

# CENI Programme of Training Courses

February - June 2009

## EVALUATION COURSES

### Introducing Self-Evaluation

2 April 2009

Introduces the concepts and issues relating to self-evaluation and the various steps and stages involved in its implementation into everyday working practice.

### Methods & Tools for Self-Evaluation

24 February 2009; 28 April 2009

Designed to help participants understand the different approaches to gathering evidence and the range of evaluation methods and tools available.

### Analysing and Reporting Your Findings

10 March 2009; 13 May 2009

Building on previous courses - self-evaluation and evaluation methods and tools - this course explains the process of analysis in more detail and is designed to help participants consider approaches for examining both quantitative and qualitative evidence.

### Getting the Most From External Evaluation

19 May 2009

Explores issues such as the purpose of external evaluation, what an external evaluation involves and how to go about commissioning an evaluation consultant so as to ensure best value.

Introducing Self-Evaluation; Getting the Most From External Evaluation and Introducing Outcomes are approved by the Institute of Leadership and Management and participants may avail of an ILM Development Award, provided at an extra cost of £45 per person per course.

**Cost per day per person** (covers delivery, materials, refreshments and lunch):

£100 (Community & Voluntary)

£175 (Statutory/Commercial)

**Venue:** NICVA, 61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast.

**Time:** Courses run from 10 am - 4 pm

**For further information contact:** Gladys Swanton, CENI Training Manager at [gladys@cenil.org](mailto:gladys@cenil.org)

## OUTCOMES COURSES

### Introducing Outcomes

11 February 2009; 23 April 2009

Focuses on measuring the benefits gained from project activities and provides an introduction to concepts and issues as well as a number of examples of outcomes.

### Evaluating Social Capital Outcomes

24 March 2009; 21 May 2009

Demystifies concepts and explains the different dimensions of social capital. Participants will be supported to identify social capital outcomes and indicators as well as explore tools for gathering evidence.

## QUALITY COURSES

### Implementing PQASSO (2 Day Course)

9-10 June 2009

Covers all aspects of introducing and implementing the PQASSO system (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations) within an organisation.

## Mapping Social Assets - Report Set to Be Launched

The final report of CENI's innovative and ambitious social assets research programme is set to be published in March 2009.

This three year project, carried out in conjunction with CFNI, explored the potential of a social assets approach to supporting voluntary and community organisations. This approach assumes that successful community development can be best achieved by investing in, and building on assets. Therefore, in addition to targeting a community's social needs, community-focused programmes should also pay attention to those capacities and relationships which are important in determining their development potential.

The programme identified two key types of social assets:

- (1) social capital including Bonding, Bridging and Linking and;
- (2) community infrastructure consisting of the level and effectiveness of local organisations

CENI and CFNI have just finished an exercise, funded by a steering group of statutory organisations led by DSD, to produce a dataset of social assets. Using a method known as Nominal Group Technique, quantitative and qualitative data was generated on social capital and community infrastructures for all 890 Super Output Areas in Northern Ireland.

The results of this research will provide important complementary data for policy makers and community-based organisations alike by adding to what we already know about geographical communities, helping target community development initiatives and assisting the design and delivery of mainstream statutory programmes.

# CENI

Community Evaluation Northern Ireland

# news

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## CENI Launches 'Prove & Improve' - A Self-Evaluation Resource for Voluntary & Community Sector Organisations

CENI recently launched a new publication 'Prove & Improve - A Self-Evaluation Resource for Voluntary & Community Sector Organisations'. Supported by the Big Lottery Fund, the publication is designed to help organisations develop their services to improve the lives of the people they support and better meet their needs.

Brendan McDonnell, Director of CENI explains the background to the development of the publication: "The voluntary and community sector plays a vital role in delivering important services to a wide range of groups including older people, children, families and people with special needs. Funders who invest in the sector want to know that the projects they are supporting are making a real difference to people on the ground. Funded organisations need to be able to measure how well they have performed, and if necessary take steps to improve their work - evaluation can help them to do this."

"CENI's role is to ensure voluntary and community organisations understand what evaluation is about and that staff and volunteers develop the skills needed to effectively evaluate their own projects. 'Prove & Improve' is a good example of our commitment to build up these skills, to ensure everyone in Northern Ireland who benefits from the work of these groups is receiving the best possible service."

