Knowing-how: Co-producing a social research training programme for the Third Sector

Final Project Report

Project funded by the University of Manchester - Humanities Strategic Investment Fund (2015-2016)

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1. Executive Summary

The 'Knowing-how' project and this report

The Knowing-how project was a pilot programme funded by the University of Manchester Humanities Strategic Investment Fund (August 2015-July 2016) that brought together University expertise and Third Sector knowledge to develop and provide a series of free training events specifically targeting community organisations in the Greater Manchester area. The training focussed on social research skills, tools, and resources that could be used to support and facilitate work in the Third Sector, as a complement to existing programmes.

The project applied a co-production approach so existing skills and knowledge could be effectively shared to develop, design and deliver the training events. This collaboration was enabled through various channels including (1) a project Advisory Board; (2) discussion groups; (3) and a final roundtable event. At the core of the project was the aim to create and strengthen connections between and within the University and the Third Sector and, more generally, stimulate a more collaborative environment that could mutually benefit both parties and possibly create opportunities for more partnerships to be developed in the future, not only about training but also research.

This report provides a detailed overview of the activities carried out during the project and the reflections that have stemmed from this work, both in terms of co-production and training provision. The report will be of interest to (1) those interested in using co-production methods; (2) both people in academia and the Third Sector who deliver and develop social research training for a non-academic audience; (3) academic and Third Sector members interested in generally strengthening the relations between these two sectors.

The project's main achievements…

- Supported the development of closer and mutually beneficial links between and within the University and the Third Sector and promoted the discussion about co-producing research methods training with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Delivered four successful and well-received training workshops that were co-produced with Third Sector partners and gave participants the opportunity to think about strategic and effective ways to collect, analyse and present empirical evidence.

…and challenges

- Time and financial resources required for both the University and the Third Sector to develop and maintain co-produced training programmes in the short and long term, which ultimately impacts on the sustainability of this initiative.

- Limited time span of the project, which might not be sufficient to consolidate the networks that have been initiated.
- Limited reach of the training workshops: issues of branding, marketing and dissemination strategies used in the project were discussed, along with more general difficulties with establishing the existence, size and relevance of a 'market' for research methods training among community organisations.

Recommendations

Based on the feedback received by University and Third Sector representatives during the project through the Advisory Board, the discussion groups, the training workshops and the final roundtable, the main recommendations are as follows:

With regard to <u>co-producing training</u>:

- Co-production, which is based on equal partnership, is mutually beneficial for the University and the Third Sector, as this makes the training more relevant and effective and facilitates the creation of networks between and within the University and the Third Sector.
- Adequate resources including funds and infrastructures need to be put in place by either/both the University or/and the Third Sector so as to enable both parties to take place in the co-production process.
- Collaborations with infrastructure/umbrella organisations in the Third Sector would be particularly effective given their expertise in delivering training and providing strategic support to community organisations.
- Small grassroots organisations, which generally suffer from a lack of resources, should be the main target of co-produced training.
- As a short-term goal, the training developed through this project could be replicated and improved if the necessary resources (i.e. staff and funds) are available.
- In terms of long-term goals, a central broker based at the University and focussed on partnership working with the Third Sector would be the ideal way to facilitate future training development.

With regard to the <u>structure and contents of the training</u>:

- Training events should be broad (including both qualitative and quantitative data and methods), practical (hands-on sessions and examples), relevant (to the needs and interests of community organisations) and applied (reflect on why and how data should be used in the Third Sector).
- Access to training should be facilitated, for instance, through online training and resources (e.g. webinars, online platform); effective branding and dissemination strategies; discounts to attend existing paid training; use of off-campus venues.

2. Introduction

The Knowing-how project was a pilot programme that brought together University expertise and Third Sector knowledge to develop and provide a series of free training events specifically targeting community organisations in the Greater Manchester area. The training focussed on social research skills, tools, and resources that could be used to support and facilitate work in the Third Sector. The project was funded by the Humanities Strategic Investment Fund between August 2015 and July 2016.

The idea for the Knowing-how project originally arose from the work undertaken by Dr Laurence Lessard-Phillips and Dr Silvia Galandini on the ESRC-funded 'Unity out of Diversity' project (grant number: ES/K009206/1). As part of the project's fieldwork in Manchester, research support was received from local community groups and infrastructure organisations. To thank these organisations for the help received, the research team organised and led (in March 2015) a free 2-hour training workshop on how to access and use area-level data available from the Neighbourhood Statistics website (Office for National Statistics). The workshop was also opened to other community groups that were not directly involved in the research project. The event was oversubscribed and very well received, with 87% of participants describing the training as very helpful or helpful (n=16).

Project Aim & Objectives: The Knowing-how project aimed to build on the positive experience of the 'Unity out of Diversity' project by developing and delivering a pilot programme where University research methods expertise and Third Sector knowledge could be used to provide targeted training specifically for local community organisations on methods and data skills, tools, and resources.

More specifically, the project pursued four main objectives:

(1) To provide Third Sector organisations with helpful skills and knowledge;

(2) To identify and test, in close collaboration with Third Sector representatives, the most adequate types of training for the targeted users;

(3) To build a long-lasting training infrastructure;

(4) To strengthen connections and mutual collaborations between the University and the Third Sector in the Greater Manchester area.

Training topics and strategies were not established a priori, but were identified and devised on the basis of a close collaboration with both Third Sector and University representatives. This co-production was facilitated through two main channels. Firstly, an Advisory Board was set up at the beginning of the project to bring together representatives of the University and infrastructure organisations in Greater Manchester. Secondly, discussion groups were conducted with representatives from local community organisations and researchers at University. These two channels were used to collect further information on local Third Sector's training needs and interests, but also on how researchers felt that their expertise could be applied to meeting these needs, as well as how co-producing training could be developed and mutually benefit all those involved. This collaboration was further strengthened through a final project roundtable which brought together the core Project Team, the Advisory Board members, members of community organisations who took part in the training events and discussion groups, and other Third Sector and University stakeholders. The roundtable was used to discuss what the project achieved as well as challenges and ideas for future collaborations with regard to co-produced research methods and data training.

This report will describe who was involved in the project, the project's timeline and the main activities carried out in detail, with a specific focus on highlighting the main achievements, challenges and recommendations that emerged from this work.

3. Project Team and Advisory Board

The core **Project Team** was composed of four members of the Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Research (CMIST) based in Sociology and Social Statistics:

1. Dr Laurence Lessard-Phillips (Research Fellow, now at the University of Birmingham) – Principal Investigator: Overall project responsibility, manage the programme and assist with the delivery of training events;
2. Dr Jackie Carter (Director for Engagement with Research Methods Training) – Co-Investigator: Assisted with creating connections with the Third Sector and advised on the development and future expansion of the programme's infrastructure;
3. Dr Silvia Galandini (Research Associate): Responsible for establishing and fostering contacts with Third Sector organisations, building the overall infrastructure as well as organising and delivering the training events;
4. Patty Doran (PhD Researcher): Provided assistance in the design, delivery, and organisation of the training programme.

Administrative support was also provided by Mrs Sue Bailey (CMIST).

The **Advisory Board** was made up of three University representatives and three Third Sector representatives with vast experience and interest in methods training, co-production, as well as (especially for the Third Sector partners) great knowledge of the Third Sector training needs and of existing networks of community organisations in the Greater Manchester area:

1. Prof Maja Zehfuss: Associate Dean for Postgraduate Research, Faculty of Humanities;
2. Prof Ken McPhail: Associate Dean, Social Responsibility;
3. Dr Tine Buffel: Research Fellow, CMIST/Sociology;
4. Yvonne Fox-Burmby: Programme Manager, Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation (GMCVO), later joined by Susanne Martikke, Researcher at GMCVO;
5. Nigel Rose: Strategic Lead (Commissioning), Manchester Community Central (Macc);
6. Jennifer Rouse: Associate Director, Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES).

