers and Laville, 2005) have taken this approach, with recent work paying scant attention to the impact of devolved government. As Vincent and Harrow (2005) suggest, this trend can lead to empirical and conceptual inadequacies.
- 1.3.8 Despite the tendency for studies to work across the UK, cross-national comparison of its constituent countries is rare, despite a few notable exceptions (for example, Osborne et al, 2002). As Vincent and Harrow (2005) argue, this can hinder accurate understanding of the third sector in national contexts.
- 1.3.9 Although there is a growing body of scholarly research that specifically addresses the Scottish context, it is clear that this is vastly outweighed by the extensive grey literature. A great number of organisations drawn from the public and third sectors, as well as independent consultants, have established the foundations of a useful evidence base. This includes a broad body of research that touches on a wide range of areas relevant to the Scottish Government's five Strategic Objectives.
- 1.3.10 The quality of the research included in this literature varies greatly, with some studies taking a robust approach to their work, and others paying little attention to the rigour of the methods used. The variety of methodological approaches in the existing research is also wide. Much of the literature is in the form of case studies, and many authors rely on semi-structured interviews in gathering original data. In addition, there are studies based on postal surveys, focus groups, web-based research and secondary analysis of official documents.
- 1.3.11 Beyond original research, there is a wealth of literature that takes the form of policy briefings and commentary. Additionally, there is a great deal of relevant material emanating from the public sector in Scotland and beyond in the form of, for example, policy guidance, legislation and official statistics. The latter, in particular, is an area that would benefit from more detailed work, and the identification and study of relevant statistics would benefit the existing evidence base.

- 1.3.12 There is also a significant portion of the literature that takes the form of evaluation of specific initiatives, and in some cases, thematic areas of third sector work. These studies have the advantage of a focus on third sector impact, often in terms of value for money, or user perceptions of service quality. However, there must be caveats attached to the utility of evaluations as discrete research, given their scale, unique focus and objectives.
- 1.3.13 Taken together, the scholarly and grey literatures enable a broad overview of the third sector in Scotland to be established. The existing material also raises a number of particular points of focus which are distinct from the broader picture across the UK, for example, a focus on rural areas, and the emergence of the idea of an 'enterprising third sector' in some of the recent material. Many studies also refer to the impact of the third sector on public service provision, where this is the case, it is explored in each chapter.
- 1.3.14 There are, however, some clear gaps in existing work. The purposive nature of much of the existing research also means that conceptual concerns are often marginalised, particularly in the grey literature. Consequently, questions of the impact of the third sector are often considered in abstract from the broader theoretical landscape. Clearly, this makes sense given the focus and intention of much of the work included. However it does mean that the body of literature would benefit from greater theoretical attention.
- 1.3.15 At the same time, gaps in research exist in some areas related to the Government's five Strategic Objectives. In most cases, these gaps are due to a lack of rigorous research evidence – while a small number of studies may exist in an area, there is often no body of research available, and consequently any analysis is limited to the scope of the studies that have been carried out. In other words, generally there is little synthesis and cross-referencing between studies operating on similar themes, with many pieces of research maintaining a more focused approach on an individual organisation or region. Only in a few cases does the material available draw together existing work, highlighting the key policy questions for the government, and the implications for the third sector (for example, Fyfe et al, 2006).
- 1.3.16 Just as significantly, almost all of the literature could be taken as relating to a number of different Strategic Objectives. In part, this is due to the cross-cutting nature of much of the work undertaken by the third sector, and in part to the range of the objectives. As such, while a discrete examination of the literature along the lines of the objectives is relevant, it became clear early in our work that analysis of sector's role must also reach across these boundaries. Chapter 8 discusses the cross-cutting nature of the third sector's work.

## **1.4 Structure of the report**

- 1.4.1 The rest of this report is split into discrete chapters. Chapter 2 provides an overview of research on the third sector in Scotland, examining issues such as definitions, size and scope. The next five chapters each examine one of the Scottish Government's Strategic Objectives, discussing the state of

literature and evidence relating to each. Chapter 8 concludes the report, discussing cross-cutting areas of research and areas of work which did not readily fit with any of the Strategic Objectives, as well as summarising the gaps in the existing literature.

- 1.4.2 Each chapter does not attempt to fully summarise the vast amount of literature available in each area. Rather, each begins with an outline of our interpretation of the Strategic Objective it discusses. Each then provides an overarching discussion of the literature available, before highlighting particularly significant examples and their findings, and concludes by noting significant gaps, as well as highlighting the contribution of the third sector to each Objective, according to the evidence available. The literature referred to in each chapter does not include all relevant literature drawn upon but is cited because it was, in our analysis, either typical of a particular theme, or approach to research, or made points that are important in understanding the context in which research has been taking place. A select bibliography is provided at the end of each chapter which contains the broader evidence relating to that theme.

## **2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE THIRD SECTOR IN SCOTLAND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

2.1.1 This chapter provides an outline of the literature concerned with the size, scope and structure of the third sector in Scotland. It also discusses the literature relevant to establishing the context to recent policy developments regarding the third sector.

2.1.2 The intention of this chapter is to set the scene for the subsequent chapters examining the literature dealing with the third sector's contribution to the Scottish Government's five Strategic Objectives. Consequently, the material included focuses less on third sector *impact* and more on the context in which the research we have examined takes place.

### **2.2 The literature**

2.2.1 The literature included in this section has been drawn from a variety of locations. Contextually, a number of policy reviews undertaken by scholars interested in Government policy towards third sector in Scotland, and the impact of devolution, have proved useful in providing commentary on the policy environment relevant to the third sector.

2.2.2 Elsewhere, a significant amount of the literature that is relevant to this theme has emerged from the public sector, and from the third sector itself. In particular, there is relatively rich data on the size and scope of the third sector, which often takes the form of surveys and statistics collated at a national level.

2.2.3 Some of the relevant material focuses not on the third sector in its entirety, but deals with, for example, specific organisational form, geographical location, or focus of activity. As such, we have been able to identify a range of data dealing with social enterprise, and with rural organisations in Scotland.

### **2.3 The changing policy context in Scotland**

2.3.1 Within the scholarly literature, there is a growing body of work which addresses the particular conditions of the third sector's relations with the State in Scotland. Typically, this work concentrates on recent trends in government policy towards the sector and their implications, emphasising the growing importance of the third sector. This literature is complemented by a vast range of policy documents and briefings emerging from the public sector and from third sector organisations.

2.3.2 It is important to note that this literature does not take the recent rise to prominence of the third sector in public policy in Scotland in isolation, and almost all of the scholarly literature aligns itself with some of the more relevant work dealing with the UK and global contexts. Fyfe et al, (2006) for example, place their analysis of their discussion of the third sector's place in policy post-

devolution in the context of New Labour's activities in Westminster since 1997.

- 2.3.3 Aside from the wider picture of state-third sector relations, voluntary activity has a rich history in Scotland. Prochaska (1990) and Anheier and Leat (2006) highlight the importance of Scottish philanthropy to social life at the turn of the twentieth century. In some cases, this influence has spread globally, through the work of charitable foundations.
- 2.3.4 From this basis, a significant point of departure in contextualising the place of the third sector in policy discussion is the Report of the Commission on the Future of the Voluntary Sector in Scotland (Kemp, 1997), which prompted the adoption of the Scottish Compact. Published in 1998, the same year as its Westminster counterpart, the Compact was one of the first of a series of policy developments that has been heralded as reframing the place of the voluntary sector into the 'mainstream' of government policy (Kendall, 2003; Murdock, 2005).
- 2.3.5 Since devolution in 1999, the range of responsibility for domestic, economic and social policy devolved to the Parliament and the Executive (since 2007, the Scottish Government) means that reframing relations with the third sector is now a high priority. Fyfe et al (2006) suggest that the Government has paid increasing attention to the third sector in recent years, with the then Deputy Minister for Communities declaring in 1999 that the third sector 'has enormous potential to help us to achieve our shared goals of promoting community development and active citizenship' (Scottish Parliament, 1999: col. 767).
- 2.3.6 As academic commentators have noted, the third sector has played a significant role in the policy thinking of the newly-established Scottish Parliament. In their analysis, Burt and Taylor (2002) point out that the growth in rhetoric towards the sector has increasingly been solidified into policy commitments.
- 2.3.7 This has been signalled by a large amount of grey literature – material that has not been produced specifically for research purposes. Most significantly, this takes the form of initiatives and policy documents. These include attempts to promote volunteering through the then Scottish Executive's (now Scottish Government) 'Volunteering Strategy' (2004), the Scottish Social Enterprise Strategy (2007) and the Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan (2008), which provides a detailed outline of support for the third sector's innovative capacity.
- 2.3.8 The grey literature also directly links good working relations between the state and the third sector with successive Governments' objective of achieving economic growth. In 2005, the then Scottish Executive published its 'vision' for the voluntary sector, highlighting the importance of the sector to the government's social programme, reaffirming close relations as a theme of policy based on fair funding arrangements, promoting the sector's contribution

to social life, and encouraging consistent and strong relations between the Government and the sector.

## **2.4 Understanding the third sector in Scotland**

2.4.1 Defining the third sector is no easy task. A perennial occupation for scholars interested in the field, and for those working in and with the third sector, it is well-established that attempts at universal definitions of the third sector are fraught with problems. Consequently, most of the definitions we encountered in the literature are purposive – they are tools used in particular studies or for a particular purpose (such as establishing a regulatory framework around nonprofit action). Definitions of the third sector are also relational - they are products of the context in which they were developed.

2.4.2 Because of this approach, many of the studies we have included in the review maintain slightly different starting points in their approach to understanding the third sector. The variety of definitions reflects the sheer diversity of material available, and the differing focus of many studies.

2.4.3 Therefore, a clear finding from our analysis was that there are a number of approaches to understanding of the meaning of the term ‘third sector’ in Scotland (in the literature, the term ‘voluntary sector’ is often substituted). Indeed, across the different sources of material included in this review, it is possible to trace contrasting approaches to definition, dependent on the approach, purpose, and intended audience.

2.4.4 In some cases, the definition adopted is necessarily broad. In framing its policy ‘vision’ for relations with the third sector, the Scottish Executive (2005) imagined the sector as primarily driven by a social, cultural or environmental purpose, governed by individual volunteers who do not get paid for governing the organisations, and independent from the state.

2.4.5 Elsewhere, SCVO (2008) focus on organisational form, referring to voluntary organisations as ‘non-profit distributing, non-statutory and independent of the state’. A far wider definition, this bears a close relation to the ‘structural-operational definition’ (Salamon and Anheier, 1997), now almost a default for academic studies of the third sector, which suggests that these organisations are:

- Formally organised
- Nonprofit distributing
- Constitutionally independent from the state
- Self-governing
- Benefiting from some form of voluntarism

2.4.6 In the scholarly literature that specifically deals with Scotland, some attention has been paid to international distinctions in definition, in order to analyse the development of policy trends towards the third sector. Harrow and Vincent (1999; 2009), distinguish between the third sector in Scotland and England by use of a metaphor, distinguishing between ‘thistles’ and ‘roses’ when

examining the differences between the third sector in Scotland and England, suggesting that the sector maintains a distinct character in each country. Focusing primarily on third sector organisations working in the health sector, they raise distinctions in the roles played by third sector, with organisations more heavily involved in service provision in Scotland than England.

