

scotsmusicgroup  
**inspire**

# EVALUATION REPORT

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**Corstorphine Rotary Club**



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Scots Music Group Inspire Project worked in partnership with four organisations (The Bethany Trust, The Rock Trust, The Stafford Centre and Stepping Stones/The Alma Project) to offer opportunities to those affected by issues of homelessness and mental health to take part in traditional music, song, dance and storytelling from May 2010 to July 2011. It was funded by Creative Scotland, The Robertson Trust, Corstorphine Rotary Club, donations of both money and instruments, and considerable in-kind support.

The project initially aimed to work with 5 groups in summer 2010 offering taster sessions, then moving to 3 outreach groups in autumn 2010. The Bethany Women's Group decided not to take part in the project, and it was decided early in the project that the four groups which did take place (which included the Bethany Men's Group) should continue throughout the project as autumn 2010 was far too soon to expect people to move out of their comfort zone and into another group. Experienced tutors were recruited to work with each group: The Bethany Men's Group - Gica Loening & Scott Murray; The Rock Trust - Michelle Burke & Amy Geddes (cover from Sarah McFadyen); The Stafford Centre - Gica Loening & Ruth Kirkpatrick (cover from Michelle Burke); Stepping Stones/The Alma Project - Jenny Gardner & Amy Lord.

The project included commissioned work, the production of a CD and a final concert, all of which were co-ordinated by Artistic Director Amy Geddes.

This evaluation report uses both qualitative and quantitative information to assess the project.

### **1.1 Qualitative evaluation**

Comments and opinions were collected from participants, tutors and project staff, both during the project and at the time of final evaluation. Tutors produced a report for each session, noting what had occurred during the session and highlighting any notable moments and comments.

### **1.2 Quantitative evaluation**

Numbers of active participants were counted at each session, as were the numbers attending in total to take account of those at drop-in sessions who were experiencing music and song in the background. Defining "active participants" was sometimes difficult as people on the fringes of the groups would perhaps join in quietly or enjoy listening. Numbers of one-to-one lessons and small group lessons were counted in units of 30 minutes (the usual length of a one-to-one lesson).

An Evaluation of Change exercise was undertaken to assess the amount of change in the participants during the project. Tutors and project staff were asked to assess regular attenders in six areas, giving scores between 1 (no change) and 4 (complete transformation). Two groups of participants answered questionnaires based on these six areas, and their answers were scored in the same way by the Development Worker. It was more appropriate for the other two groups to evaluate the project through group discussion, so no scores were given. Results were used where there was more than one score available for a participant. The Rock Trust project staff didn't take part in this exercise (due to time

constraints and contractual changes). Tutors were also asked to assess the level of change in the creative collaboration of participants with tutors during the project.

It should be noted that scores from The Bethany Trust project worker were significantly higher than those of the tutors, and this has led to the conclusion that the validity of the exercise is questionable and that specific conclusions cannot be drawn; however the results have been included as they do give an overall sense of change.

The Scots Music Group would like to acknowledge the valuable help and advice given by Colin Duff during the ongoing evaluation of the project and the production of the final report.

## **2. EVALUATION TARGETS**

Five main evaluation targets were identified at the start of the project. This section will assess the project in terms of these five targets.

### **2.1 There are greater, and more accessible, opportunities for people who are homeless or isolated in the community to engage with traditional music, song and dance.**

The project offered group sessions within the partner projects where people would feel comfortable in the surroundings (with the later exception of the Stepping Stones group for which we had to find a separate venue). All sessions were held in an informal manner and setting in order to encourage people to take part without the pressure of a formal structure. Many sessions, especially in the first half of the project, were held at drop-in groups where people were able to listen on the sidelines if they wished, allowing them to gradually move into the group as they got to know the tutors. This model of working is described further in Section 2.5.

Tutors were asked to give the numbers of both active participants and total numbers at each session – this was often difficult to assess exactly as people who weren't obviously participating might be joining in quietly. Consequently the number of people noted as active participants was lower than the actual number participating in the room.