The Advisory Board members provided support and advice both through the initial board meeting in October 2015 (please see Section 5 for more details on this), and by providing continuous feedback and suggestions to the ideas proposed by the Project Team with regard to the design of the training events carried out in March/April 2016 (more details on these events are provided in Section 7). Furthermore, the Third Sector members of the Advisory Board helped the Team advertise the discussion groups and training events among local community organisations and took an active part in the delivery of some of the training events (as detailed in Sections 6 and 7). The Third Sector partners were compensated for their time working on the project.

4. Project Timeline

The full timeline of the project is outlined in Figure 1. Prior to discussing each stage of the project in detail, a brief overview of the timeline is provided in this section.

The first step in the project timeline was to organise the initial meeting with the Advisory Board members. This was in order to gather their feedback and suggestions with regard to: (1) the relevance of the collaboration between the University and the Third Sector in developing social research training; (2) the possible strategies to pursue this collaboration beyond the Advisory Board; (3) and any ideas about contents and approaches to be applied to the training events. Due to the difficulties in finding a suitable date for all Advisory Board members to meet, two separate meetings (one for the University and one for the Third Sector partners) were held in October 2015.

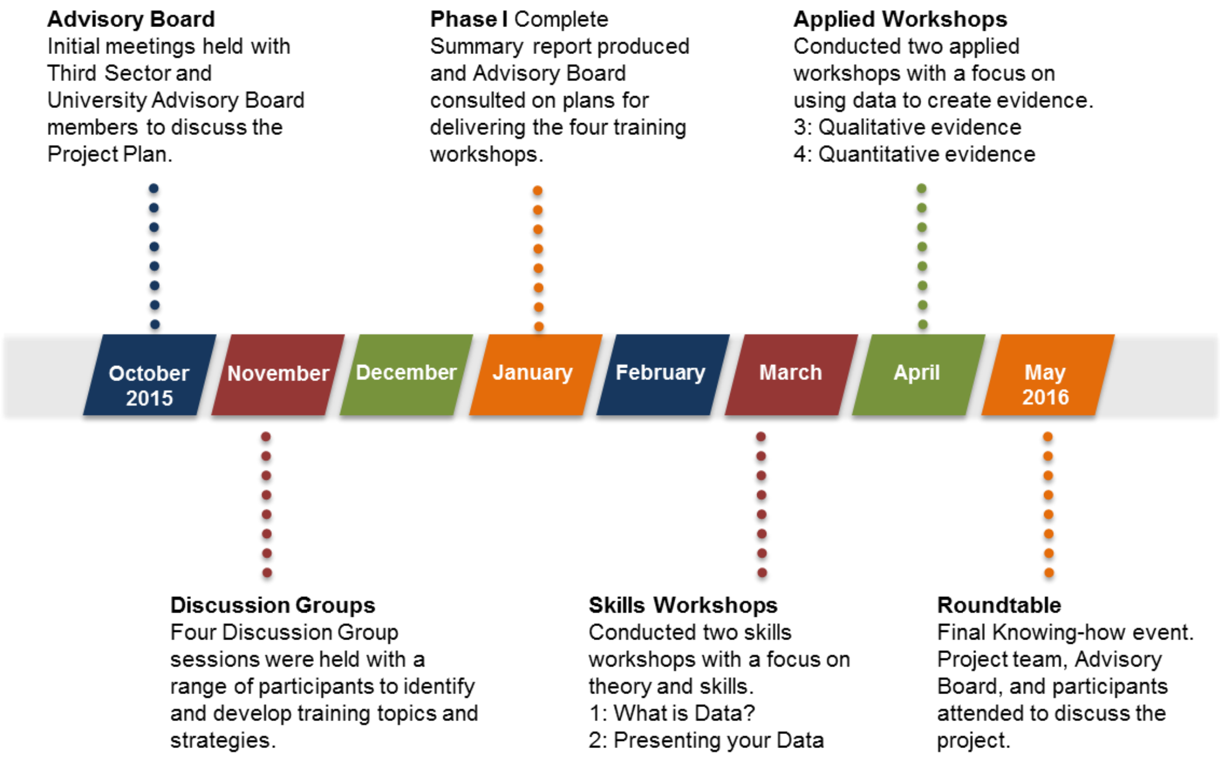

Figure 1: Timeline of the Knowing-how project

Based on the suggestions of the Advisory Board members and on the project's aims and objectives, the Project Team designed and carried out in November 2015 four discussion groups with academics (both members of staff and PhD students) and representatives of local community organisations. These events were aimed at collecting as much information as possible about: (1) training needs in the Third Sector; (2) previous experience of academics and community organisations in working together both for training and research; (3) reflections about the importance of this collaboration, including both opportunities and challenges; (4) and ideas about how the training events could be designed (topics, venues, training methods). In December 2015 an online questionnaire (focussing on the same topic as the discussion groups) was sent to all those who had not been able to attend the groups so as to collect their feedback as well.

This first part of the project which very much focussed on gathering ideas and feedback from relevant actors and stakeholders was referred to as 'Phase I' – this started in August 2015 and was concluded in January/February 2016. The second and final broader phase in the project's timeline included the preparation, delivery and assessment of the training events as well as a final project event. The training workshops were designed by the Project Team (between January and March 2016) and then held over two days in March and April 2016.

A final roundtable event was held in May 2016 to discuss the Knowing-how project (activities, achievements, challenges) and make recommendations for future partnership working with the Third Sector. The invitation to attend the roundtable was extended beyond the Project Team and Advisory Board to include the participants in the training events and discussion groups, and other University and Third Sector representatives interested in the project. The roundtable was not included in the original project proposal, as a second Advisory Board meeting was planned before the end of the project. However, the Team deemed the roundtable a more suitable option to involve a wider group of stakeholders in the discussion.

5. Initial Project Advisory Board Meetings

In October 2015, two separate Advisory Board meetings were carried out, mainly because of scheduling conflicts, one with the University representatives and one with the Third Sector representatives. The aims and objectives of the project were discussed, as well as the broad strategy for meeting these objectives, the main opportunities and challenges, and reflections on future actions to further develop co-produced training.

During the meeting with the members of the Advisory Board from the University (on 7th October 2015), a main topic of discussion was around managing expectations, both for the pilot project and for the future. This related to managing expectations with regard to: (1) offering incentives to staff and students for being involved in training delivery; (2) what can be offered given what is already present and which can be built on, without creating similar offer; (3) what type of strategic focus is needed with regard to teaching methods, topics, and other practical aspects of training; (4) and what can realistically be offered, especially in terms of costs. The idea behind the project was deemed valuable and a good opportunity for everybody involved, especially with regard to professional development (particularly for PhD students, who could be a good source of expertise) and building relationships and collaborations. The co-production aspect was emphasised as necessary for the development of the project (especially beyond the pilot), as this would foster a sense of shared ownership and responsibility. Sustainability was also discussed in terms of using and involving existing infrastructures that are already providing methods and data training (including, for instance, Methods@Manchester, CMIST, UK Data Service, Morgan Centre for the Study of Relationships and Personal Life), as well as offering incentives for the Third Sector to attend (paid) training (primarily in the form of discounts) and developing more accessible resources (e.g. online).