- 2.4.7 The growth in interest in social enterprise has raised some interesting distinctions in approach. SCVO (2001b) notes that the 'third sector' is used to emphasise the distinction between the sector and the private and public sector'. Conversely, Communities Scotland (2002) suggest that the notion of a third sector as entirely distinct from the public and private sectors is 'too crude', and that the importance of social enterprise means that the boundaries between the private and third sectors are less distinct.
- 2.4.8 However, the same authors do discuss the utility of distinguishing between voluntary organisations and social enterprise, basing their analysis in the idea of the social economy, adopting a narrow definition which focuses solely on social enterprise, and a wider definition which also embraces other voluntary organisations.
- 2.4.9 SQW Limited (2002) focus on the idea of 'social economy' in their work examining the contribution of the third sector in the Highlands and Islands. The authors recognise the difficulties of universal definition and establish a very broad approach to understanding the social economy specifically for their study, taking in neighbourhood and self-help groups, as well as community and social enterprises. Significantly, the authors note the difficulties of specifying organisational structure as part of a definition, due to the dynamism of the sector and the emergence of new and hybrid organisational forms.
- 2.4.10 In all, definition is undoubtedly important. Different approaches to understanding the third sector have an impact both on the measurement of its size, but also on the focus of activity (for example, service provision, or advocacy) considered. Beyond this, definitions of the third sector have something to tell us about the context in which the third sector operates in Scotland, given its development from a rich background of voluntary action.
- 2.4.11 A further finding from the literature is the undesirability of rigid approaches to definition. The various approaches we identified, including those sketched above, illustrate the diversity of the third sector, its work, and also new and emerging organisational forms. Hard definitional boundaries applied to the national context would run the risk of marginalising these insights.

## **2.5 The size and scope of the third sector in Scotland**

- 2.5.1 The literature that concerns itself with identifying the size and scope of the third sector comes primarily from statistics and research undertaken by the public sector, or from the third sector itself. Within the third sector, most commonly it is infrastructure bodies who undertake this kind of work (see SCVO, 2005; 2008; VDS, 2005). There has been little scholarly attention on

research of this kind as part of comparative studies of the third sector, primarily because of the tendency to focus on the UK as a whole.

2.5.2 This literature indicates that the third sector operating in Scotland is large and diverse. SCVO (2008) suggest that there are 45,000 formally-organised organisations contributing £4.7 billion to Scotland's GDP. The sector employs around 129,000 paid staff, some 5% of Scotland's workforce, and engages around 1.2 million adult volunteers.

2.5.3 The literature agrees that myriad organisations are undertaking activities in areas ranging from community organisation to the delivery of public services. As the diagram below illustrates, the type of organisation involved varies considerably, from ad hoc local groups to large multinational organisations that are major employers. At the same time, a particular area of growth has been the varying forms of social enterprise. The contribution of these groups to public services has been recognised by the government, and they are a focus of investment (Scottish Government, 2007; 2008).

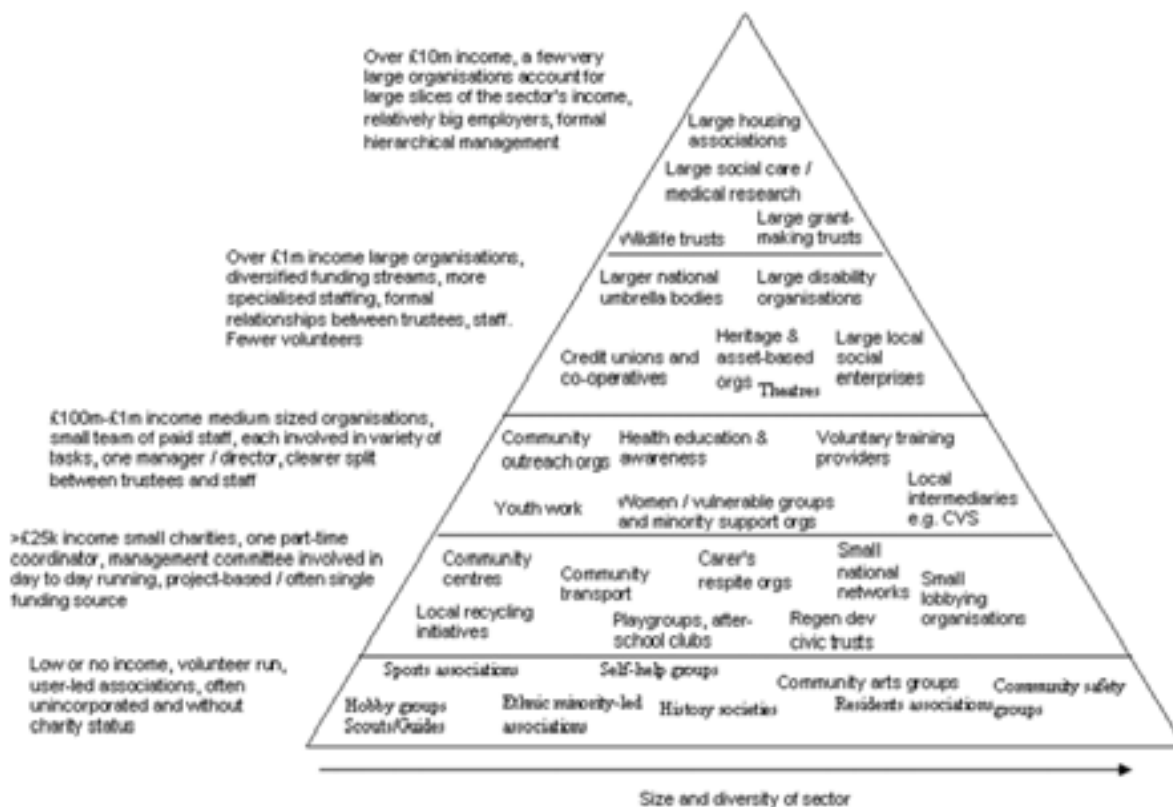


Figure 1: The size and diversity of the third sector in Scotland (SCVO, 2009)

2.5.4 The focus of work of the third sector has also been subject to attention. SCVO (2008), in their statistical digest for the sector, identify a broad range of areas of work. Interestingly, they note the dominance of organisations working in ‘social care and development’, some 45% of total work. This tallies with academic analysis of the sector in Scotland (Vincent and Harrow, 2009) and more widely across the UK (Kendall and Knapp, 1996; Kendall, 2003).

## 2.6 Third sector funding

2.6.1 There is a significant evidence base concerned with the funding and income of the third sector. Aside from official statistics, infrastructure bodies within the sector have undertaken considerable work in this area. There is, however, markedly less attention paid to this issue in the scholarly literature.

2.6.2 Broadly, the data reveals that the income of the third sector is growing, and has done so for a number of years. The SCVO maintains panel data on finances, including funding levels and sources, for 5000 organisations, dating back to 1991. Projections based on the panel data suggest that sector income reached £3.21 billion in 2006, up from £2.63 billion in 2004, and controls over £8.6 billion of community assets (SCVO, 2008). Forthcoming figures from the SCVO place the sector’s income even higher, at £4.1 billion. As the diagram below indicates, the origins of third sector funding vary greatly, with a significant proportion, although not a majority, coming from the state.

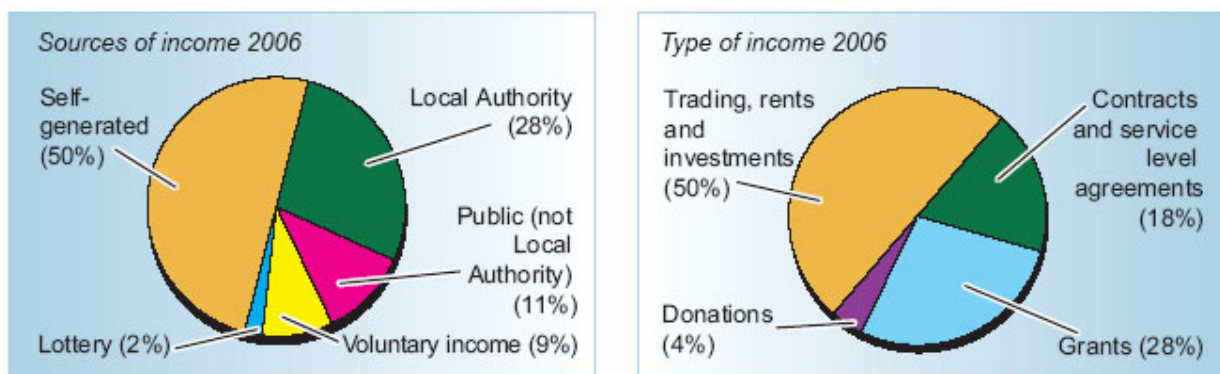


Figure 2: Voluntary sector income (SCVO, 2008)

2.6.3 The SCVO (2005) note that ‘the funding mix of the Scottish voluntary sector takes on a different balance to the UK average’. As illustrated above in Figure 2, in Scotland, the sector has a high proportion of funding from self-generated sources, that is income from trading, rents and investments. Collectively, these account for 50% of total income, compared to the UK’s 15.5%.

2.6.4 Despite this, the Scottish Voluntary Sector Almanac (SCVO, 2005) records that post-devolution, public sector funding has risen considerably. Above and beyond directly funding service provision, Futurebuilders Scotland, mirroring the initiatives in other parts of the UK, provided £18 million over two years

aimed at improving the capacity of the third sector to deliver public services. Additionally, the Third Sector Development Fund allocated £11.85 million to local Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) and £8 million to the enterprising third sector, part of a £63 million commitment to third sector development over the three years 2008-11.

2.6.5 In common with the picture across the UK (see NCVO, 2005), third sector income is distributed unevenly between organisations. A relatively small proportion of very large organisations (2%) report an income of over £1 million, collectively enjoying more than 62% of the sector's total income (SCVO, 2005). Conversely, the majority of third sector organisations (64%) exist on under £25k, approximately 2% of the sector's income.

2.6.6 Despite its growing income, the sector's expenditure has also been rising. The figures for the financial year 2006-7 (included in the SCVO's Scottish Voluntary Sector Statistics, 2007) suggest that expenditure was at £3.18 billion. Of this, some 47% went towards staffing costs. The SCVO point out concerns over the long term sustainability of the third sector in the present funding environment, with the gap between income and expenditure narrowing dramatically in recent years. Currently, this gap represents £24m, or 0.7% of the third sector's income.

2.6.7 The issue of organisations obtaining full cost recovery (FCR) when contracted by the state to provide public services has been specifically addressed in research commissioned by the Scottish Executive (Hayton et al, 2007). This work was based on a wide range of different methods, including a literature review, surveys of third sector organisations (on relatively high incomes) and public sector agencies, focus groups, and detailed case studies. It aimed to:

- Measure and consider the benefits, risks and costs to both the public and voluntary sectors;
- Create a realistic picture of FCR's impact given its non-compulsory nature, and the support that both voluntary organisations and public service providers will require going forward
- Produce recommendations on implementing FCR in a realistic way

2.6.8 The study highlighted both the importance of FCR to service providing organisations, and the cost implications to the state, making a range of recommendations for promoting FCR, and the access to broader infrastructure funding for third sector organisations.

## **2.7 The rural third sector**

2.7.1 A distinctive feature of the literature is the focus of some work on Scotland's large rural third sector. There is a body of scholarly work in this area, although it varies greatly in quality, with some studies basing their analysis on a brief search of web-based literature. Elsewhere, organisations within the third sector have undertaken original research in the area, normally in the form of case studies of a small number of organisations.

- 2.7.2 SCVO (2003) suggest that many rural third sector organisations tend to be unregulated (that is to say, not registered charities or housing associations). However, there is a large proportion of regulated organisations at work in these areas (rural areas are home to around 40% of regulated organisations).
- 2.7.3 The literature also suggests that the rural third sector suffers from a number of difficulties that are, if not profoundly distinct, then perhaps more acute, than those borne by organisations in more populous settings. Broadly, these include a lack of material and financial resources, as well as problems in recruiting and training volunteers in rural areas (Skerratt et al 2008).
- 2.7.4 Sartain (2006) examines future possibilities for the rural voluntary sector in Scotland, using Futures techniques – policy-development tools intended to identify possibilities for future policy direction. While there are clear distinctions between this and much of the original empirical work that exists, this approach is useful in illustrating a unique approach to developing solutions to the specific issues suffered by rural organisations.
- 2.7.5 As well as the literature that focuses discretely on rural issues, the rural third sector regularly appears thematically in other areas of work. Examples of this work have been included in the subsequent chapters where these are relevant to the themes we discuss in the context of the five Strategic Objectives.