- **Total number of group sessions = 166**
- **Total number of group places actively taken up = 995**
- **Total number of people attending all sessions (active and non-active) = 1976**
- **Number of different individuals actively taking part in group sessions = 89**

At sessions which took place at drop-ins, the percentage of active participants out of the total attending the drop-in was: **Bethany Trust 26%; Rock Trust 34%; Stafford Centre 65%.**

All those who attended The Rock Trust sessions were aged 25 or under; participants in the other three groups were generally older.

**A quarter of the people who attended groups (22/89) went often enough to learn skills, build confidence and plan, prepare for and perform at the final concert.** At least 4 people who were regular

attenders didn't perform at the concert. Full details aren't available, but it is to be expected that a proportion of the remainder moved on from the partner projects.

The project also offered tutoring in short one-to-one lessons and small group lessons which focussed on a particular instrument/song. Most of these opportunities were taken up at The Rock Trust, so it can be concluded that younger people are potentially more responsive to one-to-one/small group settings. Not all those who had these lessons at The Rock Trust attended the main group.

**Total number of 1:1/small group lessons: 343**

- **Bethany Trust (whistle): 5**
- **Stafford Centre (guitar): 49**
- **Rock Trust (song, fiddle, banjo, guitar): 289**

All tutors strongly emphasised the need for an informal, social atmosphere in order to build trust and relationships with the participants. They noted the length of time that it takes for this to happen, especially in the three projects where groups took place at drop-ins. The fact that the Stafford Centre group didn't meet continuously was seen as a barrier. Sporadic attendance was noted by several tutors as a barrier to learning.

Tutors generally noted that where the relationship with project staff was good, more people participated and relationships were built faster. This was especially true when project staff were able to actively participate in groups. Where there were difficulties in the relationship, this potentially had an effect on participation. For more on this aspect, see Section 2.4.

Several tutors noted that having two tutors per group helped to make the group more accessible as different needs and interests could be catered for.

Three outcomes were assessed in looking to gauge the project's success in this target area: increase in creative learning skills, increase in confidence and reduced isolation.

### **2.1.1 Increase in participants' creative and learning skills**

In the final evaluation, almost all participants who responded felt that they had learned new skills and many felt they had had the opportunity to be creative (see Appendix 2 – participant evaluations). Comments included **'I always thought I couldn't sing'**; **'I feel I learnt a lot at the music group'** and **'I didn't think I could do it to start with'**. Comments during the project included **"Who would have thought it – that I'd be playing the tin whistle!"**; **'If we can do that after two weeks, what will we do next?'**

Two groups (The Bethany Trust and The Stafford Centre) took part in group songwriting exercises, and one participant from the Bethany Trust wrote a song (Twa Fields O Dreams) with assistance from the tutor.

Tutors frequently noted instances of increases in creativity and skills, including:

**'A. took her first solo'**

**'[A]notable moment was T. and his lovely harmonies, he wasn't aware he was able to do them so it came as a shock to him, he seemed to get more and more confident singing them though as the session went on.'**

**'M. is now able to handle any harmony given to her'**

**'M. is working very hard at the banjo ....he has learned his first traditional Scottish tune, Bonnie Tammie Scolla, and started Mairi's Wedding.'**

**'B. read a poem he's working on. He has a tune in mind for it, and would like some help in topping & tailing it when he has it finished.'**

**'He's really good at coming up with arrangements and dynamics etc'**

In the Evaluation of Change exercise, the overall average score for change in this outcome was 2.8.