Similar topics were covered during the Advisory Board meeting with the Third Sector partners on 13th October 2015. There was a more targeted discussion on the training needs emerging from the expertise of the Third Sector, with a focus on building confidence in methods using practical examples as well as building basic critical skills, and utilising various teaching and training methods when delivering training. Ideas for training delivery were discussed at length. One of the main take home messages was that there is a need for research methods training, especially if provided for free, which is especially important for small grassroots organisations lacking specific “business” skills. The importance of building the training based on actual needs was emphasised, especially with regard to building funding bids, whilst acknowledging that, given the size of the Third Sector in the Greater Manchester area, targeting the training may prove challenging, unless focussing on specific organisations and/or topics. The need to utilise existing expertise and managing expectations were topics that were also discussed during this meeting, as were issues of the importance of making beneficial links between academics and the Third Sector as a long-term strategy.

The meetings were very informative and heavily influenced the subsequent activities of the project, especially with regard to training delivery and the project’s recommendations. Following this meeting, the members of the Advisory Board were continually updated, and feedback and participation was requested at key points throughout the project.

6. Discussion Groups: Co-producing Training

Following the Advisory Board meetings, and taking the advice given during those meetings into account, a series of discussion groups with a wide cross-section of participants were organised. Four discussion groups, instead of the 3 originally planned, were conducted in November 2015 and run by the members of the Project Team. By running an additional group, it was possible to more flexibly adapt to participants’ schedules and allow a higher number of people to register for the events. The groups were organised as follows:

- Group 1 and Group 2 (18/11/2015): mixed University and Third Sector representatives;
- Group 3 (23/11/2015): Third Sector representatives only;
- Group 4 (23/11/2015): Academic representatives only.

The groups were advertised within the Faculty of Humanities through mailing lists and the HumNet bulletin (Faculty of Humanities) to recruit academics (both members of staff and PhD students), and through GMCVO and Macc’s mailing lists, websites and social media to recruit Third Sector representatives. Examples of the advertisement are shown in Figure 2.

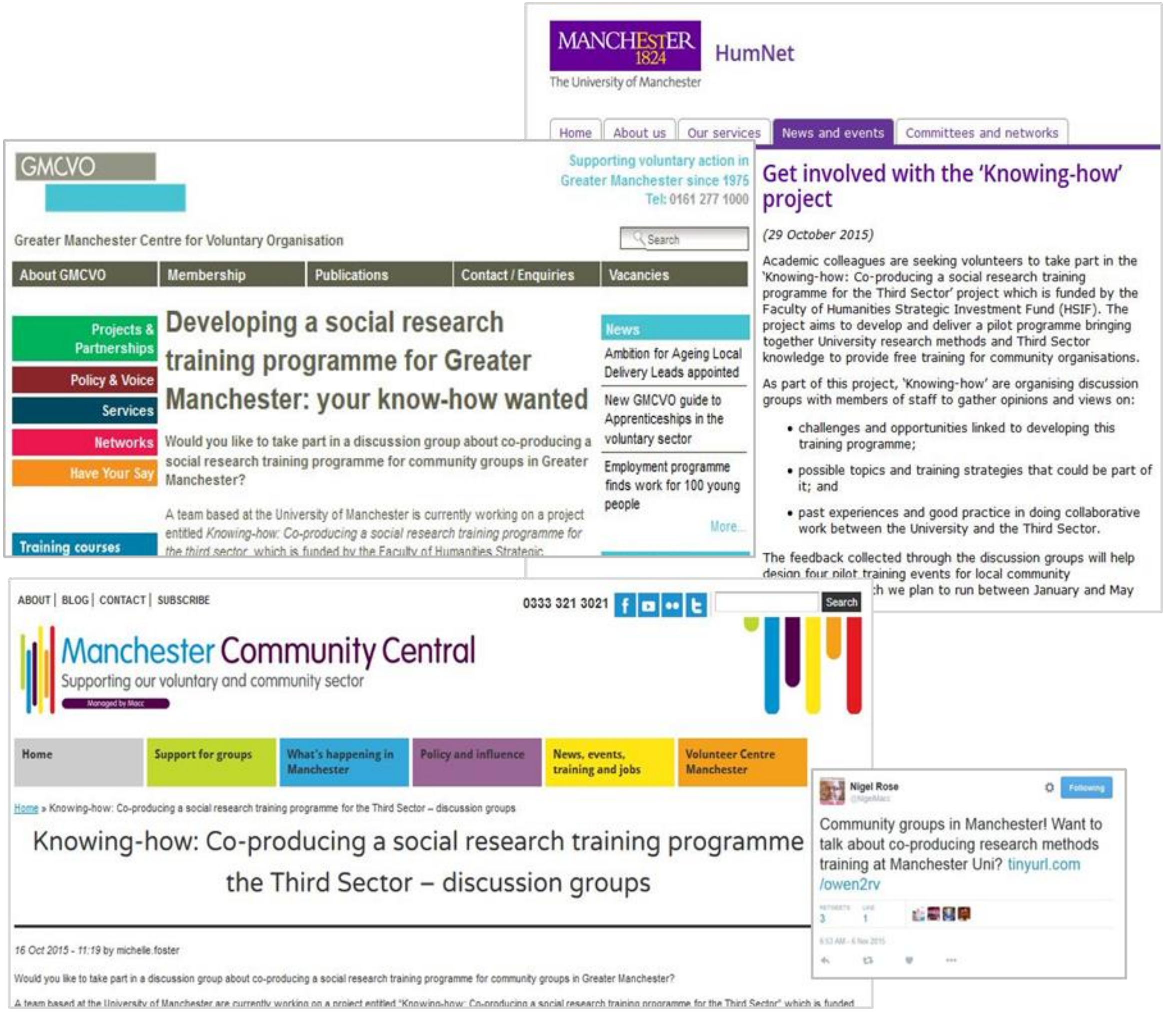

Figure 2. Example of advertisement for the discussion groups (October/November 2015).

The details about registration and actual attendance in the discussion groups are reported in Table 1. A total of 24 individuals participated (out of 47 registered).

Table 1: Attendance in discussion groups, November 2015.

	Third Sector	University	Both	All
Total Registered	15	32	-	**47**
Total Attended	7	16	1	**24**
Group 1	2	6	-	8
Group 2	-	3	1	4
Group 3	5	-	-	5
Group 4	-	7	-	7

The high level of attrition rate, despite reminding participants of the event, is something to consider when holding such events (this also applies to the training events, as explained in Section 7).

6.1. Delivering the Discussion Groups

The groups were delivered on 18th and 23rd November in the Humanities Bridgeford Street building at the University (this location was chosen based on practical considerations about room availability and costs). The aims of the discussion groups were to:

1. Involve both academics and Third Sector representatives in a conversation about designing a pilot training programme in social research methods targeting local community organisations;
2. Gather evidence about needs, ideas, potential challenges, opportunities, and good practices.

The groups were led by each member of the core Project Team but were generally geared toward the participants sharing knowledge and good practice. The discussion guide can be found in the Appendix. The groups began with a brainstorming session asking participants their first thoughts when thinking about the expression “social research methods”. Follow-up questions were asked about the words that emerged. The discussion then focused on the expertise and needs of academia and the Third Sector as well as the challenges and opportunities of these two actors working together with regard to research methods training. Finally, participants were asked to provide ideas and suggestions about possible topics, formats/techniques and locations for the training events to be designed as part of the pilot programme. Each discussion group lasted for approximately 1.25 hours and were all followed by a buffet lunch where participants from different discussion groups being run at the same time had the opportunity to meet and network.

