



Annual monitoring survey 2013

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Executive Summary

This report details the findings of INTRAC and WOI's own internal monitoring of the Peer Learning Programme. In May 2013, 12 months into the 18 month programme, a survey monkey questionnaire was sent to 112 people from 77 organisations. Of the 37 Responses, 29 completed the questionnaire, giving an encouragingly high 26% response rate.

The aim of the survey was to analyse the quality of inputs from the perspective of PLP participants and identify the impact of these activities on their organisations, their ability to support partners and the ways they learn from each other. This monitoring process is intended to complement the forthcoming external evaluation and pre-and post-intervention OCAT exercises.

The survey reveals that each of the monitoring targets that were set at the start of the programme have been exceeded, mostly by a considerable margin. The table below gives the headline data in relation to the target:

Monitoring target	Headline data
Quality of outputs	
Participants score the average quality of all interventions at 7.5/10 or more.	The average rating for all activities was 8.4 out of 10 (the individual ratings for each activity are detailed below).
Outcomes/impact achieved:	
<i>Changes to the organisation in the UK:</i> 60% of respondents to annual monitoring survey indicate that being part of the PLP has 'definitely' or 'probably' improved their capacity.	83% of respondents reported that the capacity of their organisation had 'definitely' (41.4%) or probably (41.4%) increased.
25% of respondents to annual monitoring survey are able to describe significant capacity improvements as a result of their participation in the PLP programme.	42% described significant capacity improvements.
<i>Changes in their ability to support partners:</i> 40% of respondents to annual monitoring survey indicate that being part of the PLP has 'definitely' or 'probably' increased their ability to support their partners.	86% reported that their ability to support their partners had 'definitely' or 'probably' increased.
<i>Changes in the way CGI partners learn from each other:</i> 60% of respondents to annual monitoring survey indicate that being part of the PLP has 'definitely' or 'probably' improved their networking with other PLP members.	83% reported that being a part of the PLP has 'definitely' (44.8%) or 'probably' (37.9%) improved their networking.
30% of respondents are able to describe how they have applied what they have learnt from networking into practice.	48% described specific and meaningful examples of how they have applied what they have learnt

The PLP seems to be meeting a need amongst small and diaspora organisations in the UK. Comments such as, '*it was really valuable to meet other participants... We learnt about many issues which are 'common'... We feel far less 'isolated' and 'the group has given me the opportunity to meet like-minded professionals who... have provided me with encouragement, support and advice'*', highlight the value to participants of meeting with other people working in similar organisations.

The inclusion of facilitator led activities such as the one-day workshops and one-to-one consultancies have also met a need for organisations to improve or learn new skills. By enabling participants to decide the workshop topics, have specific consultancies, steer the direction of Action Learning Sets and discuss leadership issues in coaching, the programme has been flexible enough to enable participants to achieve tangible changes in their organisations.

It is also clear from the survey results that whilst the primary target group are small and diaspora organisations in the UK, the benefits of the programme have reached partner organisations.

1. Introduction

1.1 Aim

The purpose of the Annual Monitoring Survey was to gather information on participant's experiences of participating in the Peer Learning Programme (PLP) over the first twelve months of the programme. More specifically, the results of the survey would help to monitor the extent to which certain targets had been so far achieved. The indicators are both output and impact oriented.

1.2 Methodology

The survey was developed from the indicators outlined in the agreed system for monitoring and evaluating the PLP:

Quality of outputs:

- Participants score the average quality of all interventions at 7.5/10 or more.

Outcomes/impact achieved:

Changes to the organisation in the UK:

- 60% of respondents to annual monitoring survey indicate that being part of the PLP has 'definitely' or 'probably' improved their capacity.
- 25% of respondents to annual monitoring survey are able to describe significant capacity improvements as a result of their participation in the PLP programme.

Changes in their ability to support partners:

- 40% of respondents to annual monitoring survey indicate that being part of the PLP has 'definitely' or 'probably' increased their ability to support their partners.

Changes in the way CGI partners learn from each other:

- 60% of respondents to annual monitoring survey indicate that being part of the PLP has 'definitely' or 'probably' improved their networking with other PLP members.
- 30% of respondents are able to describe how they have applied what they have learnt from networking into practice.

This was also an opportunity to gather some more detailed information about others aspects of the programme such as: how participants have passed their learning on to their

partners; which activities and topics have been the most useful; if participants have used the PLP website; and, what recommendations participants have for programme.

The link to the online survey was emailed to 112 people from 77 organisations on 22 May 2013. The mailing list was cleaned up before the survey was sent out: those organisations that had not participated in the PLP in any way were removed; those that had explicitly asked not to be contacted about the PLP were also removed. The list was also crosschecked against attendance lists for the workshops, Action Learning Sets and coaching to ensure that everyone who had participated in the PLP was contacted.

By the time of writing this report (end-August) there had been 37 responses to the survey. Of these, 29 different people completed the questionnaire. This represents a response rate of 26%. Of the eight remaining responses, five people did not finish the survey and three restarted and completed the survey (and are included in the 29 completed surveys). 23 respondents identified their organisation as a 'small' with only 6 identifying themselves as a 'diaspora' organisation.

A shorter survey was also designed for consultants that have worked on the programme. The aim of this survey was to gather their experiences of working with small and diaspora organisations through the PLP. Whilst we did not commit to any monitoring targets in relation to this group, we felt it would still be valuable to get their views. These are presented in section three of this report.

1.3 Limitations

The survey was conducted 12 months into an 18 month programme and therefore provides only partial feedback on the programme. While some of the activities were nearing completion (such as the one-day seminars) others were only mid-way through (consultancies) and some were still in their early days (coaching).

Whilst 26% is a high response rate for this type of survey, almost three-quarters of participants in the programme have not responded. There could be number of reasons for this. One issue that has been apparent throughout the programme has been the limited amount of time that participants have to spend time on the PLP, this could have been one thing that they didn't have time to do. The survey was sent to large number of people of which only a small number have consistently and actively engaged in the programme. This would have limited the number of people who felt they could respond. Despite these challenges, a 26% response rate is reasonably good.

