Programme Review 2012-2019

Scottish Universities Insight Institute
Mobilising knowledge for a better Scotland

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"The Scottish Government really values the work of the Scottish Universities Insight Institute.   It offers a very effective way of bringing together researchers, practitioners and policy-makers.   It creates real impact by focusing on the key challenges for Scotland. Delivered in a very cost effective way its project calls allow for creative approaches to problems to be tested and can lead to both academic research and policy and operational impact."

Dr Roddy Macdonald
Head of Higher Education and Science Division, Scottish Government

The Scottish Universities Insight Institute (SUII) promotes collaboration and engagement between researchers and wider society. Drawing on wide-ranging research knowledge from some of Scotland's top research-led universities, together with international perspectives and multi-sector expertise, our programmes help to establish communities of practice, linking academia to the wider policy and practice world.
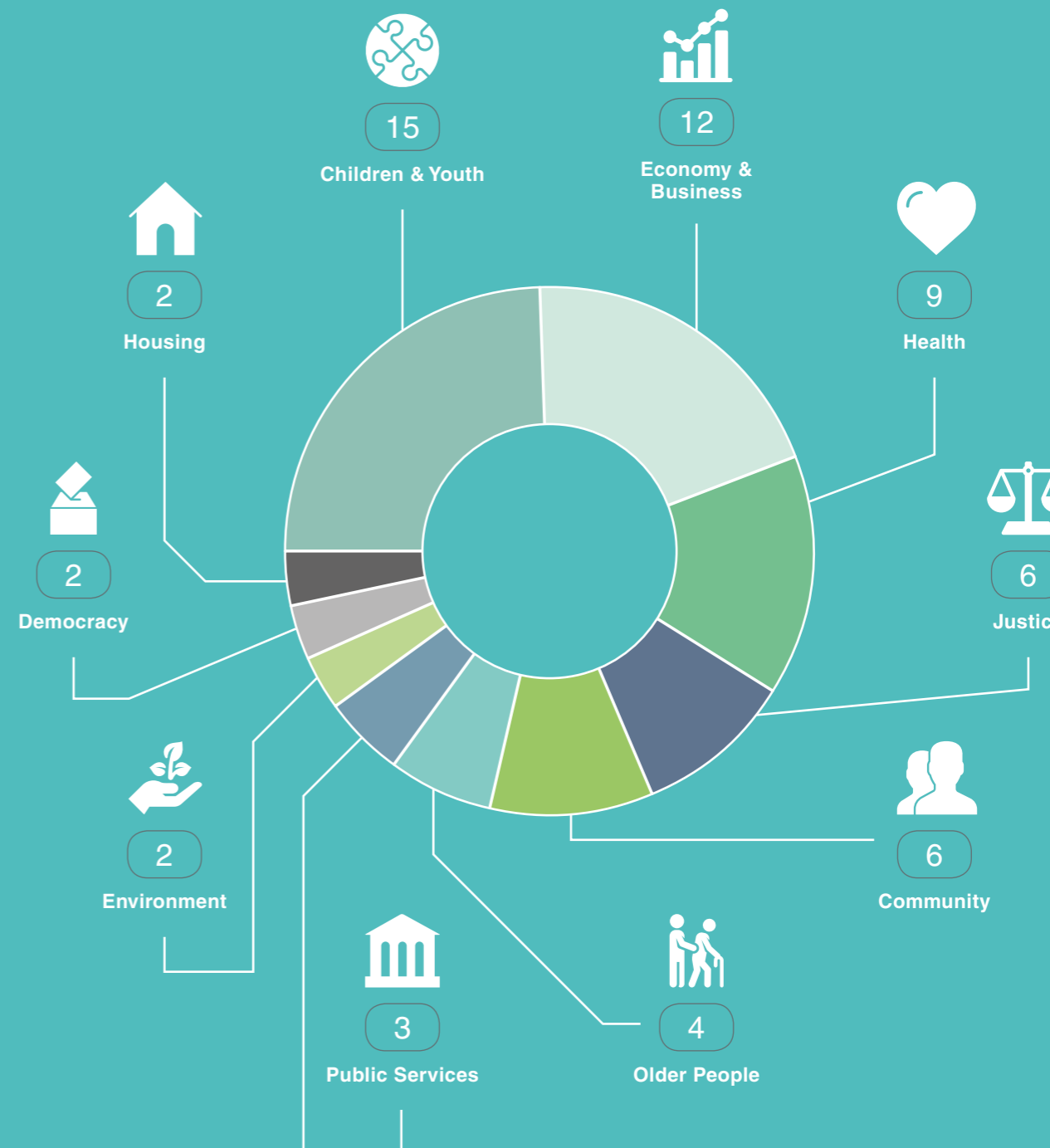
Our current member universities are: Dundee, Edinburgh, Heriot Watt, St Andrews, Strathclyde, and Glasgow School of Art. Our board is made up of our member universities plus representatives from Scottish Government, SPICe at the Scottish Parliament, Scotland's Futures Forum, and policy and practice including Audit Scotland.