Those who contacted the Project Team expressing interest in the project or registered for the discussion groups but could not attend the events were given the opportunity to contribute to the discussion by completing a short online questionnaire between 18th December and 8th January. The questionnaire only entailed open-ended questions related to the same topics discussed during the groups (see the Appendix for details of the questions asked). Of the 14 people contacted, 4 completed the questionnaire. Their answers were also used as part of the data collection.

6.2. What We Found Out

The discussion groups produced lively discussion and enthusiasm for the concept of delivering social research methods training for the Third Sector. In summary, the key conclusions from the discussion groups were:

- The Third Sector produces a wide range of evidence, and both qualitative and quantitative research skills are needed.
- It is crucial to teach/learn not only *how* but also *why* data should be collected (i.e. using data critically, making sense of data, add a story to the numbers).
- Training needs to be applied and relevant to the specific needs of the organisations.
- Hands-on, practical workshop or training sessions are preferred.
- Lack of resources (time, skills, staff, capacity) to conduct research (both data collection and analysis) is a problem for organisations.
- There is a strong need to gather evidence to evaluate and support the work carried out – it is also important to consider funders' requirements, especially for grant applications.
- The strengths of the Third Sector with regard to research include: (1) direct access to people and communities; (2) impact, as they tackle issues practically; (3) their work is based on real people and issues; (4) flexibility.
- Academic research strengths include: (1) credibility/authority/influence; (2) access to theoretical knowledge; (3) more developed networks; (4) ability to provide formal training.
- Working together produces a two-way process of collaboration based on mutual learning and benefit.
- Managing expectations and being realistic about what can be done (e.g. follow-up sessions, continuous support) is a challenge.
- It is important to consider the long-term impact and sustainability of co-produced training as well as how the knowledge acquired can be shared (longer term capacities).

Whilst the discussion groups provided a good overview of general needs, skills, and expertise, they did not provide specific guidance as to the actual specifics of requirements for research methods training. This proved challenging for the Project Team when trying to design training, but the involvement of the Third Sector partners considerably facilitated training delivery.

7. Workshops: Preparing and Delivering the Training

After having gathered and organised the feedback provided both by the Advisory Board members and the discussion groups (which were summarised in an interim Phase I report that was shared with the Advisory Board), the Project Team developed a training plan. The proposed plan was circulated amongst the Project Team Advisory Board members. After further discussion it was agreed that the four 3-hour training workshops would be delivered over two days (22nd March and 29th April 2016), with separate morning and afternoon workshops on each day. The first two workshops were focussed on skills, and the second workshops were focussed on the application of these skills. The decision to run the training over two rather than four days was based on practical considerations about trainers' availability and to facilitate attendance by reducing the number of days participants would need to dedicate to the training, especially for those who wanted to attend all four workshops.

7.1. Training Structure and Topics

Although the four training workshops were closely related to one another (due to their focus on similar resources, skills and methods), each workshop was designed as a stand-alone, independent event. In this way, participants could opt to attend any number of workshops (i.e. all of them or only some), based on their availability and needs.

All four workshops were delivered by two members of the Project Team (Silvia Galandini and Patty Doran) and were held at the University in a computer lab so as to allow for a large proportion of time to be allocated to practical, hands-on training (which involved the use of internet and software like Excel). More central locations outside the University were also considered (i.e. Manchester Central Library), however these would not have allowed the use of computers. The main delivery format included lecture-style lessons and practical exercises. A substantial amount of time was also dedicated to discussing the topics taught both in group and in pairs, but also to reflecting on how the skills, resources and methods presented could be practically applied to the participants' work in their organisations.

With regard to the contents of the training events, the four workshops were divided into two main groups, the Skills and the Applied Workshops. The Skills Workshops were conducted on the first day of training (22nd March 2016) and were aimed at teaching participants about how to collect and analyse data (both qualitative and quantitative) as well as how to find and use data that is freely available online (e.g. Census or national surveys). The main focus of these initial workshops was on skills, i.e. how to use the methods and resources presented.

The Applied Workshops were conducted during the second day of training (29th April 2016) and, despite using similar tools and methods to those presented in the Skills Workshops, their primary aim was to reflect on how these skills can be applied practically to actual research needs and interests. In this case, the training was primarily built on examples and case studies, and participants had more time to 'try' the methods, data and tools and discuss their applicability to specific research questions or interests. This type of reflection was encouraged during the Skills Workshops as well, but the Applied Workshops considerably expanded on the idea of trying to look at the skills taught as a set of helpful and relevant resources for the work carried out in community organisations. In order to strengthen the applied nature of this second set of workshops, Nigel Rose (Macc) and Yvonne Fox-Burmby (GMCVO) (two of the Third Sector advisors on the project) took part in the workshops to discuss with participants the relevance of using evidence effectively in the Third Sector. In this regard, a meeting with the two advisors was held on 21st April 2016 to discuss the delivery of the second set of workshops in detail, and this helped the Project Team further develop and improve the teaching materials for the day.

In order to try and meet the suggestions of the Advisory Board and discussion groups, all the training material was developed and written specifically for the workshops. The pre-existing knowledge and skills of the participants was unknown, and ensuring that the training was pitched to make it appealing for the targeted audience added another layer of complexity at the preparation stage. However, discussion with the Third Sector partners, the broad range of skills from the Project Team and colleagues based at the University who were willing to share their teaching and research materials[1] allowed the Team to draw on a mix of expertise, previous social research methods courses and practical research experience when designing the workshops.

All materials produced for the workshops (slides) were shared with participants by email after the events. It is important to note that for each workshops, additional slides were provided with information on additional resources about the methods and tools presented, e.g. books, free online resources, (free or paid) training courses at the University of Manchester, other universities or online. A more detailed summary of the topics discussed during the four workshops is reported below.

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[1] Special thanks to Dr Mark Brown and Dr Jo Wathan for letting the trainers use their teaching materials, and to Dr Tine Buffel, Dr Marta Cantijoch, and Prof Rachel Gibson whose studies were used as practical examples during the Applied workshops in April 2016.

Skills Workshops: 22nd March 2016

Workshop 1: What is data? (10am-1pm)

- What constitutes 'data' and empirical evidence: the difference between qualitative and quantitative data.
- How primary qualitative and quantitative data can be collected (focus groups, interviews, questionnaires) and managed (the main principles of data management).
- Online resources to access existing data: Office for National Statistics - Neighbourhood Statistics website; British Social Attitudes Survey online tool; Public Health Profiles website; UK Data Service.

Workshop 2: Presenting your data (2-5pm)

- Overview of how qualitative and quantitative data can be analysed and presented.
    - Quantitative data:
        - How to use Excel to enter/record data; use Pivot tables to produce univariate and bivariate descriptive statistics for different types of variables; recode variables.
        - An overview of what 'descriptive statistics' are; what is a 'variable'; different types of variables, measures of central tendency and dispersion.
        - How to present quantitative evidence (tables and graphs)
    - Qualitative data:
        - An overview of how focus groups and interview data can be analysed by using narrative analysis.
        - The stages of qualitative data analysis.
        - Tips on how to present qualitative data using a case study example.
- The session also included an overview of how different methods can be used together (mixed methods).
- Practical exercises demonstrating using Thematic Analysis for qualitative data, and descriptive statistics and Excel for quantitative data.

Applied Workshops: 29th April 2016

Workshop 3: Creating evidence: qualitative data (10am-1pm)

Workshop 4: Creating evidence: quantitative data (2-5pm)

- Discussed with the Third Sector partners present during the training sessions (Nigel Rose, Macc; Yvonne Fox-Burmby, GMCVO) how evidence can be used effectively in the Third Sector (including reflections on what 'evidence' means in commissioning, the concept of Social Value, how evidence can support funding applications).