There are also limitations with self-reported data and attribution. It is not a scientific study and participant's responses are personal and subjective. Participants were asked to respond to questions about the impact of the PLP on them personally and on their organisations. Whilst it may be easy to recall specific interventions from different programmes that they may be a part of, it is also possible that the impact of various different activities – some PLP, others not – have had a cumulative effect on a participant and it is therefore difficult to solely attribute capacity improvements to one single intervention.

2. Findings from PLP participant survey

2.1 Participation in the PLP

Respondents were asked which activities they had participated in over the programme period. The majority of respondents (89.7%) had participated in a one-day workshop with just over half having participated in an action learning set (58.6%). Just over half had read PLP toolkits (58.6%). The fewest number of respondents had received coaching/mentoring. This could be because at the time of the survey the coaching activity had only begun with some participants whilst other people were being matched to a coach. Table 1 below shows the number in detail.

Respondents were also asked to rank which activities they had found most and least useful on a scale of 1-5 where 1 was most useful and 5 was least useful. The activity that was rated as the most useful was the one-to-one consultancy, closely followed by the one-day workshops. The table below shows these results in more detail:

Table 1: Number of participants in PLP activities and usefulness rating:

PLP Activity	No. of participants	Average rating (out of 5, where 1 is most useful and 5 least useful)
Consultancy	13 (44.8%)	1.8
One-day workshops	26 (89.7%)	1.9
Action Learning Set	17 (58.6%)	2.1
Coaching/mentoring	6 (20.7%)	2.3
Reading PLP Toolkits	17 (58.6%)	2.9

The topic that participants found the most useful was 'monitoring and evaluation' closely followed by 'partnerships and capacity building'. Respondents were given the option of specifying 'other topics' that may have been covered in ALS, consultancy and coaching. These included: advocacy, governance and management, performance management, funding volunteer management and 'general sharing of information on issues with other small NGOs'. Table 2 below shows the results of which topics were most useful:

Table 2: Usefulness of topics

Topic	Percentage of respondents rating the topic as useful
Monitoring and evaluation	55.2%
Partnerships and capacity building	51.7%
Theory of change	44.8%
Leadership	31.0%
Other topic/s covered in Action Learning Set, consultancy and/or coaching	24.1%

These numbers echo what participants prioritised at the start of the programme.

2.2 Quality of outputs

Monitoring target: Participants score the average quality of all interventions at 7.5/10 or more.

Respondents were asked to assess the quality of the different PLP activities out of 10 (10 being excellent). Every activity exceeded the target of 7.5/10. Taken as a whole, the average rating for all the activities is 8.4/10. The table below shows the breakdown for each individual activity:

Table 3: quality rating of activities

Activity	Average rating (out of 10)
Coaching/mentoring	9.3
Consultancy	8.9
One-day workshops	8.1
Toolkits	8.0
Action Learning Set	7.6
Average across activities	8.4

2.3 Changes to the organisation in the UK

Monitoring target: 60% of respondents to annual monitoring survey indicate that being part of the PLP has 'definitely' or 'probably' improved their capacity.

Twenty-four respondents (82.8%) reported that the capacity of their organisation had 'definitely' (41.4%) or probably (41.4%) increased from being a part of the in the PLP. Only three people (10.3%) reported that being a part of the PLP had 'not really' improved their organisational capacity and only one (3.4%) replied 'not at all'. One respondent (3.4%) did not know.

Respondents were also asked how much they felt they had individually learnt from participating in the PLP. Though this question did not directly relate to a specific monitoring indicator, the responses provide a useful indication that participants have learnt from being a part of the PLP. It is highly likely that this learning would be implemented in their day-to-day work.

Almost all respondents (89.6%, 26 people) felt that they had learnt either 'a considerable amount' (31%, 9 people) or 'a reasonable amount' (58.6%, 17 people) from participating in the PLP. Only 3 (10.3%) people felt that they had only learnt 'a little'. No respondent reported learning 'nothing'.

Monitoring target: 25% of respondents to annual monitoring survey are able to describe significant capacity improvements as a result of their participation in the PLP programme.

To address the monitoring target above respondents were asked to describe the most significant changes they had seen in their organisation as a result of participating in the PLP. Deciding what counts as a 'significant' change is highly subjective. It could be assumed that any comment written in the question is deemed significant by the respondent otherwise they would not have written it. In order to compare answers and to provide a numerical result that can be compared to the target, 'significant changes' are ones that meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The change has had a positive impact on the ability of staff to do their jobs for example, staff feel more confident to deal with issues at work;

- The change has improved policies and procedures within the organisation, for example the introduction or improvement of an M&E system, drafting of an organisational plan or strategy;
- The change has improved the relationships with partner organisations for example, being able to engage with partners about governance.

Only twenty-six respondents answered this question. Of this, eleven respondents (42.3%) described changes that fit the above criteria. These responses are written verbatim below. All the responses to this question are listed in appendix 2.

It is still at an embryonic stage, but the one day consultancy gave us the tools, knowledge and confidence to start to refer to and use a more rights-based approach in our project planning and design. This was always an area we touched upon, but the consultancy showed us its' relevance to us and our work. The consultancy also gave us the chance to discuss how this area could and is relevant to our work with different partners in different countries and also the possible drawbacks or limitations.

We are able to engage with our partners on issues of governance and leadership in a profession setting.

PLP's consultant has helped us to adopt a much more sustainable approach and has helped us to develop our strategy.

Revision of monitoring and evaluation systems, greater focus on core vision and tasks.

The capacity of the organisation has grown and we have established effective and efficient ways of working. I have seen the confidence within the staff team grow and the tools we have adopted have had an impact on how we fundraise, deliver and report on our work.

Our strategy day with a consultant facilitator was excellent. It brought staff and trustees together for the first time to focus on our way forward. The facilitation was excellent, increasing levels of understanding and sharing of learning between staff and trustees. The follow-up wider stakeholder consultation on strategy will engage our partners in our strategy development.

The PLP participation has made us make the time and opportunity to look at our organisation and develop an organisation plan for the future.

We had a very specific need (to further develop our impact assessment work) which a consultancy helped to fulfil. The PLP consultancy was part of a longer-term process we're undertaking to develop our impact assessment framework.

Building relationships with the Board of Trustees improved communication with donors, improved line management of staff. Constructing project proposals in a different way.