## **2.8 Social enterprise**

- 2.8.1 A particular feature of recent government policy towards the third sector in Scotland is the emphasis on the more entrepreneurial aspects of voluntary action, with a particular focus on social firms and innovation within the sector. The Scottish Government's Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan (2008: 8) suggests that it wants to 'create a country where an enterprising third sector is valued and encouraged'.
- 2.8.2 This reflects a growing social enterprise sector across Scotland. Much like the rest of the UK, the social enterprise sector is held in the literature to have been growing rapidly in recent years, although this is area where the evidence is relatively sparse. Depending on definition, Communities Scotland (2002) identify between 10,000 and 44,000 social enterprises active in Scotland.
- 2.8.3 Social Economy Scotland maintain<sup>2</sup> a wide range of different studies and evaluations of social enterprise across the country. This includes a number of evaluations of specific organisations and initiatives. Largely in the form of research briefings and short evaluations, the material suggests that social enterprise plays a significant role in providing services to communities in Scotland, and can have a number of distinctive virtues, including a close

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<sup>2</sup> Much of the material is available in the Social Economy Scotland document library:

<http://www.socialeconomyscotland.info/scvo/content/forms/library.asp?contentid=441>

connection to service users, and innovative approaches to service delivery. However, beyond this kind of work, it should be noted that some substantial pieces of detailed research are available, focusing on cross-cutting issues such as social return on investment (Durie et al, 2007), and profiling rural Scotland (Natural Scotland, 2006).

- 2.8.4 Other studies trace the growth of social enterprise in Scotland as part of studies of the UK as a whole (Baker, 2007; CEIS, 2008). Baker (2007), as part of a programme of national mapping of the social firm sector, found that the environment in Scotland was particularly vibrant, with the country maintaining one of the highest numbers of social firms across the UK.
- 2.8.5 CEIS (2008), examining Social Enterprise Business Models, consider whether established models found across the UK and internationally might be applied to social enterprises in Scotland.
- 2.8.6 Their study was based on a blend of primary and secondary research. The authors initially undertook desk-based secondary research to gather information about the motivations and principles of business replication, and their application to social enterprise. This drew on a range of sources including internet searches, journals and other relevant reports. The primary research was carried out with Scottish social enterprises. Fifty organisations responded to a single question email survey examining the application of business models to social enterprises. Additionally, the report contains a number of case studies, which were supported by four telephone interviews.
- 2.8.7 The study found that replication, licensing and franchising can be a successful strategy for growth for social enterprises, highlighting examples from the case studies. It also suggests that these strategies are relatively new, and would benefit from future examination.
- 2.8.8 There are also a number of other small scale studies of social enterprise in Scotland available through Social Economy Scotland. These studies indicate that the enterprising third sector forms a significant part of the social economy in Scotland. However, we must leave a caveat that this is an area where the research evidence is in need of development, in spite of the number of different studies undertaken, due to problems of varying definition, methodological approach, and scope in the different pieces of research.

## **2.9 Conclusions**

- 2.9.1 It is possible to trace a significant body of literature concerned with the size and scope of the third sector, as well as its relations with the state. It is clear that different areas are subject to attention from different sources. The third sector's place in policy, for example, is almost solely of concern to the scholarly literature, although this body of work is not extensive.
- 2.9.2 From the literature, it is obvious that Scotland enjoys a vibrant and strong voluntary life. It is also clear that the public and third sectors increasingly find themselves working in partnership, and that the third sector organisations in

Scotland have, much like the rest of the UK, moved increasingly to centre stage in policy discussions.

- 2.9.3 The following chapters examine the literature dealing with the contribution of the third sector to the Scottish Government's five Strategic Objectives. In each, we have drawn out themes of literature that are particularly strong. These themes are by no means exhaustive, but are intended to emphasise areas of literature where the contribution of the third sector to each objective is either clearly defined, or, in some cases, in need of further investigation.

### **3 WEALTHIER AND FAIRER**

*Enable businesses and people to increase their wealth and more people to share fairly in that wealth*

#### **3.1 Introduction and interpretation**

- 3.1.1 As discussed in the previous chapter, there is clear evidence to suggest that the third sector makes an important contribution to Scotland's economy, including several large scale datasets such as the Voluntary Sector Statistics collected by the SCVO, and the Scottish Household Survey. This contribution, allied with the work of third sector organisations in dealing with problems related to poverty and exclusion, has also been a major focus of research attention in recent years. Indeed, of all five Strategic Objectives, 'Wealthier and Fairer' was subject to the most attention in the literature.
- 3.1.2 This objective was also one of the broadest, and a great number of different pieces of research were relevant. In interpreting this objective, we focused on material that was relevant to the economic contribution of the third sector, including third sector employment, both paid and voluntary. In addition to the literature focusing on 'wealth', we did identify some material that is relevant to 'fairness', in particular, a range of work on credit unions. However, the cross cutting nature of much of this aspect of the theme has meant that relevant literature is included in other chapters. We have also identified some material which examines the implications of the current recession for the third sector, although this material is underdeveloped and forms an emergent theme of the literature.
- 3.1.3 The strongest themes we identified in the literature are dealt with as sub themes below. These include the third sector workforce; credit unions; urban and rural Scotland; and the third sector and the recession.

#### **3.2 The literature**

- 3.2.1 The literature on the economic contribution of the third sector is reasonably well-developed, and a number of different sources have contributed to the body of material we gathered. The elements of the literature based on original research have been carried out by a range of organisations, with considerable work undertaken by agencies within the public and third sectors. Additionally, a number of pieces of work commissioned from specialist researchers by the public sector, and some independent scholarly research, have focused on the 'fairer' aspects of the Strategic Objective (for example, Michael Bell Associates, 2001), although this was far less extensive.
- 3.2.2 The Scottish Government has produced a number of publications which draw on original research and secondary analysis of statistics to discuss the contribution made by the sector to public service provision. Elsewhere, we identified a range of literature discussing voluntary activity in Scotland, focusing on the role of the third sector relating to volunteering, and to the

volunteer workforce. This suggests that the contribution of volunteering in Scotland is considerable.

- 3.2.3 As a caveat, however, it should be noted that the different focus, methodologies and definitions of the third sector included in various pieces of material mean that there is a variation in the resulting figures. Consequently, it is perhaps best not to think of one 'true' figure for the economic contribution of the third sector in Scotland, but instead to take different studies as contributing to an overall picture of the sector's economic role.

### **3.3 The third sector workforce**

- 3.3.1 The material included in this section indicates that third sector in Scotland is a significant employer, both of paid staff, and volunteers. The literature reflects this, with a range of data from different sources highlighting the sector's contribution.

- 3.3.2 There is a relatively rich base of research dealing with the levels of voluntary activity in Scotland. Concerns over the definition and nature of volunteering notwithstanding, work by Volunteer Development Scotland, based on the Home Office Citizenship Survey (which covers the whole of the UK) and the Scottish Household Survey, all contain relevant quantitative research of a high quality. Despite this, we identified markedly less qualitative data relating to this theme.

- 3.3.3 Volunteer Development Scotland produce an annual digest of volunteering statistics, based on a secondary analysis of a number of datasets, including the VDS/SAVM Survey of Volunteer Managers and the 2004 VDS Survey of Voluntary Services Managers in the NHS in Scotland. This work has estimated that a minimum of 168,969,432 hours were worked by volunteers in Scotland in 2005 (VDS, 2006). The Scottish Household Survey (Scottish Government, 2008c) suggests that three in ten adults (30%) have provided unpaid help to organisations or individuals in the last 12 months.

- 3.3.4 Due to variations in definition and methodological approach, there are discrepancies within the literature. For example, Volunteer Development Scotland's Annual Digest of Statistics and the UK-wide Citizenship Survey carried out by the Department for Communities and Local Government's both report higher rates of volunteering than the Scottish Household Survey. This may be the result of differences in sample size and population in the latter surveys, and the definition of volunteering used.

- 3.3.5 UK Voluntary Sector Workforce Almanac suggests that Scotland has experienced an increase in the number of voluntary sector employees from 40,000 employees in 1996 to 62,000 employees in 2005, a percentage growth of 55% in ten years. The SCVO suggests that the size of the voluntary sector workforce is somewhat larger, with 129,000 (83,500 fte) paid staff (Shah, 2008). Proportionally in Scotland, the voluntary workforce is significantly higher than in the rest of the UK.

- 3.3.6 Beyond the literature exploring the size and scope of the voluntary workforce, there is work available that describes the role of the third sector as an employer. Of this, the majority discusses Scotland within the context of the UK as a whole (see Almond and Kendall, 2000), which is useful in setting a broader context to the employment issues faced by third sector organisations (namely, employee recruitment, commitment and diversity), if less helpful in providing analysis of the specific context in Scotland.
- 3.3.7 The Scottish Centre for Employment Research, based at Strathclyde University, has carried out specific work on third sector employment in Scotland (2004; 2005; 2006). This work largely underpins the importance of the third sector as employer, suggesting that some 5% of the paid workforce are employed by third sector organisations. It also highlights some of the recruitment problems, real and perceived, within the sector, and makes recommendations for improvement.
- 3.3.8 We identified a few examples of studies examining the efficacy of the role third sector organisations play as employers. Rocket Science UK (2007) review the support available to the Scottish voluntary sector and focus on five areas: organisational development, workforce development, technical support, income generation and lobbying and network support. The review highlights the contribution of the third sector in each of these areas, while raising areas for development, offering a number of short and longer-term recommendations, a number of which relate to training and development. The study was based on a range of different methods, including desk research, research with recipients and providers of support, information analysis and a stakeholder workshop.
- 3.3.9 SCVO (2001) find that the third sector workforce in Scotland is particularly diverse, with female employees, disabled staff and those from ethnic minorities making up a significant proportion of the workforce, as illustrated below. These employees are often found to be working in front-line, service delivery roles:

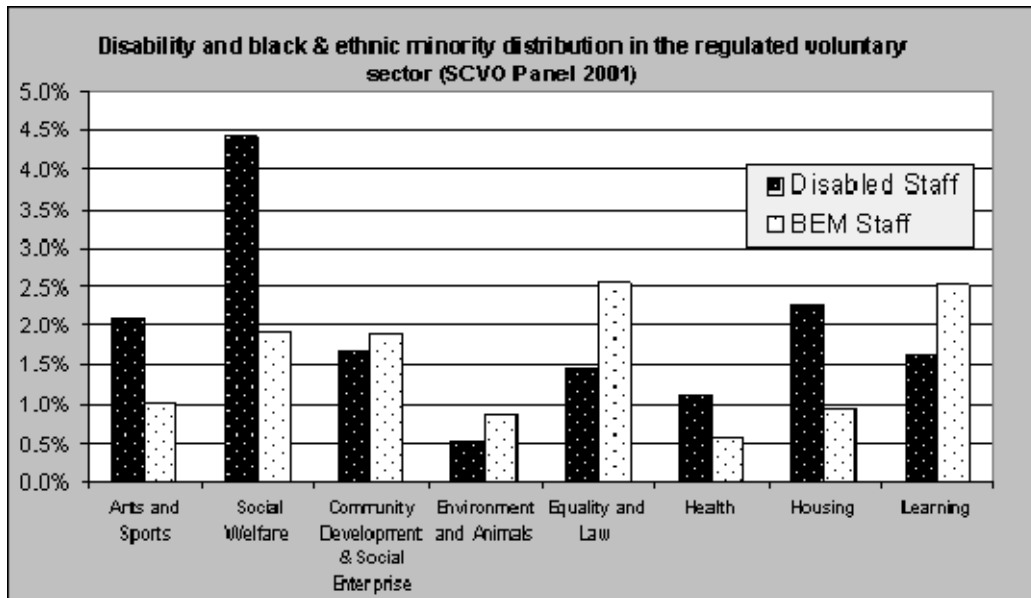


Fig. 3: Disability and black & ethnic minority distribution in the regulated voluntary sector (SCVO, 2001)

### 3.4 Credit Unions

- 3.4.1 The material we encountered highlighted a considerable contribution to the financial sustainability and wealth of Scotland made by credit unions. These are financial co-operatives owned and controlled by their members. Eligibility for credit union membership can be determined in a wide number of ways, and is often associated with places of work, or with residence in a particular locality.
- 3.4.2 McKillop and Wilson (2008) discuss the nature of credit unions and consider the extent to which they can act as alternatives to mainstream financial services. Their work places this discussion in the historical development of credit unions, presenting statistics around the growth of credit unions across the UK and worldwide.
- 3.4.3 Commissioned by the Scottish Government, the report highlights the significant role played by credit unions in tackling financial exclusion. The authors also map the particular risks faced by credit unions in Scotland. In particular they highlight the favourable financial and regulatory support enjoyed by credit unions in Scotland in recent years, expressing concern for the longer-term sustainability of these organisations should government policy change.
- 3.4.4 Hayton et al (2005) aimed to develop the evidence base relating to credit unions by identifying the characteristics of credit union members and the types of financial products and services they prefer their unions to offer. The authors also aimed to investigate the issue of financial exclusion by testing whether members of credit unions would lack access to financial products and services but for their membership of the union.