- How different types of qualitative and quantitative data (e.g. focus groups or interviews, primary or secondary, Census or survey data) can be used and presented effectively to generate compelling evidence.
- Presented case studies (fictitious or actual studies conducted) where qualitative and quantitative evidence was used (separately and together) to tackle specific research questions.
- Practical exercises were again organised so that participants had the opportunity to analyse and present actual focus group data; search, collate and present (with tables or graphs) quantitative evidence through available online resources and tools (Census or survey data); and reflect on how both quantitative and qualitative methods can be effectively used.
- For the two Applied Workshops, besides the group work, each participant was asked to take 5 minutes to individually complete a 'Personal Log' where they recorded reflections on how, when and why the data/tools/methods presented could be applied to their work and tasks in the organisations. This was devised as a tool to strengthen the applied nature of these workshops. The template for this log is available in Appendix.

7.2. Training Attendance

The workshops were promoted and participants recruited in a similar way to the discussion groups (i.e. through Macc and GMCVO's mailing lists and websites and social media). People could register for the workshops online, through an Eventbrite page. The maximum number of participants allowed for each workshop was 15 as this number was deemed to be optimal to allow for a closer interaction between participants and the trainers.

Final numbers of people who registered for and actually attended the training workshops are detailed in Table 2. Overall, 12 participants took part in one or more of the workshops. The figures also show that non-attendance was fairly high, especially for Workshop 3.

Table 2: Training workshops: registration & attendance, March/April 2016

	W1	W2	W3	W4
Registered	8	11	13	9
Attended	5	9	7	6

Despite non-attendance, which does need to be considered when planning events such as these, the relatively small number of attendees meant that the training could be personalised and the model of training delivery tested more thoroughly.

Table 3 shows that the great majority of participants (7) took part in two workshops, while only 2 people attended one event only and 3 people were present at three or all four workshops. Additional details on attendance are presented in Figure 3, which suggests that 6 participants out of 7 who attended two workshops chose to take part exclusively either in the Skills Workshops (3 people attended workshops 1 and 2) or in the Applied Workshops (3 people attended workshops 3 and 4). Overall only 1 participant combined one Skills and one Applied workshop.

Table 3: Number of training workshops attended

Number of workshops attended	N
1 workshop	2
2 workshops	7
3 workshops	1
4 workshops	2

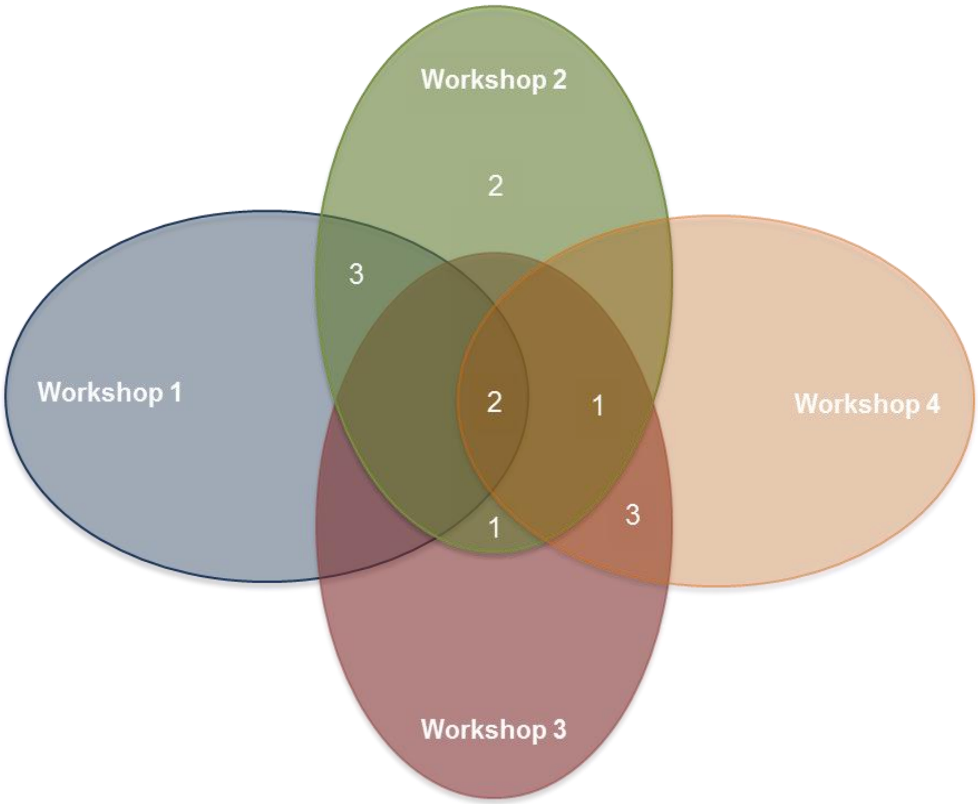

Figure 3: Workshop Attendance

7.3. Workshop Feedback

In order to evaluate the workshops, participants were asked to provide their feedback in person (anonymously) after each event (*Feedback I*) and 1.5 months after the events (*Feedback II*). This second wave of feedback was collected through an online (again anonymous) survey which was sent out by email in May (for the Skilled Workshops) and June 2016 (for the Applied Workshops). The primary purpose of Feedback II was to ascertain if the skills from the workshops had been used, and how useful the workshops were perceived to be. All feedback questionnaires included standard Likert scale and single/multiple choice questions as well as the opportunity to provide comments. The questionnaire used for both Feedback I and Feedback II are provided in the Appendix.

Feedback I: Overall, most participants found the length, speed, and content of the workshops 'just right', and rated the training 'helpful' or 'very helpful' (Figure 4). Details of the aspects that participants thought went well in each workshop and suggestions for change are detailed below.

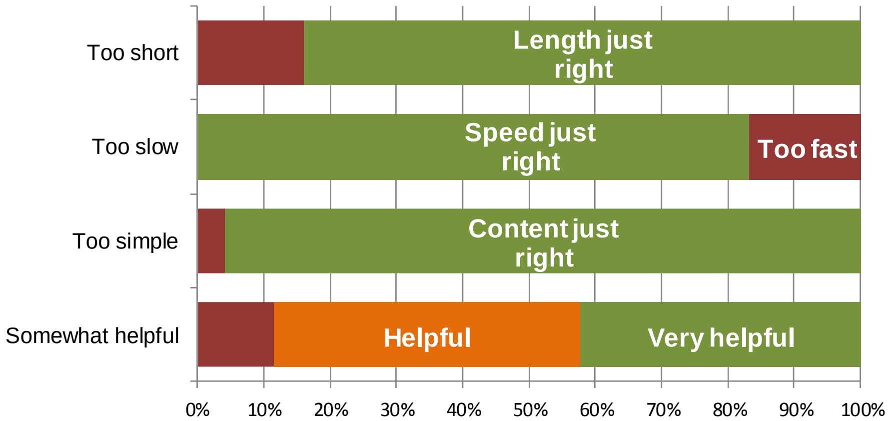

Figure 4: Feedback from across all four workshops

What went well

- Skills Workshops:
  - Information about available resources (data, references and training)
  - Learning about techniques to analyse data effectively (qualitative: thematic analysis/quantitative: Excel)
- Applied Workshops:
  - Using available tools to find, analyse and present data (practical exercises)
  - Learning more about how evidence can be used effectively in the Third Sector

Suggestions for change

- More focussed:
  - ‘How to structure the information you create for maximum impact on your target audience’ e.g. funders
  - ‘Personalise the exercises to specific project needs’
- More hands-on:
  - ‘More time to practice some examples of presenting both quantitative and qualitative data.’
  - ‘Practical exercises to take away and play around with.’
  - ‘More in depth looking at how we decide on questions or design research’

Feedback II: The response rate for the second wave of feedback was low, 3/9 for Workshops 1 and 2, and 3/7 for Workshops 3 and 4. The surveys that were completed indicated that a third of participants had used the tools, those that had not used the tools reporting lack of time and lack of need. However, all of those who completed the survey indicated that the workshops had been ‘relevant’ or ‘very relevant’ and that they were ‘likely’ or ‘very likely’ to use the skills at some point in the future (Figure 5).

