



Challenges:

- Capacity and resource limitations in community and Third Sector organisations
- Limited research and evaluation skills in the sector
- Funding constraints
- Differences in culture and power dynamics between Third Sector organisations and HEI
- Limited access for Third Sector organisations to current evidence
- Lack of strategic national approach to sharing evidence and influencing policy

Opportunities:

- Community and Third Sector organisations positioned to use knowledge to make change
- There is an appetite to develop better evidence in the sector
- Collaboration is developing locally, regionally and nationally
- There is government and national policy support in principle
- Universities are rethinking Civic Mission and their relationships to local communities



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Introduction to the
SPARK Third Sector
Research Partnership

SPARK – Cardiff University’s Social Science Research Park

Third Sector Research Partnership aim - *To create a vibrant Third Sector research culture in the Cardiff and Capital Region by forming equal partnerships between Third Sector Organisations (TSOs) and academics, through the development and sharing of research skills, mobilisation of existing evidence and through the co-production of new research that creates positive change in disadvantaged communities.*

Partner involvement – Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), Cardiff Third Sector Council (C3SC), Cwmpas, Building Communities Trust (BCT), Together for Change, Swansea and Aberystwyth Universities and the University of South Wales

6 organisations, small to medium in size

Working with some of Cardiff's most disadvantaged communities including: Communities experiencing poverty, refugee and asylum seekers, people with mental health challenges, LGBT people, people with learning disabilities

Third Sector organisation strengths and assets:

- Direct relationships 'on the ground' with disadvantaged groups
- Lived experience and local knowledge/skills
- Able to make use of knowledge to create change

Challenges and barriers

- Differences in culture between Third Sector organisations and Higher Education institutions
- Resulting power imbalance

Workshops and 1-2-1 engagement with Third Sector organisations

Development of bespoke research canvases and research support requests

Development of 10 hour pro bono support from academics

Integration with internal university programmes (e.g. Civic Insights programme)

SPARK Research Canvas:
Grow Cardiff

Date: 19/12/2023

Third Sector Research Partnership

The problem – what's up?

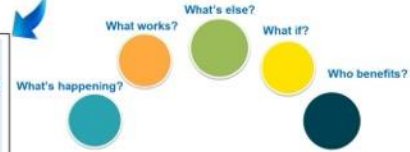
What's keeping us up at night? What's on our minds?



What do we want to know?

Interested in developing a whole school approach to children growing their own food (embedded in curriculum). Also want to explore the potential of a hub for community growing and nature organisations.

Types of research questions



A helping hand?

Links with people in Spark for an initial facilitated discussion, including:

- DECIPHer and their Schools Health Research Network (SHRN),
- Maria/Simon Murphy,
- Kevin Morgan and foundational economy and food,
- CAST,
- Chris Taylor and education,
- Cardiff Child Friendly Cities

Benefits of research

- Evidence of impact
- Evidence for funding
- Develops credibility
- Objective and independent
- Fresh understanding
- Alternative approaches
- Raising profile
- Influence on policy
- Ownership
- Building skills

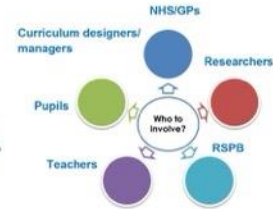
Characteristics of successful research partnerships

- Straight forward process
- Mutually beneficial
- Manageable time
- Commitment agreed up front
- Equal partnership
- Recognises resource needs
- Recognises cultural differences
- Shared language
- Process held and supported
- Output is useful
- Not extractive
- Researcher volunteers
- Ongoing accountability

Our Research Question



Who do we need to involve?



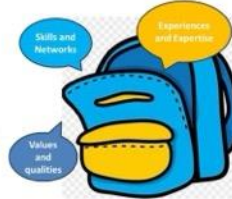
What steps do we need to take...?



The Research Cycle
Where are you now?



Everything you bring...



- Growing skills and knowledge
- Social prescribing
- Working with primary and secondary schools
- Previous experience with researchers and on research projects

Research topics

- How to develop a whole school approach to children growing their own food
- Understanding the impact of a previous scholarship programme for young people
- Exploring the impact of drag performance on people with learning disabilities.
- Understanding the impact of holocaust education on antisemitism
- Exploring the significance of the physical space/environment at a refugee project on the integration of asylum seekers and refugees
- Understanding how the physical design of neighbourhoods impacts on behaviour

5 of the 6 are now exploring longer term research partnerships and projects, with some seeking funding to co-produce research led by communities.

- Development of longer term research partnerships
- Introduction of a new cohort of Third Sector Organisations
- Possible support for research project with Cardiff 'Community Anchor Organisations'
- Exploring other new models of support
- Exploration of funding mechanisms for research partnerships/collaborations
- Development of a community of practice
- Influencing and integrating with university Civic Mission strategy