The publication represents the culmination of a three-year Training and Development Project delivered by CENI and funded by the Big Lottery Fund, which made training in evaluation skills accessible to locally based groups with limited resources. A number of training modules were developed to enable projects to understand and use self-evaluation to measure their success and identify how they can make their work more effective - to prove and improve.

'Prove & Improve' draws on the learning from the Training and Development Project and is designed to help organisations through the



Pictured launching the publication at Belfast Castle are (clockwise from L-R), Gladys Swanton, Training Manager, CENI; Nicola McIllooh, Deputy Director, CENI and Breidge Gadd, NI Chair, the Big Lottery Fund.

process of self-evaluation, breaking it down into a set of logical steps and stages. It particularly focuses on identifying and measuring outcomes - the benefits or changes which a project brings about for its users.

Speaking at the launch event, Breidge Gadd, Chair of the Big Lottery Fund in Northern Ireland said: "We are delighted that through our funding, CENI has been able to work with voluntary and community sector organisations to help them better understand and use evaluation. Through this Project, CENI has been able to help groups develop their own capacity by helping them to identify the outcomes of their project, and to monitor and assess the impact of their work."

"I welcome this publication and hope that 'Prove & Improve' will be a helpful resource for a variety of organisations. The guide will assist groups to illustrate the effectiveness and efficiency of the projects and programmes that they deliver, and improve how they work to ensure they are providing a quality service to the communities they support."

'Prove & Improve' was launched at a special event held in Belfast Castle attended by representatives from the voluntary and community sector, statutory sector, and funders.

Free copies of the publication are available by contacting CENI on 028 90248 005 or by emailing [info@cenil.org](mailto:info@cenil.org)

This publication is supported by

# CENI

Community Evaluation Northern Ireland

CENI  
Unit 5  
127-131 Ormeau Road  
Belfast  
BT7 1SH

Tel: 028 9024 8005  
Fax: 028 9023 5079  
E: [info@cenil.org](mailto:info@cenil.org)  
W: [www.cenil.org](http://www.cenil.org)  
Charity No. X02077/95



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



LOTTERY FUNDED

# CENI's Big Lottery Funded Training & Development Project a Success

As CENI's BIG Lottery Funded 'Training and Development Project' comes to an end, we report on its achievements and the findings of the Project's External Evaluation Report. The report highlights the valuable monitoring and evaluation support provided by the Project to low capacity voluntary and community groups in an increasingly challenging funding environment.



**CENI's Evaluation Training and Development Project was launched in 2005. Funded by the Big Lottery Fund, it provided training and support to organisations to help them to understand and use evaluation to improve and develop their services. Key areas of work for the project included:**

- Consultation with stakeholders on training and development needs
- Development work, designing new training modules on relevant themes and expanding/tailoring existing modules
- Delivery of evaluation training and information sessions to target groups
- Development of an evaluation resource for target groups
- Dissemination of learning within the sector

From the outset, the Project was designed to target particularly "hard to reach groups" with little resources for evaluation or

training and with specific capacity needs. To achieve this, CENI devised a strategy to engage with and deliver support to umbrella bodies, locally based issue groups and neighbourhood community groups.

The external evaluation of CENI's Training and Development Project highlights its success in providing access to training and support in evaluation and building the capacity of nearly 500 participants from target groups. The evaluation also demonstrates how the Project has enabled CENI to broaden its reach and range of services, and produce a self-evaluation resource pack based on the learning from the Project.

**Benefits to Participants:** The report shows that the training programme enabled participants to acquire new skills such as using creative methods of data collection and processes and tools for implementing self-evaluation. The Project helped them to adopt a more focussed, strategic way of working, to demonstrate the achievement of

outcomes and analyse and report on these more effectively.

**Development Work:** A needs analysis of the target groups was conducted on a regular basis and new training modules researched, designed, piloted and implemented to ensure their needs were being met. CENI also successfully tailored modules for specific sectors to meet their particular requirements e.g. those working in the arts, disability, or childcare settings. CENI's needs-based approach to engaging with target groups and its flexibility in both tailoring of modules and delivery of training were deemed to be very effective, and greatly contributed to the successful achievement of the Project's objectives and targets.