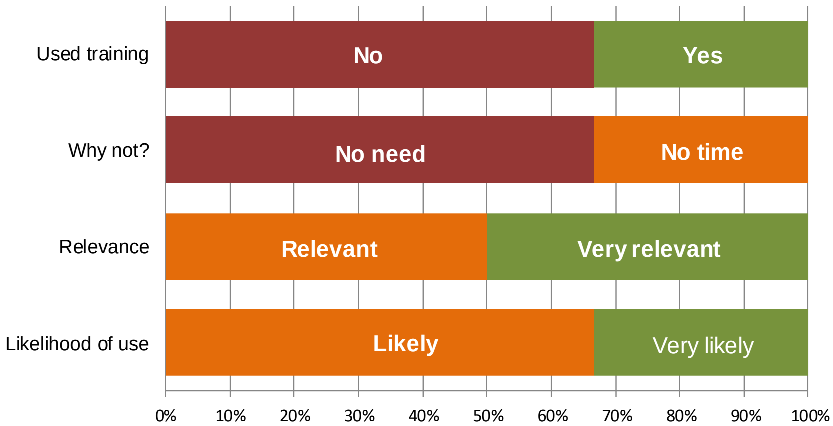

Figure 5: Follow-up feedback from across all four workshops

8. Roundtable: Reflections and Discussion

Figure 6. Themes from the Roundtable

The final roundtable event was held on 17th May 2016 at Manchester Central Library to discuss the Knowing-how project and identify recommendations for any further activity.

The invite was sent to the six Advisory Board members; those who attended the discussion groups in November 2015; the participants in the training events organised in March and April 2016; those who could not attend the discussion groups but expressed interest in the project; relevant funders and commissioners (based on the advice provided by the Third Sector partners); and other University stakeholders. Overall, 20 people registered and, of those, 12 attended the event, i.e. 4 Advisory Board members; 3 discussion group participants; 2 training events participants; and 3 representatives of existing University infrastructures providing methods and data training (i.e. UK Data Service and CMIST).

A short presentation was delivered at the start of the workshop to summarise the Knowing-how project and highlight the achievements and challenges (Table 4). The presentation was followed by general discussion about the project.

Table 4: Achievements and challenges from the Knowing-how project

Achievements	• Provided four successful research methods training workshops • Developed closer links with our Third Sector partners: mutual benefit • Networking with local community organisations • Helped local community organisations create connections with other organisations, Third Sector partners, the University (e.g. lunch during discussion groups) • Learnt about developing a new approach to research methods training (non-academic audience)
Challenges	• Creating new training for an untested audience • Time commitment needed to (1) co-produce training with Third Sector (2) design, deliver and coordinate a new training programme • Limited reach: what are the needs of the people/organisations who did not attend? • Long-term sustainability for University and Third Sector • Time and financial resources

The discussion focussed on (1) the Knowing-how project delivery and (2) general reflections and potential options for the future. The discussion is summarised below and can be used to reflect on the future of the provision of research methods training similar to that provided by the Knowing-how project.

8.1. Feedback on the Knowing-How Project Delivery

Strengths

- The training was generally well received and presents as a good model worth developing further, especially the space and opportunity to <u>think strategically about data</u> and how secondary data as well as data collected by community organisations themselves can be used effectively.
- There is a positive value in having <u>both academics and Third Sector present</u> during the training, as this creates a different opportunity to think about and consider different perspectives when it comes to collecting, analysing and using data and empirical evidence.

Limitations

- The project only lasted for a year; however a <u>longer period of time</u> is needed in order to build the networks of which training provision is part. Indeed methods and data training should be seen as part of a more general effort to create and strengthen connections between the University and the Third Sector (some of which might focus on research). There is goodwill and energy to work in this direction, but the short-term nature of project made it difficult to consolidate these efforts.

- It is difficult to effectively capture the existence, size and relevance of a 'market', an 'appetite' (i.e. a need and interest) for research methods and data training among local community organisations, despite the efforts made during the project.
- Even though the interest and need are most likely there, one evident limitation for both the University and the Third Sector is the availability of adequate time and financial resources. This generates an issue of sustainability of co-produced training, which in turn might reduce the credibility of future training programmes.
- The branding and marketing of the training events organised as part of the project potentially limited the audience that attended the events as different strategies could have been applied while naming, promoting and advertising the events (more details on suggestions emerged in this regard are provided below). This likely impacted on the numbers of attendees as awareness of training was low among community organisations' representatives.

8.2. General Reflections and Recommendations

Training content and delivery

- It is essential to develop and maintain a strong co-production component to the training, which spans from the design to the delivery of training events.
- It is also necessary to develop a longer-term plan as the success of co-produced training is based on creating a reputable programme relying on a consolidated network of people and organisations, and this will take some time.
- In terms of what co-produced training programmes should primarily focus on (themes):
  - Particular attention should be paid to (1) how data can be used properly and effectively, (2) and why data has to be used, i.e. to inform what organisations should improve and hence help them define future actions and programmes (prove and improve). In this regard, data collection strategies and how to monitor and evaluate projects are particularly important topics to address.
  - Specialised, targeted training topics should be mapped on to the different components of the Third Sector, ranging from small grass roots to very large organisations in order to take into account different training interests and needs.

- More practical training sessions are recommended. Participants should be encouraged to use their own data during workshops to build data literacy and build their organisation's evidence base (that can be used to apply for more funding).
    - One possible strategy to encourage participants to reflect on the applicability of the skills taught is to ask them to produce, by the end of the training, a leaflet based on their organisations' data and research needs.
- Besides the face-to-face format, different methods to deliver the training should be explored, in particular the use of online tools such as webinars. This is increasingly a good platform for linking people together and addressing the immediacy of needs.
- In order to increase accessibility and visibility of training events:
    - Face-to-face training should involve outreach, away from University.
    - Particular attention should be paid to the branding and marketing of training events.
- With regard to branding and marketing the training events:
    - The focus should be on the concept of 'evidence' rather than 'research methods' as the latter might sound less applied and hence less appealing to the Third Sector.
    - Advertising also needs to be innovative and clearly highlight how the training is going to practically help the work of community organisations and which helpful skills and competencies participants will acquire. So while marketing the training, it is necessary to think from the user perspective.
    - A wide array of information channels (social media, mailing lists and websites), should be used to disseminate the events, although word of mouth and face-to-face advertising seem to work best. For this reason, specialising the topics of the training carried out may be a good idea to increase visibility and attendance. In this way there will be a market to aim at and it would be possible to rely on existing networks of community organisations working on similar issues (e.g. health and social care) and already connected to advertise the events.
- PhD students should be actively involved in these training initiatives as they can certainly provide expertise and assistance with the preparation and delivery of training, and in turn, they are likely to have an interest in establishing connections with the Third Sector (based on their research work) and developing teaching skills.
- Similar methods and data training co-produced with the Third Sector could be adapted and used to provide internal training at the University, for instance, for Professional Support Services (PSS) staff.