It has enabled us to get staff working and learning in sets. New staff [a]re automatically drawn into the organisation with lots of opportunities to learn on the job very quickly, it has supported our m and e team to do a better job and strengthened north south relationships.

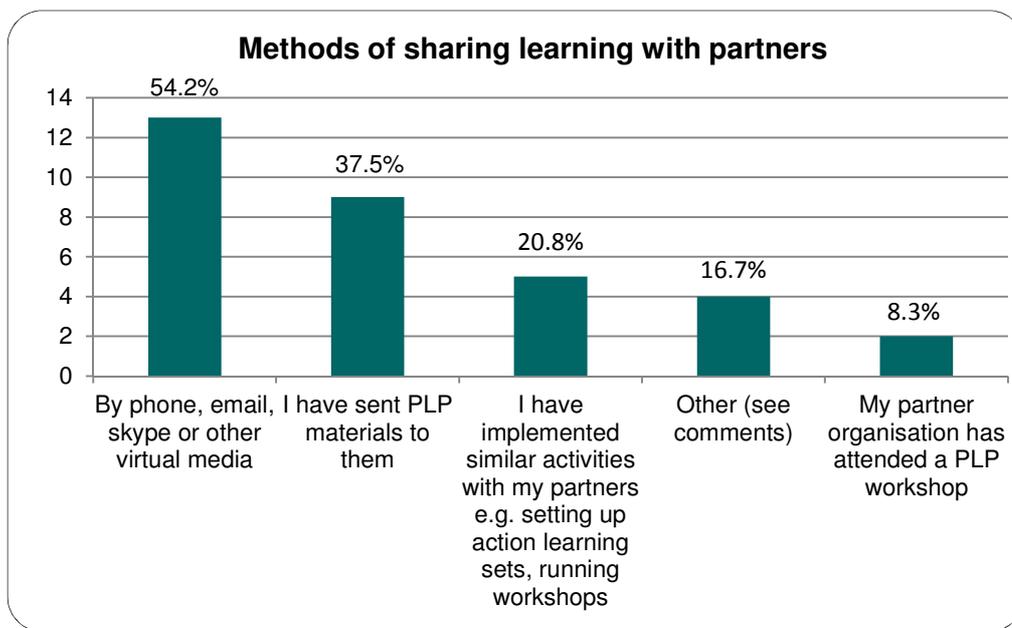
Helped with the creation of an MEL strategy.

2.4 Changes in the ability to support partner organisations

Monitoring target: 40% of respondents to annual monitoring survey indicate that being part of the PLP has 'definitely' or 'probably' increased their ability to support their partners.

The majority of respondents (twenty-five people, 86.2%) reported that being a part of the PLP had ‘definitely’ (41.4%) or ‘probably’ (44.8%) improved their ability to support their partners. Only three people (10.3%) felt that it had ‘not really’ improved their support to partners. One person (3.4%) did not know what impact it had had.

Participants were asked if they had shared their learning with partners and how. Twenty-four respondents (82.8%) said they had shared their learning with partners. Five (17.2%) respondents had not shared their learning. The following chart shows the number of people sharing their learning in the various different ways:



The four respondents that ticked ‘other’ methods were asked to specify what methods they had used. Their comments are below:

Less formal means of sharing during M&E visits an occasional email references.

Through embedding the concepts/ideas in direct work with partners.

Intend to implement similar activities in due course.

I have used the materials/learning in our workshops with them.

The five respondents who had not shared their learning with partners were also asked why they had not done so: two people replied that they had not shared their learning yet but intended to do so; one person replied that they don't have time; one replied: ‘we will share outcomes of our excellent strategy day’; and one stated ‘I have only be able to attend one Peer learning session’.

Respondents were also asked to describe how changes in their organisation in the UK had then gone on to affect their work with partners. A selection of responses is below (all the responses are in Appendix 3):

I have initiated Action Learning Sets across three organisations in Uganda, all three funded by Comic Relief. I have also shared all the tools in particular monitoring and evaluation, working in partnership, fundraising and Theory of Change with our partners, tools which they have adapted.

We have had meetings in South Africa with our partners and a new staff member has been employed as our Project Liaison & Development Officer based within South Africa.

Completed a Theory of Change.

We recently ran a multi-partner workshop in Uganda and shared our learning around impact assessment in sessions with partners there.

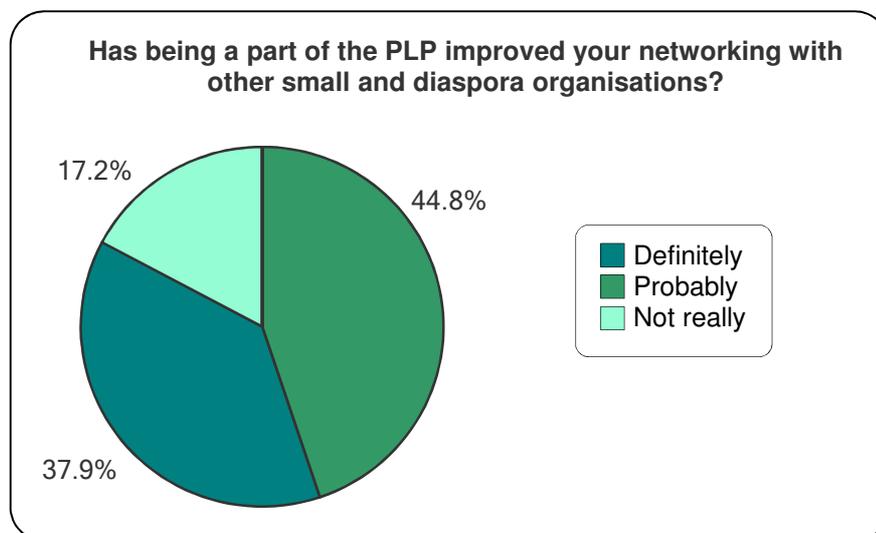
Better project proposal planning and design Planning for project completion and an exit strategy for one project. Partners better supported in this process.

Being more involved in the projects led to me visiting Sierra Leone, which has provided a better understanding of the culture and challenges faced

2.5 Changes in the way CGI partners learn from each other

Monitoring target: 60% of respondents to annual monitoring survey indicate that being part of the PLP has 'definitely' or 'probably' improved their networking with other PLP members.