Tackling issues that face Scotland and the wider world

SUII supports collaborative programmes which address and inform substantial issues and opportunities for Scotland and the wider world. We hold two calls for proposals every year, one is usually an 'open' call, addressing the most relevant issues for policy and practice, with the other advancing a broad theme. Previous themes have focused on Understanding, Measuring and Promoting Wellbeing; Learning from Other Places, and Creating Cultures of Innovation. The themed approach enables us to share knowledge and insights, make new connections and to identify commonalities across programmes.

Over the last seven years we have supported around 70 teams to collaborate on a diverse range of topics from dementia care, to human trafficking, to stroke rehabilitation and many others. Key areas of focus have been children and young people, economy and business, and health.

Areas of Focus

- 15 Children & Youth
- 12 Economy & Business
- 9 Health
- 6 Justice
- 6 Community
- 4 Older People
- 3 Public Services
- 2 Environment
- 2 Democracy
- 2 Housing

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Impact on Policy and Practice

Policy influence

Practice improvement

Benefits to end users

SUII helps members of wider communities - in the public, business and third sectors - gain new insights into the issues they face and to be better informed in the decisions they take. Building on the research and knowledge within our member universities and the experience of practitioners, programmes bring together a broad range of perspectives to increase understanding and generate new ideas and solutions.

Through deploying knowledge in fresh ways, our programmes help generate added value and impact from excellent research in which society has already invested, and provide universities with pathways to impact for their research. SUII programmes provide an opportunity to demonstrate impact on 'the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life', as required by the Research Excellence Framework (REF).

Beyond the REF, all our programmes focus on making a difference – to policy and/or practice - through identifying and sharing best practice, tackling longstanding issues, developing new ways of thinking/working, and providing a platform for knowledge to be shared and a range of voices to be heard. A number of programmes have contributed to the development and implementation of legislation and policy – through engagement with policymakers, written evidence and cross-party working groups – including the Community Empowerment Act, BSL Act, Human Trafficking Act, and National Performance Framework. Others have designed tools and guidance to improve working practices across a broad range of sectors. For example, developing and trialling a national child fatality review process; piloting interventions to promote wellbeing and resilience in schools; and creating a toolkit for assessing renewable energy potential within communities.

Typical outputs from SUII programmes are new networks and communities of practice linking academia to the wider community; reports and briefing papers, recommendations and guidelines for policy makers, businesses and the third sector; and new research collaborations which will build on newly uncovered policy and practice questions. Specific examples have included a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on social wellbeing, book publications on Human Trafficking and The Child's Curriculum, performance art looking at the issue of social isolation and a wide range of visual, digital materials such as graphic illustrations, videos and websites.

REF Impact Indicators

Influence on guidelines, legislation, regulation, policy etc.

Adoption of best practice

Influence on a debate in public policy and practice

Contributions to expert panels etc.