Relationships with the Third Sector

- The Third Sector/voluntary organisations/community organisations are a complex set of groups. They are all generally affected by the decreasing amount of financial resources available at the Local Authority level. However, smaller organisations tend to have more difficulties in collecting, managing and using effectively data given the very limited resources (financial and workforce) that can be dedicated to these tasks. It is important to take into account this complexity when establishing networks with the Third Sector.
- The University is also a complex organisation, with many entrance points to establish connections as well as many existing networks with the Third Sector primarily established through the personal, individual work of researchers.
  - A mapping exercise was recently conducted (within the Faculty of Humanities) to show current connections between the University and the Third Sector. This mapping exercise is helpful as it identifies gaps where value can be added.
- In order to develop strong connections with the Third Sector, the University needs to understand how the Third Sector is structured and works as well as capture its needs and interests and where information about training is sought.
  - The Third Sector in based on strong connections between community organisations and generally works at a fast pace, needing solutions to issues that exist here and now.
- The most crucial next step is to bring together the needs and expertise of both the University and Third Sector in order to develop a strong co-production of methods and data training.
  - It is possible to use existing resources that already focus on this close collaboration for inspiration: for example, Q-step; Citizen Scientist.
- It might be beneficial to create a permanent infrastructure (a one-stop-shop) at the University for connecting to the Third Sector. This may be a difficult task but at the same time this permanent structure would: (1) make the mutual relationship between University and Third Sector more transparent and coherent, hence reducing overlap; (2) support the creation of networks between researchers and local community organisations by acting as a 'broker' that helps those interested (from both the University and the Third Sector) to identify who the people with expertise are and what they can offer.
  - The Departments or projects that could support the management of this permanent structure are: Social Responsibility; Business Engagement; Public Engagement; Q-Step; Staff Learning and Development (for internal training). Other examples are the

now inactive Research and Community Exchange (which is a potential precedent that could be built on); Interchange (Liverpool), Hub (Durham), Options Paper (MMU), Community Partnership (Brighton).[2]

Management of relationships and training sustainability

- Sustainability in the long-run requires a more permanent structure and adequate financial resources enabling those directly involved in the organisation and delivery of the training (both from the University and the Third Sector) to dedicate the necessary amount of time to the activity.
- It is important to reflect on what the broader role and responsibilities, the impact, added value and relationships of the University are in the Greater Manchester area.
    - In terms of sustainability and funding, building training delivery and co-production into funding bids under impact could become common practice – in this sense, impact should involve engaging with local organisations from the start.
- The Third Sector gives important access to research environments (for both researchers and PhD students), so there should be discussion about whether the University should provide pro-bono support for Third Sector (Social Responsibility), or whether this should be a two-way exchange more in terms of knowledge and expertise.
- While considering the issue of sustainability, it is also important to take into account the changing University environment (with most staff and students moving on from their current posts frequently), and focus on relationships that can be built beyond the personal efforts of individual researchers so that more stable and long-term relationships can be created between the University and the Third Sector. This is linked to the creation of a permanent infrastructure connecting the University and the Third Sector (as mentioned above).

9. Concluding Thoughts and Recommendations

The Knowing-how project was successful in developing and delivering valuable data skills and data application workshops to representatives from the Third Sector. Colleagues and existing methods and data training infrastructures at the University have been actively and directly involved (through various channels) in the discussion about the present and future of co-

[2] This does not represent a comprehensive list of all the past and existing initiatives and resources focussing on the collaboration between universities and the Third Sector, but simply reports what was mentioned during the roundtable.

producing training with and for the Third Sector, and outputs from the project – including this report – will been forwarded to these and other stakeholders, which is in itself a positive achievement.

Bearing in mind the feedback from the discussion groups, the training workshops, and the roundtable event, the following recommendations are proposed (above and beyond what has been suggested in the previous sections). These focus on two broad areas of interest: (1) co-production of training, (2) structure and content of training.

Co-producing training

- Both the University and the Third Sector stand to gain from co-production of training development and delivery. This collaboration:
  - makes the training delivered more relevant and effective as expertise about methods, tools, needs and interests is shared and combined.
  - strengthens existing networks and facilitates the creation of new relations not only *between* but also *within* the University and the Third Sector. Also, the collaboration in the field of research training has the potential to positively spill over into the research field whereby researchers and community organisations can find a common ground and shared interest in developing research projects together.
- For these reasons, co-production should aim to achieve equal partnership between the University and the Third Sector, whereby both partners learn from one another and the training is not just ‘delivered to’ but primarily ‘developed with’ (e.g. Workshops 3 and 4 organised as part of this project).
- In order to allow co-production and collaboration to develop and strive, resources including funds and infrastructures need to be put in place to ensure that all partners have the capacity to take part in the co-production process. These resources can be provided by both the University and the Third Sector. For the latter, the role played by infrastructure/umbrella organisations, which provide strategic training and support to a wide range of community groups, is particularly relevant.
- Financial resources, especially, are of paramount importance both for University and Third Sector partners, as through the availability of adequate funding, time and resources can be dedicated to designing and delivering appropriate, co-produced training. In particular, based on the Project Team’s experience, the most demanding tasks, which require adequate time and resources, include:
  - The design of training events (contents, practical examples, approaches, structure) and the preparation of relative teaching materials.

- The organisational aspects of training events, which include booking of venues/facilities and catering; managing publicity of the event as well as registration of participants; and making sure that reminders about the events are sent to participants to tackle the issue of high attrition rates.
- Advertising training events adequately and ensuring that levels of attendance, accessibility and visibility remain high.

- Co-production would particularly benefit small grassroots organisations, which generally suffer from a lack of resources. Training targeting these organisations should therefore be prioritised. This training could be co-produced with infrastructure/umbrella organisations (such as GMCVO and Macc, which were involved in this project) or other organisations with an expertise in delivering training (such as CLES, another partner on this project). Alternatively, instead of simply receiving the training, smaller organisations could be involved in co-production projects if adequate funding is provided.
- In the long-term, a central broker based at the University and focussed on partnership working with the Third Sector would be the ideal way to facilitate future training development. This could be, for example, a dedicated structure bringing together staff and students interested in working with the Third Sector or simply showcasing existing work and networks. This infrastructure could build on existing work at the University but also be inspired by other similar experiences in other universities.
- As a short-term goal, the training developed through this project could be replicated and improved if the necessary resources (i.e. staff and funds) are available.
- Scoping work is required to make sure that skills and resources already available within the University and Third Sector are used, or at least represented when conducting training (or in any supporting documentation/information).

Structure and contents of training

- Techniques for producing evidence from both quantitative and qualitative data and methods are needed.
- Practical, hands-on sessions seem to be the most successful way to structure the training, particularly when showcasing how to use online tools or software.
- Training for the Third Sector should also aim to be relevant and applied to real experiences. This could be achieved by using examples that are directly related to the work, needs and interests of the audience (e.g. health, young people, ethnic minorities) or by encouraging participants to reflect on how more generic examples brought by trainers apply to their own work. It would also be beneficial to focus on how data can be presented depending on the type of audience they need to inform (i.e. the end user).

- Ways to facilitate greater access for the Third Sector to existing University methods training should be explored. These could include organising trainings outside of the University campus (out-reach); offer discounts to access existing paid training; further disseminate and advertise existing free training; or develop further online training and resources (e.g. webinars, online platform). In this regard, the collaboration with Third Sector infrastructure/umbrella organisations would be particularly important as they have knowledge and expertise in providing targeted training as well as venues that are accessible, well-known and trusted by community organisations.