- 3.4.5 The study was based on a large scale postal survey of members of 29 credit unions operating in Scotland, and an analysis of the business plans and financial services offered by 24 credit unions. The researchers also undertook interviews with 14 credit union activists. The authors found that the profile of credit union members was narrow – overwhelmingly middle aged and female, white, in paid employment and owner-occupiers. However, a significant number of members were in receipt of some form of means-tested benefits. The survey data found that between 12% and 20% would be financially excluded were it not for their relationship with the union.
- 3.4.6 Goth et al (2006), examine the state of credit unions in Scotland in the context of those across the UK. They also undertake a series of case studies of individual credit unions, although both of these are based in England. The study contains a detailed and useful summary of the history, policy background and statistics concerned with credit unions across the UK, but with specific analysis of the case in Scotland.
- 3.4.7 Communities Scotland (2004) review the Wester Hailes Community Banking Agreement (WHCBA), a partnership between the Wester Hailes representative Council and the Bank of Scotland. Established in 2001, the WHCBA works to address financial exclusion by supporting local community organisations. It works towards five overarching aims, namely: to increase bank accounts, improve financial literacy, develop a savings and loans scheme, support entrepreneurship and support local community organisations.
- 3.4.8 This evaluation was particularly extensive and took on a range of different approaches, specifically addressing each of the aims. These included interviews, focus group, analysis of existing data and telephone interviews. The study identified WHCBA as a successful ‘bottom up’ initiative, which demonstrated a close connection to local people, and quantified and evaluated local need.
- 3.4.9 The Scottish Parliament Information Center (SPICe) (2000) provide a brief introduction to credit unions in Scotland. The briefing includes a definition of credit unions, and an outline of their benefits. The work highlights what the authors see as critical success factors, such as investment in staff and premises, together with identifying further reading and contacts. The authors recommend greater attempts to understand the local context and particular issues in an area are needed when attempting to address financial exclusion.

### **3.5 Urban and Rural Scotland**

- 3.5.1 In the body of literature relating to this Strategic Objective, there is a clear discrepancy between the attention spent on the economic contribution of the third sector in more populous, urban areas, and in the rural areas of the country. Many case-based studies focused on more populous areas of the country with the economics of the third sector in rural Scotland largely absent from the analysis.

- 3.5.2 This seems significant. Rural Scotland suffers from a number of unique social problems related to inequality. In particular, the Scottish Executive (2007) note that the less 'accessible' areas of rural Scotland (populated by some 6% of the population) suffer from a number of profound social problems, including a declining (and ageing) population, a lack of economic opportunity, difficulties in accessing services, and a high cost of living and transport.
- 3.5.3 Consequently, the evidence considering the impact of the rural third sector that is relevant to this (or indeed any) strategic objective was largely less extensive than the work dealing with the sector as a whole, with only a few exceptions (e.g. SCVO, 2003; Skerratt et al 2008).
- 3.5.4 Thurley and Brotherhood (1998) take a distinctive approach to their investigation into the Social Economy in the Highlands and Islands. Published in a peer reviewed journal, this work is based on an analysis of secondary data and literature, and a postal survey of 369 third sector organisations working in these areas, taking in a wide range of form and function. It suggests that the geographical location of these communities means a necessarily greater emphasis on the third sector than in lowland Scotland, due to the physical distance of some people from mainstream services.
- 3.5.5 SQW Limited (2002) have undertaken a further, detailed review of the social economy of the Highlands and Islands. The research, based on a postal survey of 369 organisations, finds that the social economy plays a significant and growing role in economic and social life in the Highlands and Islands, comprising 8,142 organisations and generating an annual income of some £360m. Importantly, the authors find that the social economy makes a considerable contribution to employment in rural areas, with more than half the organisations included in the survey employing paid staff.
- 3.5.6 The Directory of Social Change (2008) has also produced research findings that are relevant to rural Scotland. Examining Scotland specifically, alongside its broader analysis of the UK, the research takes in the contribution made by grant-making trusts. It includes a detailed case study on the Shetland Islands, finding that the area enjoys a vastly higher rate of giving from trusts than the rest of Scotland, due to the legacy of 'Disturbance Receipts' from the Sullom Voe oil terminal, which currently stand at £15 million each year across a population of 25,000.
- 3.5.7 Ekos Ltd (2009) have undertaken a study of the perceptions of rural poverty held by public and voluntary agencies working nationally across Scotland. The research was aimed at increasing understanding of the experience of poverty in rural areas across Scotland. In particular, it explored the experiences of five specific vulnerable groups: single pensioners, single parents, disabled people, people with mental ill health and migrant workers.
- 3.5.8 National level research with nineteen public and voluntary organisation representatives were carried out. These were designed to gain an insight into

the perceptions of organisations that work with or represent the vulnerable groups, as well as organisations that work to tackle poverty. The research also involved thirteen local workshops where participants drawn from six statutory and voluntary sector service providers discussed the experiences of working with people living in poverty, particularly those in the target groups. The research highlighted the contribution of the third sector in providing support to people experiencing poverty in rural areas, but suggested that 'a significant centralisation of public and voluntary sector services' (para. 2.3.4) towards urban centres had occurred, resulting in difficulties in access to services for some people in rural areas.

### **3.6 The third sector and the recession**

- 3.6.1 There is a limited literature that discusses the financial health of the third sector in Scotland, and its ability to cope with the current recession (Lees, 2009; de Lima, 2009). An SCVO briefing to its members (SCVO, 2008), suggested that a decline in charitable giving was beginning to affect the income of its membership, and was a source of concern for many organisations.
- 3.6.2 de Lima (2009), in a paper presented to a joint ESRC/SCVO conference on the impact of the recession on the third sector in Scotland, run in 2009, reviews the implications for third sector organisations. This paper is of limited research value, as it is drawn largely on internet resources. However, it is helpful in providing an early assessment of the impact of the recessions, identifying emerging themes for future research. The research notes that given the poor evidence base that exists in Scotland and the ongoing challenges faced by rural voluntary organisations, the task of disentangling the impact of the economic downturn on the sector in rural areas is likely to be difficult and challenging.
- 3.6.3 Beyond this, Harrow and Vincent (2009) contributed a presentation to the same research conference. They considered the notion of internal differentiation within the third sectors in Scotland and England and the implications for varying approaches to public policy towards the third sector during recession. Their work also examined the question of how third sector organisations in Scotland have been reporting and responding to the economic recession, the kinds of experiences currently facing the sector in Scotland, and whether the Scottish Government's financial support for social enterprise models and solutions is relevant for development and resource purposes across the entire sector.
- 3.6.4 In all, it seems that the literature is only beginning to respond to the implications of the recession for the third sector. Lees (2009), reviewing a range of relevant material suggests that it is likely that the third sector will suffer from acute problems resulting from the recession. It seems clear, therefore that this is an area worthy of immediate future development.

## 3.7 Conclusions

- 3.7.1 As this brief overview reveals, there is a relatively extensive body of work relevant to the Strategic Objective. Aside from the broad statistics produced by the government and the third sector, a number of different agencies and researchers are active in the area.
- 3.7.2 Clearly, issues of definition, scope and measurement all matter in work concerned with this theme. As we have seen, particularly with regard to volunteering, there are discrepancies in research findings. At the same time, it is possible to identify some gaps in the literature with, for example, more research needed on the rural third sector's relation to this Strategic Objective. Beyond this, there is little research and commentary that examines the implications of the recession for the third sector
- 3.7.3 In all, however, from the literature we have identified, it is clear that the third sector makes a significant contribution to this strategic objective, either directly, through the provision of services, or indirectly, through, for example, its role as an employer.

### Gaps

- i) **Aside from reviews that focus specifically on rural issues, the majority of the studies we identified do not reflect the specific economic context of the Highlands and Islands**
- ii) **There was little material examining the impact of the recession on the third sector in Scotland**
- iii) **Although there is survey and panel data on the role of the third sector as an employer, we identified far fewer qualitative studies of employees experiences of working in third sector organisations**
- iv) **The distinctions in definition and scope of the studies we identified lead to variations in accounts of the size and scope of the third sector in Scotland**

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## **4 SMARTER**

*Expand opportunities for Scots to succeed from nurture through to life long learning ensuring higher and more widely shared achievements*

### **4.1 Introduction and interpretation**

4.1.1 'Smarter' is an objective which is thematically relevant to a considerable amount of literature. In part this is due to the scope of the theme, which takes in a range of activities from education to career development and training. However, this is also due to the cross-cutting nature of much of the research available, much of which is also relevant to a number of other Strategic Objectives.

4.1.2 In our approach to the analysis, we focused on literature which related to the direct provision of education and learning, and to pieces of work that covered the promotion of learning opportunities through, for example, the provision of early years childcare. We also included literature that covered the role of the third sector in promoting employability and access to the labour market, particularly among disadvantaged groups.

### **4.2 The literature**

4.2.1 It should be noted that much of the literature related to this theme is relevant to other Strategic Objectives (consider, for example, the relationship between levels of educational attainment and economic productivity, which links to the Wealthier and Fairer objective).

4.2.2 In spite of its scope, however the research that deals with this theme discretely (rather than being of broad relevance) is less extensive. Although we identified a wide range of studies dealing with many different areas, in some cases only one or two studies dealt with a particular topic, and few individual areas had been subject to sustained research.

4.2.3 Within the literature that we did identify, there are two related bodies of work that emerged as most clearly relevant. These discuss the role of the third sector in learning provision, and the sector's work in providing information and promoting access to learning and employment.

### **4.3 The third sector and education provision**

4.3.1 It is clear from the existing evidence base that third sector organisations play a major role in education provision in a range of areas. SCVO (2005) identify education as the focus of work for 7% of third sector organisations. Elsewhere, Baker (2007) identifies a significant role for social enterprise in providing education services.

- 4.3.2 Coben (2005) examines adult numeracy provision in Scotland, focusing on the existing literature on adult numeracy and making recommendations for its application in policy and practice. The work was based on a review of research, policy and other relevant documents, together with consultation with practitioners and members of the project's advisory group, which consisted of practitioners working in higher education, Learning and Teaching Scotland, further education, the voluntary sector and adult literacy partnerships, as well as with a group of numeracy practitioners.
- 4.3.3 The authors note that research on adult numeracy, while fast-growing, is 'under-researched, under-theorised and generally underdeveloped' (p. 17). The work that they do identify is mostly focused internationally, and a number of different country cases are considered in their review. Additionally, the review tends to focus on techniques for teaching numeracy, rather than examining the role of the third sector in current provision. Consequently, there is little detailed information on the third sector beyond acknowledging its role.
- 4.3.4 Reilly (2008) has undertaken research on the role of volunteer centres in community learning and development (CLD). The research involved an electronic survey of the type and extent of CLD in 32 volunteer centres, complemented by 11 interviews with staff from 9 volunteer centres, which were selected to represent a variety of settings, including representing urban and rural areas.
- 4.3.5 The study finds that volunteer centres demonstrate a very clear understanding of community learning and that there is a strong synergy between the outcomes of volunteering and of CLD, highlighting good practice and making a number of recommendations for future work.
- 4.3.6 Lifelong Learning UK (2008) have undertaken a survey of the community learning and development workforce in public and third sector organisations in Scotland. Their work profiles the workforce, examining issues including the nature of employment (whether full time, part time, volunteers), gender, age, disability, and ethnicity of the workforce. Information was gathered through a survey of CLD organisations, of whom 65 participants were drawn from the third sector.
- 4.3.7 The study found that the workforce was overwhelmingly comprised of volunteers (90%) and female. Recruitment and retention of staff and volunteers was found to be a problem for organisations working in rural areas.