Evidence of use in policy debate

Evidence of debate among practitioners

Enhancement of user experience

Testimonials from civil society groups and policymakers

Outcomes: Academic

36 Conferences

33 Journal Articles / Publications

29 Research Awards

9 REF Case Studies

2 Books

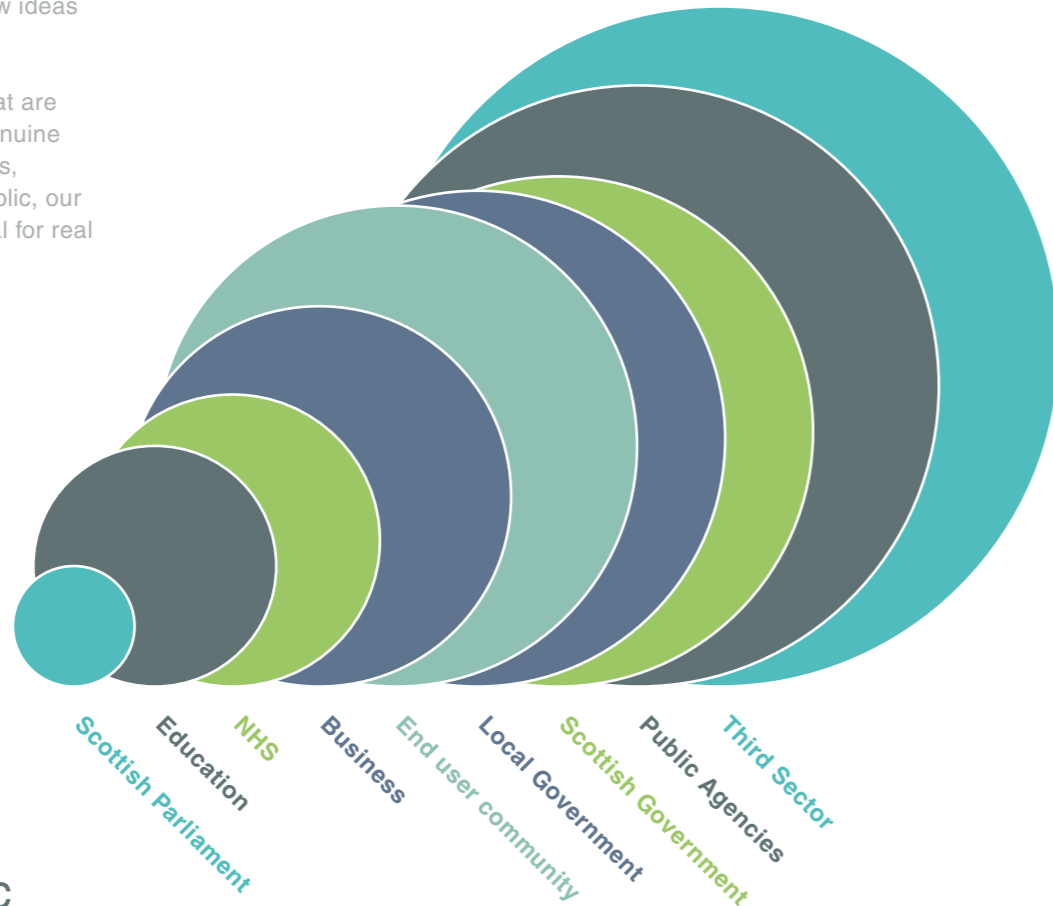**2** Course Content

Collaboration and Partnership Working

Our programmes take a collaborative approach to shared issues or problems, involving multi-disciplinary teams and a variety of organisations from across policy and practice. This exchange of academic research, international perspectives and cross-sector expertise supports the breaking down of silos and facilitates working across boundaries. The wider international participation which we support informs thinking, helps benchmark the Scottish research, policy and business environment, and builds Scotland's reputation for innovative approaches to addressing societal challenges.

We encourage programme teams to involve some of the 'unusual suspects' and to consider working with people they might not otherwise have the opportunity to engage with, as well as those whose voices are seldom heard. It is in bringing together these different views and perspectives that interesting connections are made and new ideas can emerge.