Twenty-four respondents (82.7%) reported that being a part of the PLP has 'definitely' (44.8%) or 'probably' (37.9%) improved their networking with other small and diaspora organisations. As the chart below shows, only 5 people (17.2%) reported that it had 'not really' improved their networking.



Monitoring target: 30% of respondents are able to describe how they have applied what they have learnt from networking into practice.

14 organisations (48%) were able to describe how they have applied what they have learnt from networking into practice. The table below shows verbatim what respondents learnt from their networking with other small and Diaspora organisations in the PLP and the ways that this learning has been applied.

Table 4: Application of learning from networking

	What have you learnt from other SDOs?	How have you applied that learning?
1	We have been networking with diaspora organizations of Somali origin because we share a lot in common. As far as learning is concerned, we agreed with these diaspora organizations to form a network in UK and exchange information in UK as well as in Somalia since they are working also in Somalia. In UK we exchanged best ways of young Somali integration into the main society, combating crimes of youth and assisting students especially after school and contacting schools how the children are coping with education. So we exchanged the experience from each other and what difficulties they met and how they overcome it in the schools concerned.	We applied these learning points to our organization in Somalia as well as in UK. for example in Somalia where we want to implement, the organization concerned gave us a lead people in that area and we contacted them immediately and giving them reference of the people who gave us their address, increases their confidence that they have in you and this led facilitated us to engage with communities concerned. In UK, they gave us how they solved certain youth problems which helped us apply in our area. We also help each other to launch together lobby and fund raising volunteering activities with each other. The PLP was useful in terms of human resources who may fill where you are lacking manpower or experience.
2	Understanding some of the challenges that they have been facing in their work, and how learning could be applied to address them; Learning about funding opportunities, and lessons from submitting applications and managing grants.	Through more effectively targeting grants, and avoiding potential pitfalls in the application process; Ensuring the same mistakes are not made as others.
3	Our organisation is 'very young' in terms of delivering international projects so it was really valuable to meet other participants who have many years of working in the field. We learnt about many issues which are 'common' to international development work and to a lot of organisations so we did not feel the problems we have encountered were specific to our situation. We feel far less 'isolated'. We learnt some strategies to adopt to overcome problems. We also learnt about developing systems so as to eliminate problems early and to ensure we are better placed to achieve project objectives.	We have shared with partners about strengthening data gathering and how to use this data to help with decision making. Partnership working continues to be a challenge but we are working on our first year review where we will use some principles of theory of change to help with future planning.
4	The networking and shared learning has informed the way we do things. We had a brilliant workshop on partnerships and it was useful listening to other organisations describe the ways in which they link up with their partners.	I have set up Basecamp, as one of the forums I use to hold online discussions with our partners. I have also introduced Action Learning Sets to our partners in Uganda and other organisations are willing to join up with us. This will bring senior managers in various organisations together giving them a space to raise issues, reflect, share and learn.
5	Our Ops Manager had attended the initial one day training on Theory of Change, and felt it to be so valuable that I agreed to her attending the extended training opportunity earlier this year... In terms of learning from others, I understood that she benefited from lots of different questions and perspectives - one person's 'obvious'	In the meantime, she has been tasked with trying ToC a review process, and as a way of re-configuring our monitoring and evaluation processes.

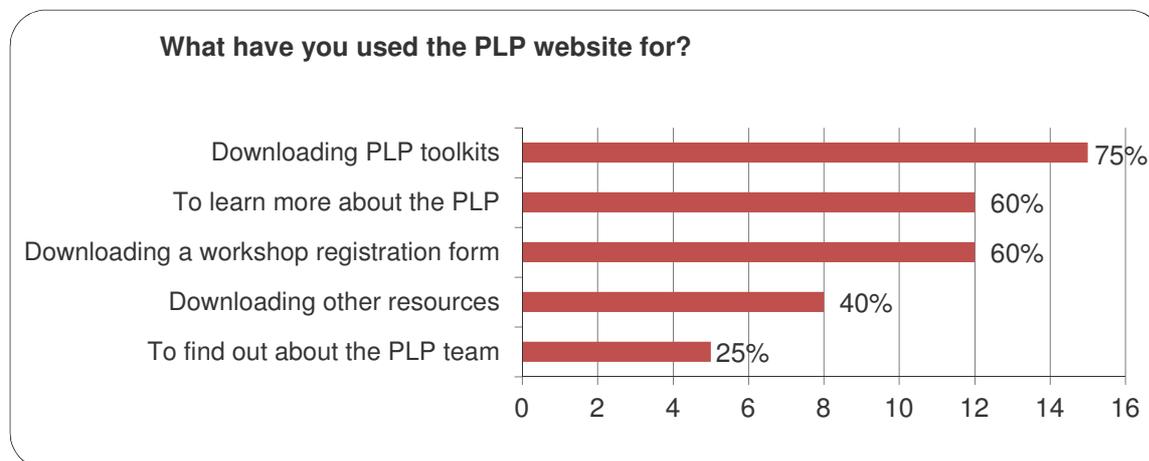
	<p>question is another person's catalyst for insight. It also helped her to re-think our aims, goals and objectives for herself, and to process how to communicate those to others. Certainly it prompted she and I to have a very helpful debrief conversation, allowing me to fill certain gaps and prompting me to clarify our vision and mission once again.</p> <p>From my perspective, it served the purpose for which I agreed to the training, i.e. encouraging her in, and introducing her to, the processes and considerations of strategic management. I'd been hoping for a chance to provide good CPD so that she could step into a partner development role in due course. Subsequently, the hope is that these foundations and the toolkit she's acquired will benefit our local partners in eight different countries.</p>	
6	<p>As I work in a small organisation and am relatively new to international development I was only seeing the picture from one angle but networking has helped me to gain an insight into the way that other organisations do things and the problems that they encounter. This has given me a wider view of the work. There have been some very helpful insights into governance and monitoring and evaluation to name just a couple of areas. I believe it adds value to my current role.</p>	<p>Having the benefit of the insight into other organisations enabled me to offer different perspectives to a discussion and gives me the confidence to challenge the way things have been traditionally done and to suggest alternative ways, if I think it will be useful. I am more aware of what is involved in certain tasks such as mid term and end of grant evaluations and the timescales for taking action, which has helped with planning. It has also enabled me to make suggestions to introduce new procedures.</p>
7	<p>I heard from Mifumi about their success in Uganda to change the culture and attitude of civil society concerning domestic violence. I understood that the lobbying and advocacy work had had a real effect. This had led to a major improvement in the quality of life, and future prospects, for those women who were fleeing violence.</p>	<p>This helped me to see that even the most entrenched unfair norms of a society can and should be challenged. I am now seeking to do this e.g. by supporting an NGO helping street children in the DRC to be more active in lobbying and advocacy work (against false accusations against children that they are sorcerers ... which leads to them being thrown out into the street by their families) particularly at local level with leaders of local communities.</p>
8	<p>i) Through contact with other plp members I received a lot of information about how other organisations operated, specifically in governance, strategy and fundraising.</p> <p>ii) I also gave a lot of advice and information on fundraising from institutional grant makers, eg gpaf, especially around due diligence and our experience of this having been through the process 2 times.</p>	<p>i) I then applied this, for example in relationship building and reciprocal relationships built on trust.</p>
9	<p>Sadly, due to my schedule and geographic location (two hours from London) I only attended one PLP meeting. I however found it extremely useful and enjoyable</p>	<p>I have learned not to be so hard on myself for feeling challenged by the process. I have tried to communicate more effectively with our partners about what is required. Going</p>