In the tutors' assessment of the increase in creative collaboration with participants (see Appendix 5), **26 out of the 32 people assessed had shown an increase in creative activity with the tutors.**

### **2.1.2 Increase in participants' confidence**

Many participants, tutors and project workers commented on the success of this aspect of the project. Participants said:

**'I've done things that I wouldn't normally do'**

**'When I first started I could barely speak within the group'**

**'Since coming to the group, I can now do karaoke sober'**

**'I conquered my fears to take part in the concert'**

**'I honestly would not have got up and performed at the concert in front of people if it had not been for the support of Amy and Michelle and the group.'**

Increases in confidence were frequently noted by tutors, including:

**'S., Z. and M. sang a solo, unaccompanied song each. Everyone else was quiet, listening and very supportive. They all got a round of applause. This was a really big thing for the girls to do and we felt really proud of them' ;**

**'You can see the pride in her face when everyone is watching her and she is growing in confidence every time she sings';**

**'A huge leap in confidence. I quoted to B. the phrase about him having been enabled by his involvement with the project. 'Exactly' he replied';**

**'R. sat in on some of the drop-in this week and sang some songs, R. is very shy but she did great to join in.'**

**'B. commented to Scott a couple of weeks ago that taking part in the Bethany Men's Group and the Music Group had increased his confidence and that he was stammering less. This is so brilliant!!!'**

One project worker at The Rock Trust commented that **'the independent workshops and guitar group have given everyone a real confidence boost, everyone has been enjoying it, it's been very meaningful to them and they've taken ownership of their music.'** The Bethany Trust project worker commented

that **'SMG has created a sense in people that they have the skills to perform'**. More people now join in the karaoke sessions at The Stafford Centre, and a worker from The Alma Project reported that one of the participants had signed up for an art course at Stevenson College immediately after the concert, something which they had been encouraging her to do for several years.

In the Evaluation of Change exercise, the overall average score for change in this outcome was 2.6.

### **2.1.3 Reduced isolation of participants**

People in all groups commented that taking part in the sessions had made a difference in this respect:

**'Brotherhood of musicians'**

**'We help each other out'**

**'The arrangements and songs and music in general have brought us together giving a sense of belonging'**

**'When you learn to sing, you're in another world, in a big family'**

**'We've grown closer. We've met up outside the group when we haven't done that ever before. So socially things are better.'**

Tutors frequently noted the importance of the social aspect of the groups, including:

**'It was obvious that all there were genuinely pleased to see each other'**

**'People laughed and took turns, listening and talking together'**

**'This worked really well I felt and created some good 'crack' between members whom I don't usually see talking to each other'**

**'B. said he thought it would be a challenge to talk about himself in this way, but he thought it seemed a good way to get to know people and was up for the challenge.'**

In the Evaluation of Change exercise, the overall average score for change in this outcome was 2.5.

## **2.2 Participants who had previously been isolated and excluded from mainstream opportunities participate in SMG's ongoing programme of classes and events**

A total of 8 class places were initially taken up by 6 different people in September 2010 (Term 1). By Term 2 one person was still attending a class. One person attended for the first time in Term 2 but didn't continue. One person attended the Songworks community choir (not SMG) and will be continuing to attend after the end of the project.

The reasons for not continuing in classes were as follows:

- Taken up alternative opportunity helping with football coaching and the class wasn't quite suitable
- Class cancelled due to tutor and venue problems
- Illness, both mental and physical (3 people)
- Didn't like learning in a group, would prefer one-to-one lessons

Two people would have attended a class but the suitable class was full.

A project worker commented that one person's attendance at three classes before he stopped going was more than he'd done outside the security of the project in several years.

4 support volunteers were involved in helping people to attend (one volunteer supported two people, one person didn't want a support volunteer). Feedback from the participants showed that the support of volunteers was welcomed and was seen as very helpful. Every effort was made to make sure that both participants and support volunteers weren't identified as being part of the Inspire Project in class. No participants who worked with volunteers stated that lack of support was the reason for not continuing.

The barriers to people signing up for classes were identified as follows:

- Participants needed to be ready to sign up for classes in August 2010, less than two months after the start of the project. Beginners wanting to learn instruments needed to join classes in Term 1 as the classes didn't accept beginners after that time. This was barely enough time for people to feel comfortable in their own groups, let alone decide to join a specific class. There was more potential interest in classes in September 2012, after the end of the project.
- Participants needed to decide quickly as some classes (often those most suitable) filled up quickly. Some people later expressed an interest but the suitable class was full.
- Most SMG classes are held in the evenings, and people were less likely to want to go out to a class in winter when it was dark.
- Most classes were held in Boroughmuir School or other areas south and west of the city centre. Most participants lived in or attended their groups in north and east Edinburgh, so the classes were perceived by many as being too far away.