By supporting partnerships that are 'demand-led' and based on genuine collaboration with policymakers, practitioners and the wider public, our programmes have the potential for real and lasting impact.
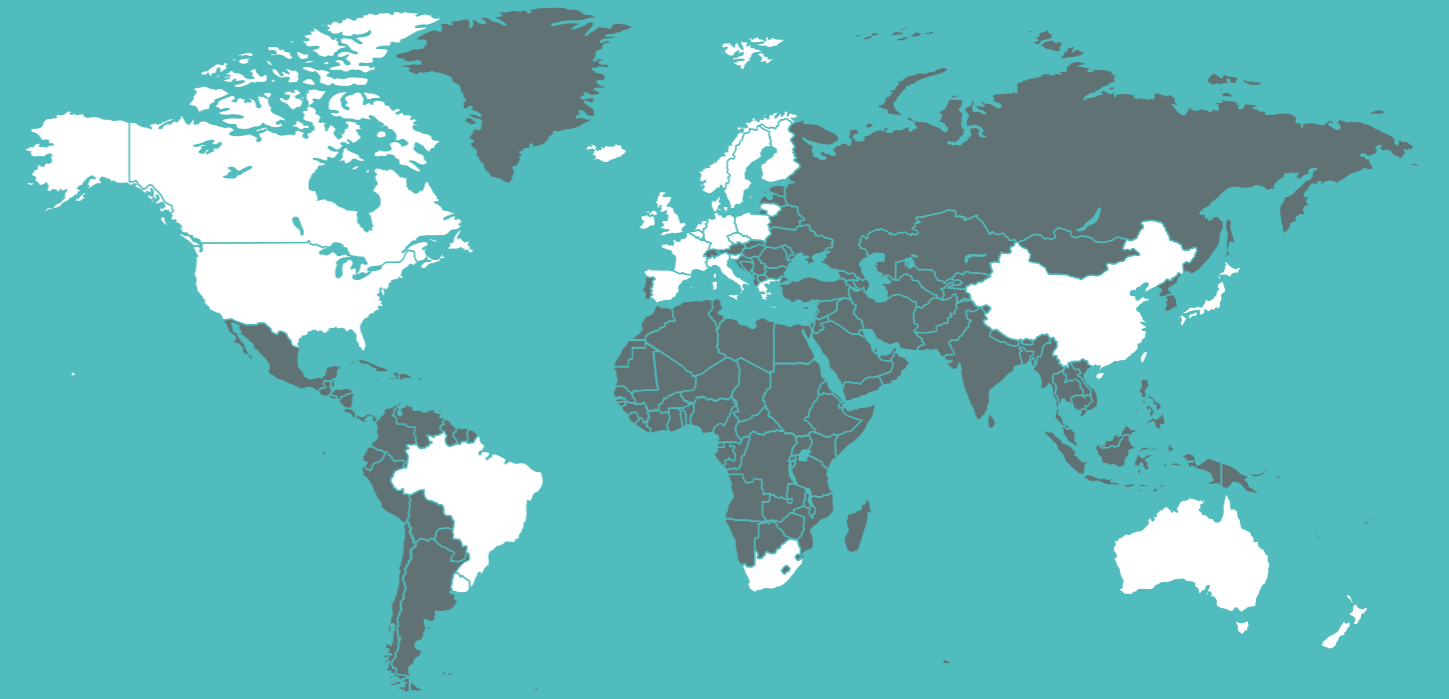
"I think things like this are important because research and policy are areas people like myself would love to work in. But I don't have university degrees. It doesn't mean that I don't still have things to say and it doesn't mean that I don't know what I'm talking about. So I think events like this, where people who maybe aren't at that level but still have such valuable information can actually put it forward."

Jenni Mack
Craigielea Care Home,
Future Transitions in Palliative Care

Partners:
Non-academic

Scottish Parliament
Education
NHS
Business
End user community
Local Government
Scottish Government
Public Agencies
Third Sector