	<p>too. I learned that we are all facing similar challenges within our own small organisations managing grants from Comic Relief. I learned that other organisations struggled to get the required data from their in-country organisations and many found the M&E&L process challenging. We would have all benefited from assistance earlier on in the application process to develop the M&E plan and to allocate much more financial resource to M&E. Even from one session I made some good contacts with others who I have stayed in touch with and shared information.</p>	<p>forward I have learned a lot about how to better design outcomes and indicators and to budget adequately for M&E. It has been a good experience.</p>
10	<p>We are not alone. We face similar problems. However, we have different ways of handling them. For example for financial monitoring. There is the need to have a bird eye view of the finances partners. Collect as much evidences as possible. This will make it possible to get the fair assessment of the project and where finances go to.</p>	<p>Have had discussions at the MC level on how to monitor and ensure that projects overseas are delivering. Ensured that those who go out for monitoring know what they should be looking for and what evidences and documentations to ask for.</p>
11	<p>For the first time it has been possible to actually share tools, reference points for research, get properly signposted to specific information on fundraising, lobbying and advocacy and contribute meaningfully to the development agenda. Through the network Mifumi worked together with a new partner in western Kenya and have successfully raised funds from DfID to support work with widows and orphans in Western Kenya, after lots of sharing and relationship building.</p> <p>Together with Africare and Padiep, we have extended this learning to support other African partners with learning, the way PLP has supported us to build relationships and learn from each other - we now have an Africare staff member desk at Mifumi Uganda where learning can be transferred easily between the 2 organisations, so that what we have learnt here, we systematically transfer to our partners on the ground and we are looking at setting up a PLP style initiative in East Africa!</p> <p>We have set up tools to support our work, knowledge and advice we learnt from other partners. Some tools work, others are not very great and when you get sound advice from someone who has a tool that works well, it is always great to save time and use what works first time! I must say PLP has</p>	<p>I think the biggest benefit has really been getting to meet people, know them well enough to build a relationship that mutually works for both/all organisations, it is a give and take platform and one of the best things that has happened to civil society of late!</p>

	<p>given us a multitude of tools that will take us a long way. I shared our theory of change at a workshop and supported other members of the PLP to develop their theory of change: demystified it and explained things in the lay man's language!</p>	
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From INTRAC - I have learnt about the peer learning approach - I had never participated in this method of learning before. • Peer learning requires active listening - a skill I've tried to improve through the peer learning groups • Having learnt from others at NGOs very different to my own workplace I've gained a greater insight not only of the sector but of the different contexts and environments that people operate in. • Practical tips and information e.g. I now know you can set up auto tweets and I shared a volunteer manual and fundraising plan template with other members. • I have learnt what others do well and how we can learn from that (advocacy especially), and also what my organisation does well which is encouraging. It's been a great support to know other people have the same struggles I do in my role and to meet other staff as there is little room to network in Manchester. This has been a wonderful opportunity from INTRAC and CR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have shared the approach with a colleague who works alone in Kenya. I suggested this as a good tool to learn and keep connected with other NGO workers. She is planning to set up a peer learning group. • Having a greater understanding about the shades of grey and different operating environments I now try to think about the whole picture, external influences, internal policies etc before making a decision. • Implemented practical tips from others e.g. Twitter
13	<p>My participation in the PLP programme has increased my understanding of issues that are faced by organisations to be similar and that it requires opening up and accepting that mistakes come about and can be resolved amicably, by sharing with others, who may have faced similar situations or working on the same front to solve them.</p>	<p>We are trying to bring on board all ranks in the organisation to use the sharing and supporting each other as a basis of understanding that anything can damage the image of the organisation, but it is the responsibility of everyone to work together to minimise on the damage and any setbacks.</p>
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a greater focus on communication within our organisation - more formal structures in partnership/project management - engaging the potential of interns for fundraising - engagement of trustees with the actual content of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - higher frequency of internal meetings and documenting and sharing of meeting action points and following up - more frequent and more formalized formatting for reporting of larger grant agreements - sharing of visit reports and case studies with trustees - recruitment of intern for fundraising, with due attention to process and learning potential for interns

2.6 Use of the PLP website

Whilst not relating to a specific indicator, it seemed a good opportunity to find out if participants had accessed the PLP website and what they use it for. Twenty people (69%) had accessed the website. The remaining nine people (31%) had not. Those that had used the website were asked what they had used it for. The results are in the chart below:



2.7 Recommendations for the future of the programme

Participants were asked to give three recommendations for improving the programme. The survey was set up so that they had to give at least one recommendation. Respondents gave a range of different suggestions, a selection of which is below (all comments are in appendix 4):