**Benefits for CENI:** CENI has itself benefited from the Project as it has allowed for the development of the organisation's own capacity, particularly with regard to improved skills in engaging with hard to reach groups. It has also helped CENI to expand its suite of courses as new modules developed for the target groups have since been incorporated into CENI's core training programme.

**Evaluation Resource and Dissemination of Learning:** Another key achievement was the design and production of 'Prove & Improve - A Self-Evaluation Resource for Voluntary and



Community Organisations'. This publication, designed to help organisations through the process of self-evaluation is currently being widely disseminated.

**Recommendations:** Recommendations emerging from the report point to the need for CENI's on-going discussions with funders and other stakeholders to further resource this important skills area within the voluntary and community sector. The evidence of need emerging from the groups, the package of support developed through the Project, and the 'Prove & Improve' publication will greatly assist with this process of engagement. CENI will also ensure that the legacy of the Project is sustained and that the learning and the practices developed are incorporated into ongoing evaluation support for the sector at project and programme level.

We will continue to disseminate the learning to target groups using a variety of media. The further investment in the development of ICT systems and our newly developed website supported by the BIG project funding, will help us to do this.

## EXPERIENCES OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

### Preparing for Evaluation

*"Evaluation is a regular action each term, rather than being adhoc or funder driven."* Women's Centre

### Developing a Self-Evaluation Plan

*"The plan is useful as it helps you to be able to break things down so you don't go off on a tangent...it helps us to be specific and narrow down what we want to achieve."* Residents Group

### Outcomes and Indicators

*"The training helped us to identify more qualitative outcomes which we wanted to measure but we felt hadn't been covered before."* Community Organisation

### Methods and Tools

*"Since attending the training we have designed the feedback forms so we receive more appropriate feedback and, as a result, have a more significant number of forms completed and returned."* Women's Centre

### Making Sense of Information

*"In the past we simply asked participants what they thought about the activity or the event. Now we are trying to get away from the quantitative and ask about change...we now have evidence for what we knew was happening as a result of the project."* Community Arts Organisation

# New ILM Endorsed Self-Evaluation Training and Support Programme Launched

**As part of our commitment to developing evaluation capacity within the voluntary and community sector, CENI has strengthened its existing suite of open training courses by launching a new ILM (Institute of Leadership and Management) Endorsed Training and Support Programme in Self-evaluation.**



Self-evaluation has become an increasingly integral part of organisational management, and CENI has developed this new Programme in response to the needs of the sector. The Programme is designed to equip voluntary/community and statutory organisations with the knowledge and skills required to effectively implement self-evaluation within their working practice. It enables participants to avail of an integrated package of self-evaluation and outcomes modules, moving beyond individual ILM Development Programmes to attain a higher level award.

Programme participants are required to attend four of CENI's one-day training courses, three of which are compulsory. These are:

- Introducing Self-Evaluation
- Methods and Tools for Self-Evaluation
- Analysing and Reporting

A fourth course is then selected from the following options:

- Introducing Outcomes
- Social Capital Outcomes
- Getting the Most from External Evaluation

In addition, participants will be supported through group and one-to-one sessions to carry out a number of exercises which lead to the completion of a small scale self-evaluation project relevant to their work.

The cost for the Programme is £850 per person (voluntary & community) and £1250 (statutory). Anyone interested in participating in the Programme, or requiring further information should contact Gladys Swanton, CENI Training Manager, tel: 028 9024 8005 or email [gladys@ceni.org](mailto:gladys@ceni.org).

## CENI Launches New Website

**February 2009 sees the launch of our new look website which is supported by the Big Lottery Fund as part of its funding of CENI's Training and Development Project.**

The new site provides details of our services, information and resources on evaluation including research reports, published evaluation reports, CENI publications and Frequently Asked Questions drawn from our recent

publication 'Prove & Prove'. The full publication itself is also available to download. The new site is designed to be accessible to a broad range of groups and more user-friendly. It provides a valuable resource for anyone interested in finding out more about evaluation and CENI's role within the sector.

**Why not visit our site today - [www.ceni.org](http://www.ceni.org)**