International Involvement

Australia
Belgium
Brazil
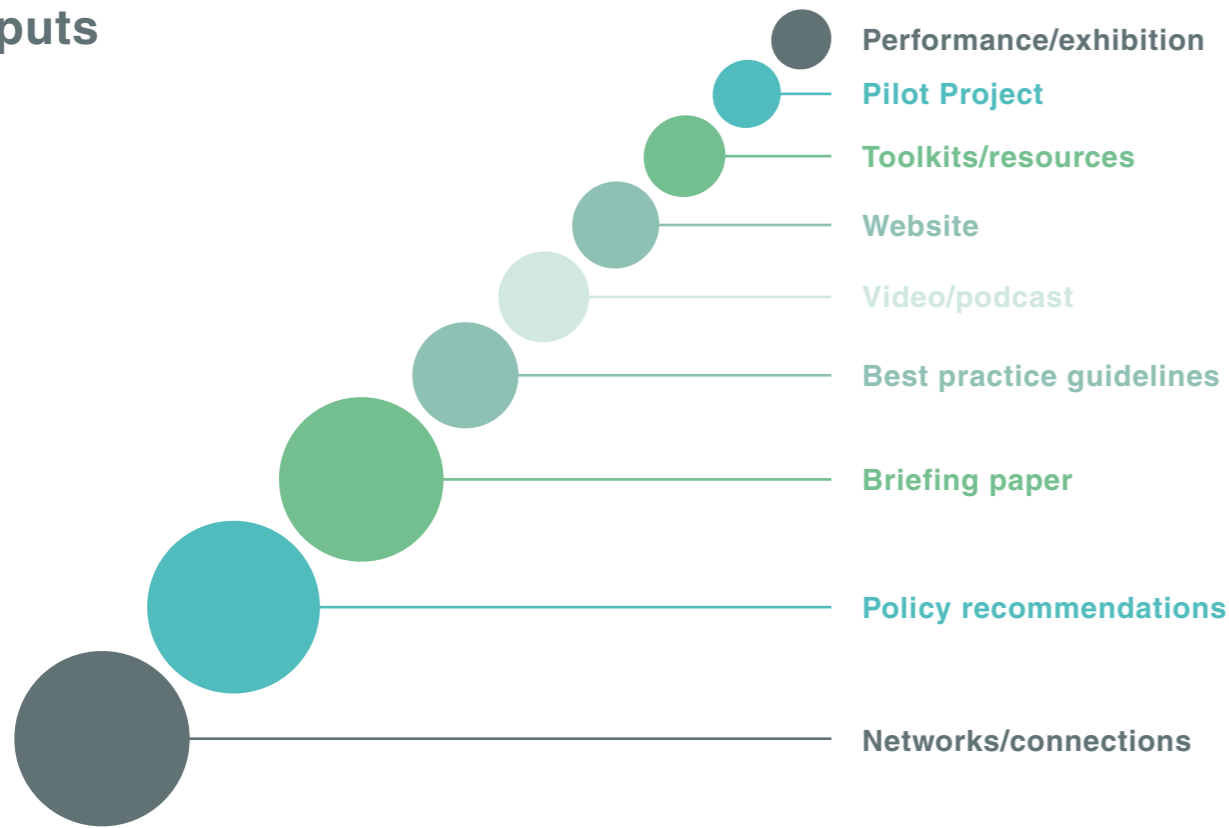Canada
China
Czech Republic
Denmark
England

Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Japan
Lithuania

Netherlands
New Zealand
Northern Ireland
Norway
Poland
Slovenia
South Africa

South America
Spain
Sweden
Uruguay
USA
Wales

Creative Approaches

Outputs

- Performance/exhibition
- Pilot Project
- Toolkits/resources
- Website
- Video/podcast
- Best practice guidelines
- Briefing paper
- Policy recommendations
- Networks/connections

SUII programmes are designed to stimulate in-depth knowledge exchange and mobilisation through workshops, seminars, and other activities over a period of several months. In particular we encourage knowledge exchange activity that wouldn't otherwise take place, supporting innovative partnerships to initiate new developments and generate opportunities for improving policy and practice.

"I think it is of immeasurable value to have that opportunity to create face-to-face dialogue and over a sustained period…the notion that you can develop people's thinking over a period of time, you can call in expertise to give a steer on specific issues. From our point of view, the space the project created, and the way it enabled us to join dots….has been transformative."

Graham Turner
BSL in Schools

Programme activities vary according to the type of project and teams can develop their ideas with a specific target group or community in mind. For example, projects looking at the environment or regeneration might carry out field trips to relevant sites; community-focussed projects may organise informal events in local settings to encourage participation and hear the voices of the seldom heard; creative and inclusive activities such as exhibitions or performances can help children and young people engage more easily. Events can be held in our workshop space in Glasgow, but also take place across the country, including rural and island communities.
SUII values and encourages creative approaches to carrying out knowledge exchange and programme teams can design their activities to best suit their participants and overall project objectives. This often includes working closely with skilled professionals such as graphic illustrators, facilitators,

interpreters, performance artists, designers and others. The team at SUII work with programme teams to plan and deliver these activities, whether that's booking a mini bus, sourcing venues or providing a listening ear. Our role is to ensure the events run smoothly so the teams can focus on the content of their programme.