<p>Programme in general</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Targeting either diaspora or small CSOs, not both at once. ▪ Our organisation is small with no CEO so consideration for different working models would be helpful as we did not fit into the model promoted by PLP. ▪ Increase in support to reach grassroots organisations. ▪ Consideration of client time constraints. ▪ More blended learning (utilising interactive/online interface). ▪ More practice-based learning - potentially utilising written-up case studies of organisations for facilitated discussion. 	<p>Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remember that not all organisations are based in London so more advance warning for workshops and starting later and finishing on time so that cheaper tickets can be booked and used. ▪ Workshop handouts to be sent following training. ▪ Maybe some trainings could be done in half days? ▪ Perhaps higher quality of input. Small organisations does not necessarily equate with less skilled or experienced. ▪ Skills training workshop on bid writing to large donors (DFID, BIG Lottery, Comic Relief) with examples of real bids that won, and others that failed to win
<p>Consultancy/coaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep consultant days. ▪ I asked for consultancy support but didn't get a final response - communication is key. ▪ Continue with the consultancy and coaching. ▪ Extend mentoring programme. 10 hours not enough. 	<p>Programme in general</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How can we make the Action Learning Sets more engaging with more commitment from the members. ▪ Allow for greater frequency of Action Learning Sets. ▪ Clearer rules around participating in the Action Learning Sets - I understood these were for directors, not interns and junior

	<p>staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work to a stricter timescale for ALS - a timetable to sign up to. ▪ Improving access to and participation in Action Learning Sets.
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The final question of the survey asked for additional comments about the PLP that had not already been covered in the survey. Some of the responses are below (full comments are in appendix 5):

We are grateful that this exercise has enabled organisations to undertake activities on a level of excellency.

Our organisation benefited significantly from consultancy input, and I feel the coaching will also be very good. Thank you for the opportunity.

The programme definitely continues to add value, and its flexibility is good, enabling participants to pick and choose and focus on areas where they may require greatest support. A tailored assessment process though may be of use to further adapt the programme's offering to the needs of the participating organisations.

Being based in Scotland we felt unable to engage with the programme as much as we would have liked to; through both time and financial constraints. While I found the one workshop I was able to attend somewhat useful, I feel it did not equate to the costs incurred (both by ourselves and through a grant from PLP).

3. Consultants survey feedback

Consultants that had worked on the PLP were asked to complete a short survey on their experiences of working on the PLP. The survey was sent to nine people six of whom responded (response rate of 66.7%). Respondents were asked which activities they had worked on, what went well and not so well, and what recommendations they had for improving the delivery of the PLP.

Four consultants had worked on delivering a one-day workshop and writing up of the toolkit. Three had delivered a one-to-one consultancy and three had delivered coaching/mentoring.

3.1 What went well?

I did one workshop and toolkit which I was happy with and I feel participants were too. I felt my 1 coaching and 2 consultancies went very well
Coaching and mentoring has been the most effective method, enabling organisational leaders to focus on their issues and to get an external perspective
The workshop exchange of experiences, participative format, and some inputs. The final version of the toolkit came out really well: short and practical.
Good organisation and information from INTRAC about what was needed and when. High interest from participants. Change in their views about theory of change - more open and less donor driven.
I think I was matched well with organisations and felt that I had the skills that they needed.
A small group ... two people and so quite "personal", not really a workshop, not quite coaching. Two very keen people and so a good conversation for around 7 hours. The good part was being able to supplement the materials that I'd prepared with other resources.

3.2 What did not go so well?

Nothing really
Getting consensus on dates for the action learning sets (ALS), with attendance figures being unreliable - even though the feedback has been that ALS is a highly effective tool to get peer support and for learning.
I had a feeling that some participants at the workshop didn't really want any inputs at all - just to spend time meeting and hearing from other participants. Yet others really did value the inputs.
Only a few organisations had previous experience of using theory of change and only one in a full and participatory way so it was difficult to draw on their learning to share with others. ToC is a very difficult thing to train about - you have to take people through a process really. CGI is more difficult group as they do not fit CR focus on specific target groups and therefore some of groups did not have enough in common to do the exercise well.
It was hard to balance an often long list of requirements from PLP members against the time I had available. Also it was hard not to overwhelm participants with information in just one day! I also would have liked to have had a few hours follow up so I could check in with participants a few weeks/months later to see how they have used the information.
One of the "exercises" that I'd been used to using with small groups didn't go so well with just 2 people, but only a small blip in a day that felt good

3.3 Recommendations

The PLP has involved or been attended by organisational leaders, as well as individuals in non-leader positions. It may be more effective to target leaders only - it should not be a case of having more groups or organisations involved, but of having fewer where the impact can be greater. For instance, the ALS involved individuals at different levels, and therefore the dynamic in the sessions that I ran was not always as effective as it could have been. It might also be a good idea to allocate consultancy or coaching "blocks" to organisations so that, for example, a half day session is offered initially, followed by another three (so the support is every quarter) to follow up on progress. This would help to track learning and would also help organisations in a more sustainable way. Again, support to fewer organisations but with the object of achieving higher impact and sustainability.
I wondered whether it might be helpful to meet those different priorities by separating out those two activities i.e. Some specifically networking events separate from events where there is some input. It might have been good to agree a time frame for the toolkit in advance so that we knew beforehand when 1st drafts, revisions and final drafts were expected.
If it is possible to provide some time (an hour or two) for an additional coaching session over the phone to follow up on progress.
Informally I've offered to be a resource in case they're looking for other support, particularly in relation to written materials. Might be useful to write this into the contract, even if only a statement of the possibility.

4. Analysis and Conclusions

The survey shows that all the targets set at the beginning of the programme were achieved, mostly by a long way. The additional questions included in the survey also show that the programme was able to have a wider reach to SDO partner organisations. The mixture of activities worked very well possibly because the different methods address separate but linked parts of an organisation; the leadership coaching, action learning sets and workshops enabled people to increase their individual skills in different areas whilst the consultancies looked at organisational needs. Not surprisingly, respondents felt they gained more from the intensive personal one-day consultancies than they did from downloading a toolkit. However, as a package of interventions the mixture worked well.

All the activities were deemed to be high quality with an average rating of 8.4/10. This is clearly pleasing since the PLP team worked hard to ensure that the facilitators were assigned to the workshops, consultancies and coaching clients that matched their specialism. The team also ensured that the interventions met participants' needs through simple needs assessments prior to the activities taking place (for example asking questions on the workshop registration forms which were then used to design the workshop content). All activities were highly participatory and enabled plenty of time for peer learning and networking.