#### **4.4 Early years childcare**

- 4.4.1 In the literature, the third sector has a significant role to play in provision of early years childcare. The Scottish Executive's Integrated Strategy for the Early Years (2003) suggests that 'voluntary sector services can augment the responsibilities of statutory sector agencies by developing innovative and creative ways of meeting families' needs and increasingly by providing services directly on behalf of statutory agencies' (p. 11).

- 4.4.2 We identified a range of literature that took the form of original research into this field, building a solid base of evidence underpinning the role of the third sector.
- 4.4.3 NFO Social Research/DTZ Piedad Consulting (2004) undertook extensive work on the demand for, and access to, childcare among parents of children aged 0-14 years in Scotland. The study represents both a large-scale examination of parental experiences of childcare services and in depth interviews with forty parents in ten different target groups.
- 4.4.4 The study builds on earlier research (NCSR, 1999) which analysed access and demand for childcare according to a number of factors including social class, employment and household structure. It aimed to establish a comprehensive picture of childcare demand and take up in Scotland. The research reveals the role played by the third sector in childcare provision in a multi-agency environment, highlighting the sector's place as a provider of services, and also in shaping the service agenda with other partners.
- 4.4.5 Sproston et al (2004) have undertaken research on Child Contact Centres, neutral venues that exist to promote and support contact between parents, guardians or other family members and children who do not live together. Recognised as an important element of childcare provision in protecting children from parental conflict, the 28 Child Contact Centres in Scotland are run by voluntary organisations, staffed by a combination of paid organisers and trained volunteers. They can be funded by a variety of sources, including Family Mediation Services, local authority grants, charitable donations and grants, and individual or centre-based funding.
- 4.4.6 The authors were concerned with the efficacy of Child Contact Centres, examining the take-up of provision, and the quality of service provided. The research is noteworthy because of the detailed approach taken, with the work carried out in three stages. Phase 1 collected basic demographic information on the families using Child Contact Centres in, while Phase 2 was a survey of the contact centre workforce. Phase 3 aimed to investigate stakeholders' experiences of contact centres, and highlight any areas of convergence or divergence. The research highlights the significance of the service to many families. However, they identified a range of issues in their research, including the greater resources available to contact centres in urban areas, compared with rural contact centres, and the need to better promote the work undertaken by contact centres.
- 4.4.7 Durie (2005) examines the specific case of East Lothian in their analysis of social enterprise. Commissioned by the East Lothian Social Economy Partnership, the body charged with supporting social enterprise in the region, the study aimed to map social enterprise in East Lothian, identifying the numbers of organisations present, the potential for future social enterprise activity and areas of public services that would be of interest to social enterprises in the region.

4.4.8 The study gives limited information on its methodological approach, but is based on a questionnaire of organisations which might be classified as social enterprises as part of an initial mapping exercise, supplemented by focus groups and informal contacts. The study identified 81 social enterprises working in East Lothian, 41 of which were working in the childcare sector. Significantly, a wide range of areas of public services, ranging from recycling to healthcare, were identified as possible areas of growth and future work for the sector.

## **4.5 Lifelong learning**

4.5.1 A number of pieces of material we identified underline the important role that third sector organisations play in contributing to the provision of lifelong learning in Scotland.

4.5.2 The Scottish Community Development Centre (2007) developed a Community Resource Guide for Community Learning and Development Practice, based on a review of a number of existing resources at the national and local level. The Resource Guide includes an annotated bibliography covering all of the material included within its review of resources.

4.5.3 The third sector plays a strong role in the Guide, with the authors finding third sector organisations significant in community learning provision, and also a key audience for many of the resources they included. The authors also note the primarily English focus of some of the material they review, despite its claims to cover the UK.

4.5.4 Learning Link Scotland (2007) have undertaken research on the work of the third sector in providing training in English for second language speakers. This work was considered extremely important by the authors given demographic changes in the last decade. Based on an online survey and telephone interviews, the work identified a clear role for the third sector in provision of services for learners, ranging from practicing English conversation to accredited courses.

4.5.5 Similarly, Evans (2009) has undertaken an Audit of Scots Language Provision in Scotland. The research attempts to establish existing provision of Scots language education in Scotland. The work is based on multiple data sources, using a mixed methods approach. It also includes detailed case studies. The audit specifically examines the respective roles of the public, private and third sectors in this work, identifying a significant role for the third sector. The report suggests that sector organisations often augment provision by undertaking grass roots work, and that the sector should be supported to continue future provision.

## **4.6 Facilitating access to learning**

4.6.1 Beyond the themes of literature that relate to direct service provision, there is some work that suggests that the third sector also plays a role in facilitating access to learning, for example, through providing childcare to enable lone

parents to study. Burden (2004), for example, investigates the provision of childcare for lone parents at colleges and universities, finding that the third sector plays a significant role in funding childcare provision for lone parents. Little information, however, is given on the methodological approach taken.

4.6.2 Similarly, Slowey (2004) highlights the role played by third sector organisations in providing information and services related to learning, in the context of the inequalities existing in access to learning in Scotland. In a secondary analysis of the data provided by 475 respondents from Scotland included in the 2002 NIACE Survey of post-compulsory education, she finds that 'voluntary organisations remain important sources of information for adults' (p. 50) with voluntary organisations reported as sources of information and guidance on learning opportunities by a wide range of respondents to the survey.

#### **4.7 Access to employment**

4.7.1 The literature also revealed a role played by third sector organisations in facilitating access to employment. Many of the studies we encountered dealt with the impact of the third sector's work with groups who might otherwise be marginalised, or excluded, from the labour market.

4.7.2 Ridley et al (2008) examine employment support for people with learning disabilities and/or autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), considering the third sector within the scope of its work. The research surveyed providers of employment support, looked at the literature on best practice, gathered opinions about barriers and key issues, and explored experiences and views of supported employees, their families and employers.

4.7.3 The authors base their work on interviews with ten participants drawn from policy and strategic planning positions across the statutory and voluntary sectors, finding that a range of existing skills and expertise are in place across the different organisations included in the scope of their study. The authors present a number of implications for policy and practice, including a need to build on the well-developed practice, skills and expertise of existing supported employment services in Scotland. They did, however, identify the need to make employment support more user-focused and career-led.

4.7.4 Stalker (2002) reviews the transition of young disabled people into adulthood in Scotland. Her study builds on earlier work, set in England, but aims to reflect the distinctive post-devolution context in Scotland. The study takes as its starting point the limited existing literature focusing discretely on the Scottish context, noting the bias in existing work towards replicating the English experience.

4.7.5 The research is based on secondary analysis and a review of existing work, and contextualised by informal conversations with representatives of central government, statutory agencies, the voluntary sector and researchers working in the field. The study reviews the policy context in Scotland, noting the distinctive elements of the situation in Scotland, making recommendations for

developing transitions further. The voluntary sector plays a significant role in the research findings, contributing to transition planning and delivering services to young people.

## **4.8 Conclusions**

- 4.8.1 As is clear, a variety of topics have been included in this area, with a wide range of different pieces of research undertaken. The themes of literature sketched above here are by no means exclusive. However, they do indicate the direction of some of the elements of available work that formed clear themes of study.
- 4.8.2 The research relating to this particular strategic objective was of varying quality. Although much of the literature took a robust empirical approach, some studies provided little information on the methodological basis to the work (for example, not including information on survey sample size, and questions asked).
- 4.8.3 From the research as it stands, there is no full record of the third sector's contribution to this Strategic Objective, although it seems clear from the material available that it plays a significant role. There is a clear need for more methodologically sound research in this area, given the work of the third sector in promoting access to, and delivering, learning, as outlined above.

## **Gaps**

- i) We identified little scholarly literature relating to this theme**
- ii) Much of the existing material considered the third sector in Scotland as part of a broader study of the UK, rather than taking it as a specific focus**
- iii) The literature on adult numeracy is underdeveloped**
- iv) There is a need for more methodologically sound research in this field**

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## **5 HEALTHIER**

*Help people to sustain and improve their health, especially in disadvantaged communities, ensuring better, local and faster access to health care*

### **5.1 Introduction and interpretation**

- 5.1.1 Health services are a clear priority for the Government and the subject of a range of high profile policy initiatives. As we have seen in Chapter 2, health and social care also forms a significant focus of the work of the third sector, with some 45% of the sector working in 'social care and development'.
- 5.1.2 Our interpretation of this objective followed the primary trends of the literature we identified. The strongest themes of material we identified related to health policy, healthcare provision, health promotion, children and parental wellbeing, substance misuse, and sport, health and wellbeing.

### **5.2 The literature**

- 5.2.1 A large proportion of the literature was either directly produced by the public sector, or was commissioned by the government from independent researchers, with less work drawn from the third sector. Health status is influenced by education attainment, inequality, housing provision and the local environment. Frequently the third sector is incorporated into studies that examine particular client groups, for example, vulnerable children, alcohol abusers and recovering drug users. This type of social rather than medical model approach ensures an integrated analysis, but the third sector is rarely centre stage, with the focus on the needs of the client group rather than the contribution of a specific service provider.

### **5.3 The third sector in health policy**

- 5.3.1 Health services are a clear priority for the Government. Partnerships for Care (Scottish Executive, 2003) promotes health in a broad sense with patients as partners in their own healthcare. Health policy is integrated with the Scottish Government's other Strategic Objectives with links between health and inequality highlighted in relation to smoking, alcohol and other forms of substance abuse. Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland sets out the policy direction for 2008-11 and puts addressing inequality centre stage (Scottish Government 2007). The welfare of children living in poverty and disadvantaged communities and their vulnerability to obesity, suicide and other forms of physical and mental ill-health is widely documented (see Action for Children Scotland 2009). Within these policy frameworks, the contribution of the third sector to health improvement is acknowledged, both as an advocate and provider within an integrated healthcare system.
- 5.3.2 Increased emphasis is being placed on the provision of services and support in the community. Since 2005, a key role has been identified for Community Health Partnerships (CHPs) that are the successors to Local Health Care

Cooperatives (LHCCs). CHPs manage community health services and use a community planning process, involving voluntary sector and community based providers. In some areas of deprivation Healthy Living Centres have also been established with a key role for the third sector. The Better Health, Better Care Action Plan (Scottish Executive 2007) reinforces this policy framework. The NHS as a mutual organisation is well positioned to encourage local participation, ownership and accountability. NHS Boards are required to work with local third sector organisations to maximise their involvement and contribution to health improvement and ensure health boards achieve the *Investing in Volunteers Standard*. This policy context has created opportunities for the social enterprise sector. The Action Plan also emphasises the twin challenges of improving Scotland's public health and tackling health inequalities. During 2009, in partnership with the voluntary sector, a national Health Information and Support Service will be introduced.