The project offered free ceilidh tickets to participants, but few actually attended. Attendance would have been much higher if they could have been supported by a project worker or tutor that they already knew, but this wasn't possible due to insurance constraints and pressure of time for project workers.

Three participants are now attending SMG's monthly Café Ceilidh, a daytime, supportive session run by SMG volunteers, and more have expressed an interest in doing so.

In terms of participants expanding their horizons through the project, the other outcomes identified were as follows.

### **2.2.1 Participants take part in new social networks/have new creative and learning goals**

18 participants were observed to take part/intend to take part in new social networks during the project, though the project cannot claim to be the catalyst for all events. They have:

- started or signed up for specific courses at college or through other agencies
- started jobs
- stated strong intentions to go to traditional music sessions at the Royal Oak
- attended Café Ceilidh (see above)
- attended a ceilidh where a tutor was playing in the band
- attended a gig where a volunteer was playing in the band

### **2.3 That professional musicians can create and stage a quality piece of new work in conjunction with, and with the participation of, both mainstream Scots Music Group students and Inspire Project participants**

The final concert took place in June 2011 as part of the Leith Festival in the Acorn Centre (run by the YMCA). The venue and timing were deliberately chosen in order to make it a community event where participants would feel safer. The concert was made up of performances by all four groups, supported by 16 SMG students (both instrumentalists and singers). The performances included both commissioned work and other material. See Appendix 4 for full statistics.

The commissioned work consisted of eleven pieces rather than one single piece, as this allowed for collaboration with groups and individuals in a variety of ways. Four were inspired by the project & its participants; three were created from comments by participants (one in a specific group setting and one with comments gathered from all groups); two are stories created by collaborations between individual participants and a tutor; one has traditional words set to music designed for particular participant to sing (following extensive conversations about their interests); and one was written by a participant and arranged by a tutor. Seven of the commissions featured in the final performance. Tutors were involved in arranging commissions and recording the pieces.

One tutor remarked that watching the development of another tutor's work and being involved in the songwriting process has given her the inspiration and confidence to be more creative (she then wrote a tune). Another remarked that this aspect was the highlight of the project – both in having the opportunity to collaborate creatively with the participants and in having their work validated by their peers, which has encouraged them in their own personal creative development.

At the start of the project, staff weren't sure whether the groups would actually perform, and the structure of the event evolved during the project through consultation between the Artistic Director and tutors. Some tutors commented that this sometimes led to confusion about the nature of the event and the commissioned work. The Artistic Director noted that having a fixed fee for her work rather than a regular presence made frequent communication difficult at times. All agreed that the nature of the project and the collaborative nature of commissions necessitated the evolution of work rather than the imposition of fixed ideas from the beginning of the project.

**22 participants** (from all four groups) performed at the event, supported by tutors, volunteers and SMG students. This included **5 solo performances** (4 from the Rock Trust and 1 from the Alma Project) and one solo pre-recorded song.

**The event was sold out**, with 50 tickets sold, plus 32 guest tickets (invited guests/participants' friends & family).

The audience was asked to fill in a feedback form, which simply said “We’d really appreciate any comments you have about tonight’s event”. 33 of the 69 audience members completed a form. All the comments were very positive (see Appendix 3) and included the following:

**‘Inspired! So professional’**

**‘This should be taken to a wider audience – perhaps a Fringe concert?!’**

**‘Very, very special and so moving. This show should be seen & heard all over Edinburgh (People’s Festival, Fringe?)’**

**‘Fantastic! Best £5 I’ve spent. Well done for being so brave. You all did really well. Thanks for a great night of entertainment.’**

**‘Inspirational! Very confident performers – all supporting each other – great!’**

**‘I was very impressed by the skilled performances of so many who took part. Coupled with this was the friendly atmosphere and warmth between audience and players. One player I know has never performed before and was great!’**

#### **2.4 To work in partnership with other community organisations in ways which are of tangible benefit to both SMG and the partner projects in promoting wider participation in the arts**

Overall the project found that it was important to have access to the expertise of the partner projects and that it was crucial (especially in the early stages of the project) to be able to hold sessions in venues where participants already felt comfortable. Partner projects were also important in publicising the music groups to their service users.