Project Participants' Experience

"I think the main thing is the freedom that it gave us to, kind of explore different things, there was no real constraints on what we could do and, in fact, being encouraged to be more lateral thinking was great."

Andy Kerr
Stroke Rehabilitation Technologies

Participants told us what they valued most about their SUII experience

- Learning in an interdisciplinary setting
- Accessing emerging research findings and academic rigour
- Improved standing within my organisation
- Working with practical organisations
- Having the space to improve the way we practise
- Taking time out to learn with passionate, knowledgeable colleagues
- Learning from those individuals directly concerned
- Ability to 'hit the ground running'
- Trying novel ideas and working through issues
- Working with people with the power to make decisions
- Engaging with service users
- Obtaining updates on progress in government
- Face-to-face discussions

Case Studies

Stroke Rehabilitation Technologies
Health

Local, national and international stakeholders, including a range of policy and practice organisations such as Chest and Heart Stroke Scotland, Scottish Government and the NHS explored opportunities and barriers to the integration of rehabilitation technologies into mainstream practice. A programme of activities designed to generate new thinking in this area looked at identifying user priorities, and developing a framework to evaluate and guide technology development in a way that places the user at the centre.

"I think hearing the real people, rather than reading papers and thinking about this stuff, hearing real people and real voices saying, "This is what we want, this is what we need." It's quite empowering."

Programme Leader

Crafting Growth
Economy & Business

Over the course of two collaborative events, Scottish-based academics, brewers, and relevant industry bodies met with their counterparts from nine European countries to develop practical action plans for tackling challenges and optimising opportunities for the craft beer sector. Industry partners from different countries were able to discuss areas of concern, and reach joint understanding of the main growth challenges as individual businesses, as regional sectors, and as a European sector. The partnership has allowed for new insights and solutions into sustaining the rapid growth of the craft beer sector to be developed, and has enabled support/industry bodies to gain a deeper understanding of the needs of the sector and of individual firms.

Human Trafficking
Justice

The seminar series explored the challenges of securing multi-agency, national and international agreement on definitions, effective practice and appropriate responses to the victims/survivors of trafficking in humans.

Experts in law, human rights and social work from across Europe and the UK were invited to participate in three two-day events, bringing together substantial experience of direct service-delivery, policy development and research. Debates were held under Chatham House rules to allow individuals to speak freely, in a space conducive to reflection and deliberation. Members of the programme team subsequently contributed to the development of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015.

Big Data
Public services

A series of café conversations brought together academics, students, and practitioners from the third sector, the public sector, and the private sector to look at how third sector organisations can make better use of data strategically and operationally, to see what data can reveal about the third sector, and to develop the capacity and capability of third sector organisations to work with data.

The programme was successful in building up a mixed community of academics and practitioners. Additional funding of £250,000 was secured under the Economic and Social Research Council's Civil Society Data Partnership programme to enable the capacity and capability-building to be scaled-up and further developed in Scotland's Third Sector.

Active Healthy Kids
Children & Youth

The Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card is a 'state of the nation' report which provides a critical, up to date, and evidence-based summary of the physical activity and health levels of Scottish Children and adolescents. Based on the Canadian model developed by Mark Tremblay, the report card identified best evidence for 10 different health indicators, incorporating feedback from a wide group of stakeholders, including a range of organisations from across health, sport and education. The Report Card is updated periodically and Scotland now forms part of an international network of Active Healthy Kids Report Cards, launched at the Global Summit on the Physical Activity of Children in Toronto in May 2014.

Democratic Deaficit: a signing Parliament
Democracy

Democratic Deaficit explores the idea of an implementable model for the world's first sustainable 'Signing Parliament' – a representative, democratic body which could complement and enrich the work of relevant authorities as they begin to implement their commitment to deliver the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015. The goal is to design a model for a representative body that can help break down barriers to meaningful participation in political processes for BSL users in Scotland. Events, which bring together a variety of stakeholders and representatives from the signing community, civil society organisations, politics and government, academia, and media organisations, are recorded and livestreamed, and so far have been viewed by over 3000 people in 13 countries.