## **5.4 Healthcare provision**

- 5.4.1 The literature in this field provides a range of evidence to suggest that the third sector plays a significant role as providers of healthcare, housing, advocacy, and through sports organisations and facilities. This is significant in illustrating the range of function undertaken by the sector.
- 5.4.2 An important theme in the material relating to healthcare provision is the narrative of partnership with the state. Towards a Healthier Scotland (1999) and Partnership for Care (2003) place partnership between the health service, local authorities and the voluntary sector at the core of promoting better health in Scotland (Woods 2001; Fyfe *et al* 2006). Pullen (2000) in an editorial for the British Medical Journal notes that a significant proportion of joint commissioning teams in Scotland are drawn from 'users, carers, and representatives from the voluntary sector'. Whilst the policy on CHPs is clear, research studies on the contribution of the third sector in CHPs is sparse. An early mapping exercise by Voluntary Health Scotland (2005) based on responses from 35 out of 36 CHPs (but using a less than systematic interviewee selection process) indicated that the third sector was represented on each CHP, reflecting adherence to statutory requirements. The findings, however, were cautious in relation to third sector capability and the sector's capacity to engage effectively in CHPs. Taking account of the centrality of CHPs in health policy, research is needed to assess the contribution of the third sector to CHPs and to the objective of a healthier Scotland.
- 5.4.3 Another important form of partnership involves the large number of volunteers that work alongside professionals in the provision of health and welfare services. The increased professionalisation of health and welfare services is not always viewed positively by volunteers. These issues are pertinent to Bondi's (2005) ESRC funded research on counselling in Scotland. In 2001, Bondi conducted a postal survey of voluntary sector counselling in Scotland supplemented by 100 interviews with agency managers and counsellors. Bondi reported a sharp narrowing of the definition of counselling compared to an earlier survey with organizations including CAB, Samaritans and Women's Aid Centres stating that they had withdrawn from counselling services, which

reflected an attempt by these organizations to distance themselves from the contemporary professionalisation of counselling.

- 5.4.4 Nonetheless, Bondi (2005) reported that 2,100 counsellors worked in 204 voluntary agencies in Scotland delivering 189,000 face-to-face counselling sessions per annum to 37,000 clients. 76% of voluntary sector counsellors gave their time and expertise without payment. Counselling services had become less geographically concentrated than in the 1980s, but inhabitants of rural areas still faced lengthy journeys to access services. Another key challenge related to training with the traditional contract of free training in exchange for voluntary service under considerable strain; only 24% of voluntary sector agencies were able to meet the full cost of their training. An important implication is that if trainees have to pay for their own training they may seek payment for their services which many organisations cannot afford. Moreover some respondents were opposed to professionalisation because they viewed volunteer status – and an implied peer rather than professional (i.e. hierarchical) relationship – as the essence of counselling.
- 5.4.5 This chapter is notable in that it places the development of the voluntary sector in Scotland in its historical context, beginning with the origins of the first counselling services at the end of the Second World War. It also provides a commentary on the effects of professionalisation of counselling services since the 1980s. The chapter also finds that counselling services are concentrated in the central geographical areas of the Country, with a paucity of services in rural areas
- 5.4.6 Whilst appropriate training and accountability for volunteers is essential these findings resonate with broader concerns about the professionalisation of voluntary sector organizations and the implications for attracting volunteers. In particular Fyfe and Milligan (2003) in their study of voluntary sector organization in Glasgow, based on 40 interviews amongst health, social welfare and criminal justice organisations, noted some unease amongst volunteers and staff about the professionalisation of voluntary organizations. Milligan and Fyfe argue that this ambivalence stems from a shift to a more corporate orientation with a loss of flexibility and responsiveness, and a reduction in the scope for volunteers to be drawn from the local community.

## **5.5 Health promotion**

- 5.5.1 Titterton et al (2000), as part of a consortium that included SCVO and the University of Glasgow, undertook research into the contribution of the third sector to health promotion. Forty-five interviews with voluntary and statutory agencies were complemented by focus groups of healthcare professionals. The research highlighted that health promotion was defined very broadly with a third of interview respondents mentioning some form of preventative work, either harm reduction for those working in drugs or alcohol prevention, or secondary prevention for those addressing particular illnesses such as stroke. The third sector's strength in health-related activity was based on its diversity and flexibility and its ability to fill gaps in statutory service provision, but its

weaknesses were the lack of a coherent sector-wide voice and the difficulty of developing strategy and planning in partnership with the public sector in which demarcation disputes existed. The research also notes the lack of detailed knowledge in relation to multi-agency partnerships and the third sector's role in health promotion.

- 5.5.2 A higher policy profile on the wider social and economic influences on health and wellbeing has encouraged a broadening of the health promotion agenda. Healthy eating and combating obesity have gained a much higher political profile. Although many studies have focused on what influences healthy eating (e.g. CRFR 2003), there is an emerging web presence that highlights the role of social enterprises within the evolving food cooperative movement. Hibbert *et al.* (2003) in a small qualitative study interviewed 8 of the 10 volunteers involved in a food cooperative, combining fruit and vegetable retail and a community café, in a deprived part of Scotland. Interviewees reported positive feelings of well being and improved self-confidence from their involvement in the cooperative.
- 5.5.3 Many of these community enterprises were showcased at the 2008 Social Enterprise World Forum [www.ceis.org.uk](http://www.ceis.org.uk). For example, the Mull and Iona Community Trust [www.mict.co.uk](http://www.mict.co.uk) has secured £5.4 million for community voluntary and social enterprises and has been active in the food sector, for example, organising an annual food festival. At present, however, there is little systematic evidence on the contribution of social enterprises to health improvement in Scotland.

## 5.6 Children and parental well being

- 5.6.1 There are many physical and mental health challenges confronting young people and their families in Scotland with sobering trends in suicide attempts and rates amongst young men and women (see Action for Children 2009). Many of these difficulties are influenced by parenting practices. Growing up in Scotland (GUS) is a longitudinal study that tracks the lives of Scottish children from their early years. In the second year almost 7,000 interviews were conducted with parents of children under 4. Young mothers, especially lone mothers in low income groups, were wary of professionals, requiring further research, but also signifying scope for enhanced third sector support (CRFR 2008).
- 5.6.2 ChildLine Scotland is a service delivered by Children 1<sup>st</sup> on behalf of the NSPCC and systematic data exists on the contribution of ChildLine (Backett-Milburn *et al.* 2006). Based on an examination of almost 11,000 calls in 2003-04, calls were categorised into queries about: facts of life, sexual abuse, pregnancy, relationships and sexuality. Three quarters of callers were females and the mean age of callers was 13.5 (13.9 boys, 13.4 girls). A common theme was the salience of peers in understanding and responding to sexual health issues but the research also revealed that for many callers there was nowhere else where their fears and concerns could be articulated, indicating the importance of relationship and lifeskill training.

- 5.6.3 The ChildLine study highlights the importance of mental health improvement, despite evidence that public attitudes and perceptions of mental health have improved, in part because of the National Programme and 'see me' campaign which has drawn attention to stigma and discrimination (Braunholtz *et al* 2004; Myers *et al* 2009). The Scottish Development Centre (SDC) has been active promoting better mental health. In 2006, SDC evaluated Restart, an Edinburgh based employability project for people recovering from mental health issues. Bailey *et al* (2006) based on interviews with 17 users and 4 service providers reported that 96 people had been assisted, and of the 25 that left the project 13 moved into employment. Positive 'recovery' outcomes were prominent themes in the interviews.
- 5.6.4 Smoking remains the biggest cause of premature death in Scotland. Each year nearly 13,500 deaths in Scotland are attributed to smoking, which equated to almost a quarter of all deaths. About 40 young people start smoking in Scotland every day (Scottish Government 2008). Legislation has a key role in prevention, but in addition to legislation, ASH Scotland have established a youth development officer and are sponsoring research by the University of Glasgow which examines the role of influential peers in disseminating important health messages [www.ashscotland.org.uk](http://www.ashscotland.org.uk).

## **5.7 Substance misuse**

- 5.7.1 The connections between mental health issues and substance abuse are noted in many studies (Scottish Executive 2003). Easthope and Lynch (1992) undertook research on third sector work with drug misusers, a study notable for its international focus, taking in Scotland, London and Tasmania. Based on a comparison of survey data in the three locations, the authors found a number of common themes across the locations. In particular, the third sector organisations included demonstrate a recent and rapid growth, are predominantly small and rely on the commitment of a few workers, and are heavily dependent on government funding. A later survey of 115 recovering drug users in Glasgow (Glasgow Street Intervention Group/Scottish Drugs Forum 2001) identified a series of problems that resulted in only 20% of recovering drug users feeling able look for employment.

## **5.8 Sports, health and wellbeing**

- 5.8.1 The benefits of sport in improving health and countering social exclusion has been recognised in the national strategy for Sport, *Reaching Higher* (Scottish Executive 2007) and data about participation in sport is collected and analysed by sportscotland (2008a). There is a small literature on the role played by third sector organisations in sports provision, and the resulting health benefits (Allison, 2001; Reid Howie Associates, 2006; SportsScotland, 2008b) and in the specific case of mountaineering the potential risks to health (Sharp 2007). Most of the research has been commissioned by Sportscotland. Allison (2001) from the Centre for Leisure Research, University of Edinburgh, undertook a comprehensive survey of sports clubs in Scotland. She distributed a questionnaire to 10,200 sports organizations and obtained 3,500 returns (36% response rate). The study highlighted that there was no single

definition of a sports club and respondents defined themselves in cultural terms, referring to their purpose and history. Acknowledging this imprecise definition Allison estimated that there were around 13,000 sports clubs in Scotland of which almost a fifth were football clubs (19.7%) or bowls clubs (18.9%). In conjunction with golf (6.4%) and badminton (4.9%) these four sports comprised more than half of all sports clubs in Scotland.

- 5.8.2 Significantly, sports clubs did not view themselves as part of the third sector which suggests that strengthening links with the third sector might enhance its contribution. This conclusion is reinforced by a report by Coalter et al (2000) based on a literature review and ten case studies, which argued that the potential for sport to enhance health was not being realised. They recommended that among the least active groups, the promotion of a more active lifestyle may be a more useful strategy than only offering traditional sports and stressed the psychological as well as the physical benefits of sport.
- 5.8.3 More recent evidence, although not based on large-scale survey research, indicates more concerted efforts to develop the links between sport and the voluntary sector. Greenaway (2008) based on primary documentation and 14 interviews evaluates the establishment of a volunteer development manager post with Scottish Swimming. He notes that there are approximately 2,500 volunteers in Scottish Swimming with an estimated value of £7.9 million per annum. The volunteer development manager was effective in developing a strategy to recruit and retain young volunteers in swimming, countering the ageing volunteer workforce. Greenaway (2008) concludes that the volunteer development role could be extended to other key sports.

## **5.9 Conclusions**

- 5.9.1 The literature makes it clear that the third sector plays a significant role in shaping and providing healthcare to the people of Scotland. It also highlights the work undertaken by third sector organisations intended to shape public health, and providing education on health and wellbeing, tackling substance misuse, counselling, and a range of other areas.
- 5.9.2 Overall, many different kinds of material are available that are relevant to this theme of the literature, and there is a significant body of material available. However most research is focused on specific client groups or national programmes with much less attention directed at the specific contribution of the third sector.

### **Gaps**

- i) We could identify only a limited body of work concerned with multi-agency partnerships (such as CHPs) in health**
- ii) The literature indicates that there is little research evidence on health promotion**

- iii) **Much of the work that relates to this objective does not discretely assess the third sector's contribution, but considers it alongside other issues**

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## **6 SAFER AND STRONGER**

*Help local communities to flourish, becoming stronger, safer places to live, offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life*

### **6.1 Introduction and interpretation**

6.1.1 In all, the evidence base relating to this Strategic Objective is comparatively strong. This was due in part to the wide range of material available but it should be noted that the scope of the theme contributed to the range of literature that related to each theme.

6.1.2 Although a number of topics were addressed in the literature, we identified particular areas of work dealing with ‘communities’ and research related to issues of ‘place’ and housing provision. We also included here the literature relating to the third sector and the arts, primarily because of the social and cultural benefits associated with this work in much of the material we encountered.

### **6.2 The literature**

6.2.1 Broadly, this Strategic Objective is subject to a considerable amount of research attention, from both public and third sectors, and from the academic community. As is typical of much of the relevant research in Scotland, a significant proportion is commissioned by the Government, and is intended to inform policy direction

6.2.2 However, this theme revealed a greater trend of work drawn from the boundaries of the state than the other Strategic Objectives, with the third sector playing a significant role in commissioning and undertaking research.