It is very difficult to scientifically assess capacity development as there is no single proven method and all individual or organisational capacity assessments have limitations. There are also limitations with self-reporting by participants. Having said this, there are some conclusions that can be drawn from the data. The survey gives us an indication of how people feel about the programme and their perception of its impact on their individual and organisational capacity.

- *The PLP has had some impact on capacity development:* 83% felt their capacity had definitely or probably improved as a result of the PLP and many respondents were able to give practical examples of significant changes.
- *The programme has helped organisations to better support their partners:* 86% felt it had definitely or probably improved their ability to support partners. Many were able to give examples of how they had passed on their learning from PLP to partners by for example: initiating action learning sets with partners; undertaking a theory of change process; and sharing PLP learning through multi-partner workshops.
- *The programme has helped to link up small and diaspora organisations in the UK:* 83% felt it had definitely or probably improved their networking and learning from other small and diaspora organisations. They were able to give specific examples of what they had learnt from others and how this had been learning had been implemented. It would also appear that some links forged between SDO organisations through the PLP will continue into the future such as the links between the Somali organisation and the connections between organisations working in Uganda.

While this may not be conclusive evidence on own, it is a very useful contribution to the overall evaluation of the programme and will be important to consider alongside the findings of the OCAT process and feed into the external evaluation.

Appendix 1

Individuals from the following organisations completed the survey:

African Initiatives
Africare
Bishop Simeon Trust
BRAC UK
Busoga Association
Cafédirect Producer's Foundation
ChildHope UK
CRED Foundation
Deep End Ltd/BEDG
Disability and Development Partners
Environment Africa Trust
FOTCHSA
Gem Consultancy Ltd
GHARWEG
HIRDA UK
Hope for Children
iDE UK
International Children's Trust
MIFUMI UK
Powerful Information
Retrak
rYico
Signpost International
Survivors Fund (SURF)
Sustain for Life
Target Tuberculosis
Trust for Africa's Orphans
Woodford Foundation
Youth Action for Change International

The five organisations that started but did not complete the survey are: Ace Africa; AbleChildAfrica; Developing Technologies; Kenya Community Support Network; and, Theatre for a Change. These organisations were not very engaged in this second phase of the programme.

Appendix 2: What have been the most significant changes you have seen in your organisation as a result of participating in the PLP?

<i>Open-Ended Response</i>
we are still to have the 1 day consultancy on theory of change but this will be significant in helping all members of the organisation have a shared understanding of this topic
It is still at an embryonic stage, but the one day consultancy gave us the tools, knowledge and confidence to start to refer to and use a more rights-based approach in our project planning and design. This was always an area we touched upon, but the consultancy showed us its' relevance to us and our work. The consultancy also gave us the chance to discuss how this area could and is relevant to our work with different partners in different countries and also the possible drawbacks or limitations.
We are able to engage with our partners on issues of governance and leadership in a profession setting.
Increased awareness of the need to express concepts that were previously more implicit than explicit in our work and our organisation; and learning from other organisations' practice and experience
PLP's consultant has helped us to adopt a much more sustainable approach and has helped us to develop our strategy.
Revision of monitoring and evaluation systems, greater focus on core vision and tasks
not able to comment at this stage, because I have not yet engaged enough.
Sharing of ideas of within Action Learning Sets have led to greater focus on fundraising plan and recruitment drive for interns.
The capacity of the organisation has grown and we have established effective and efficient ways of working. I have seen the confidence within the staff team grow and the tools we have adopted have had an impact on how we fundraise, deliver and report on our work.
Our strategy day with a consultant facilitator was excellent. It brought staff and trustees together for the first time to focus on our way forward. The facilitation was excellent, increasing levels of understanding and sharing of learning between staff and trustees. The follow-up wider stakeholder consultation on strategy will engage our partners in our strategy development. I have just begun coaching, so it is too early to comment, but a skilled coach has been identified and I am hopeful that it will help me do my job better and bring about significant changes.
improved MONITORING
The PLP participation has made us make the time and opportunity to look at our organisation and develop an organisation plan for the future. Attending meetings at PLP gave an insight to how other organisations work
Methodology and procedures
It was a learning point that helped improve my capacity to monitor and evaluate.
No radical change, but an incremental change as a result of putting the learning from PLP into practice in our work.
I haven't been part of PLP
Consultancy and coaching helped us focus on the top priorities for our future strategy
We had a very specific need (to further develop our impact assessment work) which a consultancy helped to fulfil. The PLP consultancy was part of a longer-term process we're undertaking to develop our impact assessment framework
Building relationships with the Board of Trustees Improved communication with donors Improved line management of staff Constructing project proposals in a different way
More value given to my role in the organisation leading to more responsibility and a larger part in running the organisation.
Developed our 'infrastructure' and policies
Met other organisations and learnt from them. It has made us more effective and more influential. Our organisation is going through a lot of change in a financial constraint situation. The workshop attended was quite useful and helped to put us on course.
Given the majority of international development institutions are based in or around London there are limited opportunities for Manchester based INGOs to access free or low cost training opportunities, networking events, seminars or peer learning sessions. As such, I've been delighted to participate in the Manchester based INTRAC peer learning group. The group has given me the opportunity to meet like-minded professionals who (with support and facilitation from the INTRAC

consultant) have provided me with encouragement, support and advice in a confidential and comfortable environment. It's reassuring to know that you're not alone and that others have similar work struggles and can give you practical tips to help you out. In turn, you can use your knowledge and experience to help others.
IT HAS ENABLED US TO GET STAFF WORKING AND LEARNING IN SETS. NEW STAFF RE AUTOMATICALLY DRAWN INTO THE ORGANISATION WITH LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN ON THE JOB VERY QUICKLY, IT HAS SUPPORTED OUT MAND E TEAM TO DO A BETTER JOB AND STRENGTHENED NORHT SOUTH RELATIONSHIPS
As we are a very small organisation, there hasn't really been much change to the organisation but rather my understanding and knowledge has increased. I have been able to use these experiences to work more effectively with our partners.
Helped with the creation of an MEL strategy.

Appendix 3: Do you have any examples of how this change has affected your work with partners?