There were varying degrees of success in working with the four partner projects, with differences between the partnerships in general and changing scenarios within individual projects.

The most successful partnerships were built with staff who were keen to be involved or who had prior experience of traditional music. Communication about difficult behaviours/situations by partner projects to tutors was found to be very beneficial where it happened, and future projects should clarify the mechanisms for this.

Problems beyond the control of both SMG and the partner projects had an impact on the groups. Stepping Stones ceased to exist overnight when the University Settlement (its parent body) went into administration, but the commitment of two project staff in forming a new organisation (The Alma Project) and the flexibility of the Inspire Project allowed the music group to reform within 2 months. The main contact with The Rock Trust left his job soon after the music group began, and the large staff turnover there caused difficulties in communication. Late in the project The Rock Trust’s funding changed and there were no drop-ins or staff available to be directly involved with the music group (though the music group continued as the Rock Trust still offered their premises as a venue).

The Bethany Group had to move out of the drop-in October to make way for other activities, a move which benefitted the group in many ways but did mean that several people ceased to attend. The Stafford Centre was not keen to have a continuous group, which meant that continuity was broken and relationships took longer to build.

Communication between project staff and SMG were hampered by all staff being part-time and having a heavy workload. Five Project Steering Group meetings were held, rotating round all projects (except Alma who have no premises), but no meeting was attended by staff from all the projects. This meant that the Steering Group was more of a mechanism for information and communication rather than a guiding hand for the project.

#### **2.4.1 Development of a model of partnership working useful to homeless/mental health organisations & community arts**

Partnership working was most successful where:

- all project staff (not just the main contact) were fully aware and supportive of the project and encouraged people to attend (both personally and through their own publicity)
- there was continuity of staff throughout the project
- project staff attended the group, particularly in the early stages
- ongoing information about potential difficulties was shared with tutors
- tutors had regular contact with project staff
- one tutor became a volunteer at their project (enhanced communication)
- the music groups were viewed by staff as a positive and developmental step for participants and not just another activity
- clear negotiation had taken place prior to the start of the groups so that both sides were clear about the nature of the groups and mutual expectations.

#### **2.4.2 Sharing of resources between partner projects and Scots Music Group**

This was successful with all projects. SMG provided the resources and expertise for the music groups, and the partner projects provided:

- venues for music groups (all except Alma, who have no premises)
- extra insurance for tutors (Bethany Trust and Rock Trust)
- internal publicity
- staff expertise
- venues for meetings

#### **2.4.3 Partner projects and Scots Music Group are better informed about each other's work**

SMG tutors and staff were well informed about the work of the projects, and SMG volunteers and other students were made aware of the nature of the projects through direct involvement or discussions about the project. Several SMG classes went busking at Christmas to raise funds and one SMG student raised funds from his local Rotary Club.

Project staff were informed about SMG classes and other events, and several were involved in indirectly supporting participants to attend SMG classes.

**2.5 That new information about ways of working is gathered to support SMG and other projects in helping people who are isolated engage more within their current groups and with the wider community through traditional music, song and dance.**

### **2.5.1 Participants are able to engage with their own groups**

Participants, tutors and project staff noted several aspects of the group sessions which were important in helping people to increase their engagement with others in their group. Comments about increases in creativity, skills and confidence and reduced isolation can be seen in Section 2.1 (above).