### **6.3 Housing and homelessness**

6.3.1 Within the literature, a range of the material deals with issues of place and housing. Broadly, these can be analysed according to two themes: homelessness and rough sleeping, and housing stock, as indicated by the examples below.

6.3.2 Wooley (2008) examines the importance of employability in dealing with homelessness, noting at the outset the role that third sector organisations can play in promoting employability in those disconnected from the labour market. The study finds the sector clearly has a role to play in dealing with homelessness, often in partnership with the state. It also suggests that the third sector has significant expertise in adapting to the specific needs and challenges of those at risk of homelessness.

6.3.3 Shelter (2004) examine the impact of rising house prices in rural Scotland. Reviewing the social problems of rising house prices, the study examines cases in both England and Scotland, finding particularly acute difficulties

caused by house price inflation in Argyll and Bute, the Scottish Borders, and Dumfries and Galloway. The work uses third sector agencies as sources of information (although it recognises that much of this may be 'anecdotal'). It recommends closer work between statutory and voluntary agencies to deal with the social problems caused by rising house prices.

- 6.3.4 Communities Scotland (2008) undertook a review of Registered Social Landlords in Scotland. Based on an analysis of the Annual Performance and Statistical Returns of Scottish Registered Social Landlords, the study provides an overview of the RSL sector in Scotland, describing the housing stock, and the structure of the sector. The report examines the performance of third sector organisations acting as Registered Social Landlords on several specific issues including managing empty property, dealing with arrears, and carrying out repairs. The study uses a number of case studies to highlight good practice.

## **6.4 Equalities groups**

- 6.4.1 Green (2006) undertook a survey of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. The aim of this research was to capture a snapshot of the work of the third sector with refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland over a one month period. The work was based on a quantitative survey undertaken in Glasgow. A survey questionnaire was used to collect further information based on the findings of interviews and case notes taken by a sample of organisations working in the field. The report includes a section specifically addressing the role of the third sector in supporting destitute asylum seekers in Scotland, finding that the sector provided services that would otherwise have not been available.
- 6.4.2 Lewis (2006) examines the public's attitudes towards asylum seekers in Scotland. The research is based on a total of 13 focus groups that were conducted across Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow with a range of participants from different backgrounds. In addition to its broad examination of public attitudes, the study identified that concerns around asylum seekers were related to economic issues. The study concludes by offering recommendations to a wide-ranging set of interested parties including the third sector working in the field.

## **6.5 The third sector and the arts**

- 6.5.1 A clear theme of the literature was the number of studies which took as their focus the role of the third sector in facilitating access to, and participation in, the arts in Scotland. Frequently, this work included in its scope the related social benefits to these activities. Beyond this, the material relating to the evidence base for arts and culture policy has been subject to recent review (Galloway, 2008), which provides a contextual starting point to examining the evidence in this area.
- 6.5.2 Losito (2002) examines culture, creativity and citizenship in Scotland, focusing in particular on the participation of young people in the arts. The research is

based on a range of case studies, primarily examining the work of third sector organisations based in Scotland. The study finds that the third sector has a significant impact on participation in the arts, and significantly, makes links between participation in arts and culture, wider community involvement, and wider participation in civic and democratic life.

- 6.5.3 Goodlad et al (2003) address the relation between the arts and social exclusion. The study focuses in particular on the Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIPs) run in Scotland by the Scottish Arts Council to distribute Lottery Funding to arts projects. The study drew on a postal survey of all Social Inclusion Partnerships in Scotland, focusing on the contribution of the arts. Ten detailed studies of arts projects were held, based largely on interviews with arts workers and staff. In three of these, the views of participants were examined through semi-structured interviews.
- 6.5.4 The study has a number of relevant findings, including the third sector's significant impact when funded through SIPs, and the untapped potential for greater participation in these projects, suggesting that further support for the third sector's work in this area might be beneficial.
- 6.5.5 Beattie and Pirnie (2002) trace the beginnings of a 'cultural renaissance' in the Highlands. Examining the unique set of physical, social and economic characteristics of the Highlands, the authors suggest that culturally, the region differs greatly from the rest of the Country. Moreover, they identify a growth in participation and interest in arts, sports, heritage and new media in the Highlands. Their work, based on detailed desk research, specifically addresses the role of the third sector in this cultural growth. Importantly, the authors conclude that the cultural renaissance in the Highlands is at an early stage, and needs to be nurtured in order to reach its potential.
- 6.5.6 McMahon (2002) has undertaken an in depth study of the culture of the Hebridean Islands, taking in issues of arts infrastructure and the promotion of Gaelic language. Based on interviews with more than fifty Islanders, including voluntary workers, she finds that the third sector plays a significant role in promoting Gaelic through education, information sharing and social groups.
- 6.5.7 Netto et al (2002) outline the importance of the third sector in increasing participation in the arts of people from ethnic minorities. Their study, drawing on focus groups and interviews with a range of stakeholders including people from ethnic minorities, arts organisations and Scottish Arts Council staff, finds that access to the arts is most often facilitated by third sector organisations, most frequently with little or no funding. Underpinning the findings of the study is the overwhelming contribution of third sector organisation to arts provision in Scotland.
- 6.5.8 Douglas (2002) presents a collection of discussion papers originating from an international conference promoting Arts and Heritage development in remote areas, held at Duff House in Banffshire, Scotland, in 2001. The conference explored the role of the arts in cultural development, as well as the impact of the arts from a variety of economic, social and cultural perspectives. The

diverse range of material included material, includes a number of country cases in its scope, includes a number of accounts of volunteer arts projects in Scotland.

## **6.6 The third sector and advocacy**

- 6.6.1 In common with the wider literature on the third sector drawn from other country settings, it is clear that in Scotland, third sector organisations have a significant impact in providing advocacy services.
- 6.6.2 Crowley (2008) examines the needs of migrant workers in Scotland, focusing on their relationship with Citizens' Advice Bureaux. The research fulfilled a mapping function, identifying a demographic profile of CAB clients from the Accession 8 (A8) countries. It also examined the role of CABs in providing advice, analysing contact with A8 migrant workers, and undertook a detailed analysis of the impact of this emergent client group on the work of the bureaux and their staff. The study concluded that the staff working in CABs were aware of the increased workload as a result of the increasing numbers of A8 clients, and suggests that the Government ensures comprehensive provision for these client groups.
- 6.6.3 The research was based on a survey of 251 clients across 13 Citizens' Advice Bureaux. Advisers from these 13 bureaux were drawn from both rural and urban areas of Scotland. The researchers also undertook ten structured interviews with clients drawn from across the participating bureaux, as well as a number of case studies.
- 6.6.4 Fyfe and Milligan (2003) examine the impact of the state on the third sector's role in providing welfare services to communities. Based on an in-depth case study of the third sector in Glasgow, the research investigates the 'spread' of third sector activity across the city, finding that there are high levels of voluntary activity in deprived areas of the city. Despite this, the research highlights concern over the impact of funding the third sector to provide services to deprived people, echoing a wider literature on the negative effects of contracting voluntary agencies, including excessive bureaucracy, loss of independence and erosion of the sector's comparative advantage.
- 6.6.5 Michael Bell Associates were commissioned by the Scottish Government to carry out research into housing debt, advice services and the gaps in provision that existed. Using a variety of methods, including local case studies, the work aimed to improve the state of knowledge about housing debt, including the third sector's role in providing advice.
- 6.6.6 The research identified findings in a number of relevant areas, including:
- Access to debt advice
  - The nature of employment
  - Joined up thinking, planning and delivery
  - Data collection
  - Independence of provision

- Prevention is better than cure
- Representation and the role of Sheriffs
- Training

6.6.7 The implications of this for the third sector are clear, although it must be noted that the study does not focus solely on the contribution of the third sector.

6.6.8 Skerratt et al (2008) undertook a study of community facilities in rural areas. Their work aimed to gather and analyse data on the extent of provision, and the condition of rural community facilities and to assess the levels and nature of their use. For the purposes of the project, only facilities owned and maintained by the third sector were examined.

6.6.9 Based on a postal survey, a small number of telephone interviews and local case studies, the research identified a significant role for the third sector in this area.

6.6.10 McQuaid et al (2007) review different approaches to evaluation in community regeneration on behalf of Communities Scotland, taking in the work of the third sector. The main aim of the research was to examine approaches and methodologies adopted by evaluations of regeneration and inclusion programmes in Scotland, in the context of the rest of the UK, in order to identify good practice, and lessons and recommendations for future approaches to programme evaluation in Scotland

6.6.11 The available research also includes more localised case studies, as well as nationally-focused studies. Fagan et al (2006) undertook a study on local community planning, aiming to explore a proposed community centre and housing development in Dunbeg. The work, based primarily on a survey, is interesting in that it is carried out in close consultation with local third sector groups, who were involved in shaping the survey and research direction at each stage.

6.6.12 Carnegie UK (2009) examine three case studies of community-led service provision in rural areas. One of these cases is the Kilwinning Sports Club. The work results in a set of findings aimed at identifying the successful features of each case, and how to promote good practice.

## **6.7 Conclusions**

6.7.1 This Strategic Objective enjoys a considerable amount of attention in the literature. Most of the research work identified is cross-cutting in nature, touching on other Strategic Objectives.

6.7.2 There are perhaps fewer obvious gaps in the literature in this theme than in some of the others, although the quality of research available does vary.

## **Gaps**

- i) The quality of research in this area is sometimes hard to establish, with little information on methodologies given at times**
- ii) There is little scholarly work in this area**
- iii) The research tends to focus on one aspect of work, rather than collecting a range of different indicators to establish the third sector's impact on community safety and strength**

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## **7 GREENER**

*Improve Scotland's natural and built environment and the sustainable use and enjoyment of it*

### **7.1 Introduction and interpretation**

7.1.1 The scope of this theme focused on the role of the third sector in promoting and carrying out environmental activity. Our analysis took in a range of broad themes including recycling, environmental advocacy, heritage, sustainable communities and the promotion of the outdoors.

### **7.2 The literature**

7.2.1 Although we encountered less material related to this theme than the other Strategic Objectives, environmental work has been a preoccupation of many researchers interested in the third sector. Largely, this literature is concerned with locally-focused action, rather than broader environmental work. There is a scholarly literature that tackles these issues directly, with a number of relevant pieces of material published in peer-reviewed journals.

7.2.2 The theme is also subject to attention from the state, resulting in relevant work drawn from the public sector that is contextually useful. For example, the Scottish Executive (2004c) maintain detailed statistics on the environment in Scotland, collecting data on issues ranging from public attitudes to air quality, and waste management. Beyond this, the third sector has generated a significant amount of material, much of which is in the form of smaller scale studies and evaluations.

### **7.3 Environmental volunteering**

7.3.1 A strong theme of literature concerned the work of third sector organisations in encouraging participation in environmental issues. This took a range of forms, from encouraging direct participation, to providing information and environmental education services.

7.3.2 Macrae and Reilly (2007) undertook a review of the participation of young people in environmental volunteering. The authors carry out an evaluation of the work undertaken by the Green Team, a voluntary organisation running one day and residential sessions for young people to participate in environmental activities.

7.3.3 The authors carried out participant observation and undertook focus groups with young people at two residential events, and two that took place over one day. The authors find a number of positive outcomes as a result of the work of the Green Team. In particular, young people feel that their values have changed as a result of participating in the activities, although lasting behavioural change was difficult to measure.

- 7.3.4 The Black Environment Network (BEN) have undertaken a number of pieces of research examining the participation of ethnic minorities in environmental volunteering (2004). This work largely takes the form of evaluations and case based studies of individual initiatives.
- 7.3.5 The account of the partnership between BEN and One Quilt Project (2004) is typical of this literature. Working with three community groups in Glasgow, the project aimed to use craft and art work to emphasise the value of traditional home-based skills in employment, and to promote local voluntary groups within their communities. The evaluation identified a number of successful features of the project, and recommended developing other community environmental art projects across Scotland.
- 7.3.6 Moxen and McCulloch (1999) discuss the role played by third sector organisations in disseminating environmental information. The authors examined the Scottish policy approach to environmental protection. The authors find that the role of third sector organisations in providing environmental information to the public has steadily increased. They find that these organisations are successful in disseminating information to the public but are less successful when working with industrial organisations. The authors build on previous work that explicitly discusses the role of the third sector in environmental policy.