<i>Open-Ended Response</i>
In the design stage of new programme areas with different partners and relevant to the individual countries legislative background and adoption of international rights based legislation.
The Partners have managed to use the tools in providing better deliverance to the beneficiaries and are able to plan future activities relating to the skills obtained.
In developing project ideas and supporting project implementation we are more conscious of keeping these ideas in mind as we work together
This has affected our new strategy, which impacts on both us and our local partner.
A new framework for capacity building and evaluation
not at this stage
Too early to tell.
I have initiated Action Learning Sets across 3 organisations in Uganda, all three funded by Comic Relief. I have also shared all the tools in particular monitoring and evaluation, working in partnership, fundraising and Theory of Change with our partners, tools which they have adapted.
Not yet
SET UP A COMPUTISED M&E
We have had meetings in South Africa with our partners and a new staff member has been employed as our Project Liaison & Development Officer based within South Africa
Improved layout of reports
It increased my knowledge of formulating TOR and sharing with my donors.
Ultimately it is beneficial, ensuring that we are better equipped to support them.
I haven't got examples as I feel I haven't not participating in the PLP
Completed a Theory of Change
We recently ran a multi-partner workshop in Uganda and shared our learning around impact assessment in sessions with partners there
Better project proposal planning and design Planning for project completion and an exit strategy for one project. Partners better supported in this process.
Being more involved in the projects led to me visiting Sierra Leone, which has provided a better understanding of the culture and challenges faced.
Management Committee re-organised. More participation by members of the management committee.
I have sought practical support from other members of my action learning set to help with problems etc. I have also shared tools/manuals/documents with other members of the action learning set.
YES, WE ARE WORKING BETTER BY SHARING TOOLS AND BUILDING THE PARTNERSHIP THROUGH SETS FROM BOTTOM TO TOP

Appendix 4: Suggestions for improving the PLP

Each row gives the suggestions made by an individual respondent. Where there are boxes with no content it is because the respondent did not give three responses.

1)	2)	3)
workshop hand-outs to be sent following training		
Remember that not all organisations are based in London so more advance warning for workshops and starting later and finishing on time so that cheaper tickets can be booked and used.	I don't know if the "council" or panel is in existence, but there does not seem to be a focal point for organisations outside of INTRAC.	Keep the workshops - and the resource notes on the PLP site for those who could not attend. Very useful
Capacity development and community participation.	increase in support to reach grassroots organisations.	peer learning for developing understanding among organisations.
Half, not whole day, workshops	targeting either diaspora or small CSOs, not both at once	
Keep consultant days	Maybe some trainings could be done in half days?	
Allow for greater frequency of Action Learning Sets	Differentiation between size (and experience) of NGOs for workshops	
How can we make the Action Learning Sets more engaging with more commitment from the members	I asked for consultancy support but didn't get a final response - communication is key	
The workshop I engaged in would not entice me to go back. Perhaps higher quality of input. Small organisations does not necessarily equate with less skilled or experienced.		
Clearer rules around participating in the Action Learning Sets - I understood these were for directors, not interns and junior staff.	Events took too long and should be shorter and snappier	
MORE WORKSHOPS	ONE TO ONE MEETINGS	CONTACTS WITH SPECIALISTS
our organisation is small with no CEO so consideration for different working models would be helpful as we did not fit into the model promoted by PLP		
more consultation with clients as to format	consideration of client time constraints	use Facebook
More PLP workshop	publishing more monitoring and evaluation tools	
More blended learning (utilising interactive/online interface)	More practice-based learning - potentially utilising written-up case studies of organisations for facilitated discussion	
Continue with the consultancy and coaching	Provide worked examples of how theory was turned into practice with a named SDO + their southern partners	Skills training workshop on bid writing to large donors (DFID, BIG Lottery, Comic Relief) with examples of real bids that won, and others that failed to win

half day or evening workshops are more realistic for me to attend		
Don't start London workshops until 10am or those coming from Somerset will be late!	Extend mentoring programme. 10 hours not enough.	
Introduce more in-depth workshops to build on introductory training, e.g. on M&E	Group organisations by thematic area for workshops	
Make access to sessions easier for those outside London	Work to a stricter timescale for ALS - a timetable to sign up to.	Take note of where participants are based and work outside London.
Make workshops more hands-on/participative	Use more case studies	
IMPROVE ATTENDANCE	GET COMMITMENT FROM ORGANISATIONS TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE	IDENTIFY PEERS EARLY ON SO THAT LEARNING IS MORE STRATEGIC
Improving access to and participation in Action Learning Sets	More workshops	More material that we can share with our partners
Fix dates well in advance for the quarter or year and stick to them even if some people are unable to attend	Sessions to be scheduled early afternoon to avoid peak rate travel costs	Location more central London would be helpful

Appendix 5: Additional comments

If you have any other comments to make about the PLP that have not already been covered in the questions above, please write them here:
Open-Ended Response
Re. ALS - I had hoped to be able to take part this year as the previous attempt in the Midlands failed the previous year. Unfortunately, I was again unable to attend as dates were quite rigid from the beginning based around INTRAC holiday dates - which is understandable, but only up to a point. From comments from organisations using ALS in London, they were very popular and helpful and it seemed a shame that the London centric focus could not be overcome here.
We are grateful that this exercise has enabled organisations to undertake activities on a level of excellency.
We've received emails to inform of any upcoming events but not aware of how to access any of the other services mentioned. Interested to take full advantage of the programme
I need to invest more time and effort in this.
Our organisation benefited significantly from consultancy input, and I feel the coaching will also be very good. Thank you for the opportunity.
The programme definitely continues to add value, and its flexibility is good, enabling participants to pick and choose and focus on areas where they may require greatest support. A tailored assessment process though may be of use to further adapt the programme's offering to the needs of the participating organisations.
IT MIGHT BE MORE EFFICIENT IF ORGANISATIONS WERE SEGREGATED OR PAIRED REGIONALLY?? NOT TOO SURE HERE
Being based in Scotland we felt unable to engage with the programme as much as we would have liked to; through both time and financial constraints. While I found the one workshop I was able to attend somewhat useful, I feel it did not equate to the costs incurred (both by ourselves and through a grant from PLP).
Having been to one Action learning set meeting only I would very much like to continue. I would also like to know how to access the coaching/mentoring opportunities