To conclude, the project was for a fixed time frame and designed to test the most appropriate way to mutually share skills and knowledge with the Third Sector. In order to continue the success of the project, and to ensure that the knowledge gained is not lost, a sustainable infrastructure for partnership working with the Third Sector should be developed. The Knowing-how Team believes that there is definite scope for creating such an infrastructure, which will require considering the recommendations above. Building a strong research methods training infrastructure that goes beyond what has been done in this pilot project, incorporates the various levels of skills available within the University, and takes into account the needs of the Third Sector would be an invaluable resource for all involved.

10. Appendix

10.1. Topic Guide for Discussion Groups

1. **Introduction**
   - Explain project
   - Recording? No used for research but to facilitate collection of data
2. **Ice-breaker (round the table)**
   - Personal intro + Why did you come here? Motivations to be here today
3. **Brainstorming session: "Social research methods" [write on flipchart; ask participants to write max 3 words on a post-it (1 word per post-it); and attach post-it on flipchart]**
   - What does this include (perceptions): topics, skills, anything that participants mention
     - Prompt to clarify if necessary
   - Why are these relevant to participants in what they do daily
4. **Needs & Expertise**
   - Taking into account what discussed so far regarding Social Research Methods, think about 2 scenarios illustrated on flipchart (i.e. two-way process) – first one and then the other
     a. Academic: expertise ⟶ Third Sector: needs
     b. Academic: needs ⟶ Third Sector: expertise
5. **University and Third Sector working together on the training**
   - Past experiences
   - Opportunities
   - Challenges (for both TS and UNI)
   - What do you know exists (what's there?)
   - What's not there?
6. **Ideas for training events**
   - Topics
   - Techniques, Format
   - Locations

10.2. Initial Questionnaire Sent to Interested Parties (December 2015)

MANCHESTER 1824

The University of Manchester

"Knowing-how: Co-producing a social research training programme for the Third Sector" project – Questionnaire

The 'Knowing-how' project recently brought together interested people from Manchester's Third Sector and Manchester University to discuss how together we can create and deliver some training on social research methods. Thank you for expressing interest in the discussion groups, which have now been completed. You can still add your views to the discussion by filling in the following short questionnaire. All ideas and feedback are much appreciated.

1. Could you tell us why you expressed interest in taking part in the 'Knowing-how' project (and the discussion groups)?

2. If you think about the expression 'social research methods', can you identify specific expertise and needs associated with the University and the Third Sector?
Please enter this information in the relevant boxes.

	Expertise	Needs
University		
Third Sector		

3. What are, in your opinion, the main opportunities and challenges (both for the University and Third Sector) of co-producing a social research methods training programme?
Please feel free to refer to your direct or indirect experience working with Third Sector organisations and/or the University and to share your thoughts about best practices, what already exists, what is missing and anything else you think might be relevant

4. Do you have any suggestions or ideas about possible topics, formats or locations that we could use for/apply to the training events that we will be designing as part of the project?

	Suggestions and ideas
Topics (e.g. specific methods, skills)	
Training Techniques and Formats	
Locations (in the Manchester/Greater Manchester area)	

5. Any other comments?

6. Please leave us your contact details if you wish to be involved in the training events (either as participant or trainer).

Name

Organisation

Email address

Done Save Cancel

10.3. Personal log template for workshops 3 and 4 (April 2016)

Knowing-how project: [Workshop title]

Do you think you will use any of the data/tools/approaches presented today as part of your work in the organisation? If so, which ones, how and why?

Do you have any other comments about today's workshop that you think would be helpful to write down on paper?

10.4. Feedback I - after the training events - March/April 2016

Knowing-how project: Evaluation questionnaire

1. How did you find the workshop overall?

☐Very helpful ☐Helpful ☐Somewhat helpful ☐ Not helpful

2. How was the content of the workshop?

☐Too advanced ☐Just right ☐ Too simple

3. How did you find the speed at which contents were presented?

☐Too fast ☐Just right ☐ Too slow

4. How did you find the length of the workshop?

☐Too short ☐Just right ☐ Too long

5. How did you find the location of the workshop?

☐Convenient ☐Not convenient

6. What was the **most** useful part of the workshop?

7. What was the **least** useful part of the workshop?

8. If we were to organise another workshop like the one you attended today, which topics do you think we should present?

9. Any other comments?

THANKS FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

10.5. Feedback II - online

Skills Workshops (March 2016) – questionnaire sent in May 2016

Knowing-how project: SKILLS WORKSHOPS 22 March 2016 - Second feedback questionnaire

Page 1

Thank you for taking time to complete the second feedback questionnaire about the training workshops you attended on 22nd March 2016. When answering the questions please think about all the workshops you attended on the day. Your responses to the questionnaire are anonymous and your feedback will be used to evaluate the pilot training programme designed and delivered as part of this project ('Knowing-how'). Thank you again for your contribution. The Knowing-how team.

1. Which workshop/s did you attend on 22nd March 2016?*
   - ☐ "What is data?", 10am-1pm
   - ☐ "Presenting your data", 2-5pm

2. Have you had the chance to use any of tools or approaches addressed during the workshop/s?*
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No

3. If you have answered 'YES' to the previous question, could you tell us which tools or approaches you have used? *
   If you have answered 'NO', please just write N/A in the box below.

4. If you have NOT used the tools and approaches addressed during the workshop/s, could you tell us why is that?*
   Please tick all that apply.
   - ☐ I have not had time
   - ☐ I have not had the need
   - ☐ Not applicable (I have used the tools/approaches addressed)
   - ☐ Other, please specify

5. Regardless of whether or not you have used the tools and approaches explained during the workshop/s, how relevant do you think the information provided has been with regard to your work in the organisation? *
   - ○ Very relevant
   - ○ Relevant
   - ○ Somewhat relevant
   - ○ Not relevant at all

6. And how likely are you to use these tools and approaches in the future?*
   - ○ Very likely
   - ○ Likely
   - ○ Unlikely
   - ○ Very unlikely

7. Please use the box below for any other comments you would like to share with us.

Applied Workshops (April 2016) – questionnaire sent in June 2016

Knowing-how: APPLIED WORKSHOPS 29TH APRIL - follow-up feedback

Page 1

Thank you for taking time to complete the second feedback questionnaire about the training workshops you attended on 29th April 2016. When answering the questions please think about all the workshops you attended on the day. Your responses to the questionnaire are anonymous and your feedback will be used to evaluate the pilot training programme designed and delivered as part of this project ('Knowing-how'). Thank you again for your contribution. The Knowing-how team.

1. Which workshop/s did you attend on 29th April 2016?*
   - ☐ "Creating evidence: qualitative data", 10am-1pm
   - ☐ "Creating evidence: quantitative data", 2-5pm

2. Have you had the chance to use any of tools or approaches addressed during the workshop/s?*
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No

3. If you have answered 'YES' to the previous question, could you tell us which tools or approaches you have used? *
   If you have answered 'NO', please just write N/A in the box below.

4. If you have NOT used the tools and approaches addressed during the workshop/s, could you tell us why is that?*
   Please tick all that apply.
   - ☐ I have not had time
   - ☐ I have not had the need
   - ☐ Not applicable (I have used the tools/approaches addressed)
   - ☐ Other, please specify

5. Regardless of whether or not you have used the tools and approaches explained during the workshop/s, how relevant do you think the information provided has been with regard to your work in the organisation? *
   - ○ Very relevant
   - ○ Relevant
   - ○ Somewhat relevant
   - ○ Not relevant at all

6. And how likely are you to use these tools and approaches in the future?*
   - ○ Very likely
   - ○ Likely
   - ○ Unlikely
   - ○ Very unlikely

7. Please use the box below for any other comments you would like to share with us.