## **7.4 Community Recycling in Scotland**

- 7.4.1 Community Recycling Network Scotland (CRNS) (2006; 2007) have produced a series of mapping studies of Scottish furniture projects which was undertaken in August and September 2005. The survey is also benchmarked against an earlier survey undertaken in 2003/04.
- 7.4.2 Based on a telephone survey of all 65 Furniture Reuse projects in Scotland, the research finds that by 2007 the number of active or emerging furniture projects on the CRNS database had fallen in 2007 from 65 to 57, including a carpet reuse project. Of these, 50 organisations took part in the survey.
- 7.4.3 The mapping study shows that the impact of the third sector on community recycling continues to increase year on year even though the total number of projects is in decline. The work identifies significant changes, including a 50% increase in service users, increased partnership with local authorities, and a 260% increase in the number of trainees in the sector.

## **7.5 Land management and heritage**

- 7.5.1 Some research has been carried out on the role played by the third sector in public education on environmental issues. Moxen and McCulloch (1999) conceptualise this as a 'learning opportunity' for the public, reaching across into the 'Smarter' Strategic Objective.

- 7.5.2 Volunteer Development Scotland (2007) have undertaken work that examines the contribution of volunteering to natural heritage in Scotland. The study identified 553 organisations working in heritage in Scotland, surveying 204 of these and carrying out a small number of in depth case studies. They identified a considerable contribution made by volunteers in this field, tempered by a number of issues relating to volunteer management, governance and training.
- 7.5.3 Reilly (2009) examines the role of volunteering in the historic environment, surveying 233 third sector organisations active in the field. The research, commissioned by the Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland (HEACS), aimed to identify the scope and scale of volunteering in the historic environment and examine the need for additional support. Its specific objectives were:
- to undertake an audit of volunteering in the historic environment across Scotland and establish a baseline of the range and scale of volunteering activity;
  - to examine opportunities to improve the coordination and management of volunteers and volunteering opportunities in the historic environment
  - to examine skills and resources across the sector, including how volunteering in the historic environment might be stimulated and supported
- 7.5.4 The report identifies issues of capacity, volunteer management and diversity for further development, suggesting that increased networking, generic training programmes, a more co-ordinated allocation of volunteers and greater promotion of the importance of heritage volunteering, might improve practice in this area.
- 7.5.5 Bramley et al (2004) review Green Belt policy in Scotland, commissioned by the Scottish Executive Development Department. The research was carried out over a relatively short period of time (seven months) but attempted to examine the origins as well as actual practice and performance, of Green Belt policy in different parts of Scotland.
- 7.5.6 The work builds on both academic and professional literature, and on stakeholder and practitioner experience, as well as data on the current operation of Green Belt policy, but also places the Scottish experience in international context, drawing on experience from other countries.
- 7.5.7 The research finds that the third sector has a role to play in mobilising communities to manage green belt areas. It suggests that there should be attempts to form voluntary bodies, holding charitable status, in order to engage local people in Green Belt planning.

## **7.6 Conclusions**

- 7.6.1 The work that is relevant to this Strategic Objective is dealt with a range of topics and varied in approach. The few examples discussed here give a flavour of the many topics addressed, and the distinctive features of much of

the work. Elsewhere we identified smaller themes of work relating to the environmental activities of specific organisations (often in the form of evaluations).

7.6.2 The work is, however, limited in its discussion of broader environmental topics, with a focus largely on either local cases, or on specific themes of work. Very little of the material identified in the analysis places research in a global context.

### **Gaps**

- i) Although there were a number of detailed local studies, we could identify few wide-ranging, national studies of the environmental work of the third sector**
- ii) The material we collected tended to take the case of Scotland in abstract from international environmental work**
- iii) Although there are statistics relating to environmental participation through voluntary activity, these could be more detailed**
- iv) Overall, this is an area that would benefit from greater research attention**

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## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

### **8.1 Introduction**

8.1.1 This section concludes the review, outlining the relation of the literature to the Strategic Objectives, what is not covered by the Strategic Objectives and what is, and highlighting gaps and areas for future work.

### **8.2 The contribution of the third sector to the Strategic Objectives**

8.2.1 From the material we have identified, there can be no doubting the importance of the third sector to social life in Scotland. The size, scope and diversity of the sector discussed in the material included in Chapter 2 only begin to attest to the sector's contribution in Scotland. There is also clear evidence underpinning the third sector's contribution to each of the Scottish Government's Strategic Objective. While the themes we have highlighted are by no means exhaustive, they can be taken as an indication of the breadth of the third sector's contribution.

8.2.2 In Chapter 3 we highlighted the role of the sector as an employer of paid staff and volunteers, showing a large and diverse workforce. We also noted the important role played by the third sector in organising credit unions, and in alleviating rural poverty. We noted that this Strategic Objective was subject to the most attention in the material we identified.

8.2.3 In Chapter 4, we noted that the third sector is also a provider of education and learning, particularly in post-compulsory education, when, for example providing adult numeracy classes. The material also highlights the role played by the third sector through the provision of early years childcare, lifelong learning, and in promoting access to learning and employment.

8.2.4 A significant amount of the material we encountered noted the large proportion of third sector organisations carrying out activity related to health and social care. We noted literature outlining the sector's role in healthcare provision, health promotion, child and parental wellbeing, and substance misuse, amongst other areas of work.

8.2.5 Chapter 6 dealt with the contribution of the third sector to ensuring safer and stronger communities. A wide range of studies underlined the third sector's importance to areas such as advocacy work, housing and homelessness, and equalities work.

8.2.6 Finally, in Chapter 7, we noted the contribution of the third sector to environmental work, identifying a number of studies that found an impact in areas as wide ranging as environmental volunteering, recycling, and land management.

### **8.3 Cutting across the Strategic Objectives**

- 8.3.1 The majority of the research that we have included in this review cuts across the five Strategic Objectives. For example, work on health promotion is relevant to both 'Healthier' and 'Smarter'. As has been noted earlier, some areas (most obviously those related to 'Wealthier and Fairer') have been subject to far more attention in the literature than others.
- 8.3.2 This is a necessary function of much of the research that we have encountered, with the work largely being focused on a specific initiative or theme without reference to the objectives themselves. It seems clear that the cross-cutting nature of the third sector's work is a strength that is emerging from the literature, and one that can support the Government's aim for more joined up working across portfolio areas.
- 8.3.3 One striking feature of the literature was the role played by the public sector in commissioning, or directly carrying out, research either directly on the third sector, or on related fields. The majority of the material we collected had its origins with the public sector, indicating a commitment on the part of the government to understanding the impact of the third sector. A comprehensive database of all commissioned work would be beneficial.

### **8.4 Third sector contribution beyond the Strategic Objectives**

- 8.4.1 Due to the wide scope of the Strategic Objectives, there was little research that dealt with the contribution of the third sector to services, or to the social economy, that did not fit with at least one strategic objective.
- 8.4.2 We did, however, identify a limited number of themes of research that did not fit discretely with any one objective. Typically these related to the overarching trends in government policy towards the third sector, or to issues such as definition. Examples of this might include policy reviews from the academic world, or overarching surveys of the size and scope of the third sector in Scotland. Most of these have been included in our analysis in Chapter 2.

### **8.5 Gaps in the existing material and areas for development**

- 8.5.1 Our review has identified some gaps in the existing research, including a number which do not fit neatly within the Government's five Strategic Objectives. It is clear that relatively little scholarly literature exists that focuses specifically on the third sector in Scotland, in spite of the broad references made in the context of the situation in the UK. Similarly, there is little literature that attempts to establish a conceptual basis underpinning the third sector's role in Scotland.
- 8.5.2 From our work, there is a clear mandate to further develop current research on the third sector in Scotland. Currently, although large amounts of material exist, with some exceptions there is no coherent body of research, which identifies clear areas of relevance for the sector as a whole. Instead, many studies focus on specific geographical locations, areas of work, or individual organisations. Given the clear contribution made by the third sector to social

and economic life in Scotland, the need to develop the body of nationally-focused studies of its impact is clear.

8.5.3 Although much of the literature that we encountered placed the work of the third sector in Scotland in an international context, we could identify little material that examined the impact of Scottish voluntary activity on other countries though, for example, international development.

8.5.4 Specific gaps in the literature under each theme are summarised in the table below:

Literature theme	Gaps
Overarching gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of scholarly literature</li> <li>• Most studies do not consider conceptual issues</li> <li>• UK (or English) focus in much of the relevant research evidence</li> <li>• Variable research quality</li> <li>• Low number of large-scale datasets</li> <li>• Little literature on international impact</li> <li>• Little cross referencing between studies</li> </ul>
Wealthier and fairer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variations in definition and scope lead to distinctions in research findings</li> <li>• Little work examining the recession</li> <li>• Rural Scotland often marginalised</li> <li>• Few qualitative studies of employees' experiences of working in the third sector</li> </ul>
Smarter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body of research not extensive</li> <li>• UK focus to much of the existing material</li> <li>• Little scholarly literature</li> <li>• The literature on adult numeracy is underdeveloped</li> <li>• There is a need for more methodologically sound research in this field</li> </ul>
Healthier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little work on multi-agency partnerships, particularly Community Health Partnerships</li> <li>• Health promotion an under-developed area of research</li> <li>• Greater discrete focus on the third sector needed</li> </ul>
Safer and stronger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variable research quality</li> <li>• Lack of scholarly literature</li> <li>• Research tends to focus on specific themes, such as the arts, rather than collecting data on a range of relevant areas</li> </ul>

Greener	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall this objective would benefit from greater research attention</li> <li>• Lack of global context to much research</li> <li>• Few broad, national studies</li> <li>• Few statistics on environmental volunteering</li> </ul>

## 8.6 Recommendations

8.6.1 While it is clear that abundant evidence exists to highlight the impact of the third sector in Scotland, there is a need to develop this work in order to present a comprehensive picture of the significant role played by third sector organisations. The specific gaps outlined above provide suggestions for addressing existing research needs. Beyond this, we recommend that further nationally-focused, cross cutting studies of the third sector's impact are encouraged.

8.6.2 Useful work is emerging that identifies, and collates, relevant pieces of research and resources dealing with the third sector's impact - for example, the evidence library developed by the SCVO. However, given the role of the Scottish Government in commissioning research in this area, we recommend developing a comprehensive database of all relevant commissioned work. Additionally, in order to develop the statistical evidence for the third sector's impact in Scotland, more use could be made of the relevant statistics collected by the public sector.

8.6.3 We would also suggest that the Scottish Government considers working with relevant networks of scholars in order to ensure a coherent research agenda is developed. In particular, the lack of conceptual literature dealing specifically with the third sector in Scotland needs to be addressed.

8.6.4 Finally, we would suggest that the evidence included in our review should prompt research interest in the third sector in Scotland. Particularly within the scholarly literature, there is a tendency to marginalise Scotland in favour of the UK as a whole. The unique character and impact of the third sector in Scotland that we have traced in the available research suggests that this approach is not appropriate. Instead, a greater focus on Scotland – and especially on the role of the third sector post-devolution – would significantly enhance the scope and quality of this work.

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## **APPENDIX 1: ORGANISATIONS CONTACTED DURING THE REVIEW**

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations  
Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition  
Voluntary Action West Lothian  
Dumfries & Galloway Federation of Councils of Voluntary Service  
North Lanarkshire Council of Voluntary Service  
West Dunbartonshire CVS  
Inverness CVS  
Fife CVS  
Scottish Enterprise  
The Office of the Scottish Charity Register  
Volunteer Development Scotland  
Directory for Social Change  
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