Home not Housing
Housing

Home not Housing brought together a range of sectorial interests across housing, planning, social work, healthcare and design to fully debate understandings of home and help inform policy objectives with respect to issues such as house-building, home-working, home-care and general place liveability.

Participants worked together to discuss and provide feedback on the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework (NPF) which was being redesigned at the time to incorporate a range of wellbeing measures. Home not Housing was part of our wider programme *Understanding, Measuring and Promoting Wellbeing,* supported by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage, Carnegie UK Trust, Scottish Enterprise and Scotland's Futures Forum.

Community Land Ownership
Community

Working with Community Land Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and partners in the Scottish Government, the project held three regional roundtables in Stornoway, Oban and Inverness, based on collaborative and co-productive methods, to capture and describe the current model of community landowning in Scotland. Participants developed a rigorous set of criteria for the appraisal of the economic performance of community-owned land.

"The work has produced a rich seam of insights that we can apply to help community land owners, government and others, to help evaluate and measure the outcomes and benefits from community land ownership. The experience of working with SUII has been very positive and we welcome the opportunity it has given to bring together academics and field practitioners to capture insights and to deliver outcomes."

David Cameron,
Chairman, Community Land Scotland

Learning from Loss: climate change and heritage
Environment

During an intensive fieldtrip and series of workshops from Edinburgh to Orkney, researchers, practitioners and community stakeholders visited coastal heritage sites and examined the impact of climate change on our historic environment. The team held a number of community meetings to consider the priorities and range of options available for mitigating loss of heritage, and local residents guided participants around their vulnerable heritage sites. The programme resulted in a series of multi-media resources created by programme participants including a film, Climate Stories booklet and Story Map. The outcomes have helped decision making processes and fed into sector-wide change via Historic Environment Scotland's Archaeology Strategy and featured in the first HES magazine-style report 'Celebrating Archaeology in Scotland 2018'.

Memory Friendly Neighbourhoods
Elderly

Memory-Friendly Neighbourhoods marked a new, interdisciplinary collaboration, to explore the development of environments for ageing-in-place and lifelong social inclusion for those affected by dementia. Working co-creatively with policy, practice and not-for-profit partners, and experts from Europe and North America, the team synthesised evidence in design for wellbeing, practitioner expertise and the lived experience of people with dementia. The programme was innovative in using live sites to explore and test out ideas with participants.

"The greatest value from [the project] has been meeting and working with people from Scottish Dementia Working Group. In better understanding how invaluable people living with dementia are to informing change we have been able to focus on co-design as being a central part of MFN phase 2."

Programme Leader

Annex 1.SUII Programmes 2012-19

Citizens Basic Income
Housing and Ageing
Learning from Loss – heritage and climate change
Future Transitions in Palliative Care
Developmental Needs of Looked After Children
Language and Literacy - equity and attainment
Housing and Substance Use
Shifting Paradigms for Dementia
Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers
Crafting Growth
Restorative Justice
Stigma in Childhood
Leadership Studio
City Deals
Widening Choices for Dementia
Bridge over Troubled Waters
Changing Lives through STEM
Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
Public Inquiries
Stroke Rehabilitation Technologies
Workplace Innovation
Community Land Ownership
Circular Economy
Transforming Health and Social Care
Child Neglect and Arts-based Practices
Offending Behaviour
Migrant Youth
Digital Families
Flourishing Communities and Productive Seas
BSL in Schools
Accountable Policing
Surf to turf - food security
Young People's Experience of Poverty
Credit Unions
Pinkie Schools Project
Access to Mental Health Services
Big Data and the Third Sector
Linking Northern Communities
Place Identity Dwelling
Seannachies – storytelling for social isolation
Waterfront Regeneration
Flourish
Good Lives and Decent Societies
Home not Housing
Path to Wellbeing
Walking for Wellbeing
Economics of Wellbeing
Children's Rights and Intersectionality
Memory Friendly Neighbourhoods
Solar Energy
Active Healthy Kids
Assistive Technologies
Child Death Reviews
Constitutional Futures
Looked after Disabled Young People
Human Trafficking
Cultural Industries
Reclaiming Lost Childhoods
Strengthening Democracy
The Well Connected Child

catalyst

focal point

safe space

adviser

organizer

interpreter

facilitator