The key methods used, developed and discussed during the project were as follows:

- **Informality, with emphasis on the social aspect of the group**  
This was frequently noted as important for all groups. Sessions took place in two arenas: at drop-ins, where the atmosphere had to be informal, and in separate groups, where informality was still seen as extremely important in building relationships and taking part in the music.
- **Tutors providing a group focus (music) which allowed greater engagement**  
Overall this has been observed as an important factor in allowing relationships to develop where people have a common task/interest.
- **Tutors using material that was directly relevant to the experiences of the participants, and negotiating with groups about future material**  
See Section 5 (below) – the importance of traditional arts.
- **Tutors working in pairs**  
Tutors commented on the importance of this for two reasons: they were able to deal more easily with the diverse social needs of the participants, and having a broader range of skills allowed tutors to offer more, having instrumental, singing and (in one case) storytelling expertise.
- **Tutors working closely with project staff in assessing the nature of the group and working accordingly (appropriate group style and group goals)**  
Where partner project staff offered guidance, this greatly helped the tutors in understanding the needs of the group and potential group members. For instance, the worker at Stepping Stones/Alma encouraged tutors to teach the group more challenging material, which led to a greater sense of fulfilment for the group and necessitated greater group co-operation. The worker at the Bethany Trust commented that **'The tutors' way of working was great – building skills gradually, literally finding the voice within people.'** At The Rock Trust, high staff turnover led to occasional problems in communication which meant that tutors found it harder to bring the group together in the early stages of the project.
- **Tutors/SMG working within the culture of the project but potentially challenging that culture if appropriate**  
All tutors needed to work within the culture of the project where participants felt secure. Tutors began introducing music at the Bethany drop-in by sitting at the side of the room so as not to impose their agenda on potential participants and then moving further into the room as they were accepted by those present. Tutors at the Rock Trust needed to work next to the pool table to become a part of the drop-in culture, and frequently heard pool players humming along to

the music. At the Stafford Centre it was felt that the culture of having blocks of activity rather than a continuous group was detrimental to group bonding and continuity, and that future work there would depend on discussing a change in the culture of the Centre. The Steeping Stones/Alma Project culture is based on specific, focussed groups, so the music group established itself more quickly than other groups.

- **Having the necessary funds for the materials (instruments etc) required for participation**

It was seen as vital to be able to give people real opportunities to participate in group and individual activities, some of which required the purchase of instruments and other materials which participants would not otherwise be able to afford.

## **2.5.2 Participants are able to engage and communicate with the wider community**

See comments in Sections 2.1 and also Section 2.2 (participation in mainstream activities).

The key methods used, developed and discussed during the project in terms of encouraging engagement with the wider community were as follows:

- **Encouraging groups to perform in public**

As well as performing at the final concert, the Bethany group performed several times at Bethany Trust events, and also at a cabaret night at The Acorn Centre. The Steeping Stones group performed at the Colony of Artists exhibition, and The Stafford Centre group performed at an exhibition opening at the Engine Shed. External performances can be seen both as a way of communicating through music and a way of providing opportunities for greater social engagement.

- **Involving the wider community in the project**

Involving volunteers in the project (see also Section 4) and holding a public event was important in creating opportunities for vulnerable people and the wider community to engage with each other. The audience's reaction to the final concert, both at the event and in their feedback (see Appendix 3), was distributed to all participants and was very well received. This was an opportunity for participants to feel valued by the wider community and for the wider community to appreciate the talent and commitment of the participants.

- **Having funds to pay for places in mainstream activities**

Those who attended mainstream activities generally couldn't afford to do so without support from the project. Although the number who attended such activities was relatively small, it is anticipated that numbers would have increased if the project had continued and if appropriate support was available.

- **Having support systems in place to encourage attendance at mainstream activities**

Volunteers (see Section 4) and tutors were invaluable in supporting participants to take part in mainstream activities such as classes and performances. It was noted during the project that having both the funds and appropriate insurance and policies to support participants to attend more informal activities such as ceilidhs would increase such attendance.

As well as assessing the project in terms of the original targets in Section 2, there are three further aspects of the project which deserve mention.

### **3. MUSIC AND WELLBEING**

Participants frequently commented on the benefits of music in terms of their own psychological and physical wellbeing. Confidence and reduced isolation have already been discussed in Section 2, but further comments are as follows. See also the comments made during the Bethany and Stafford Centre group discussions (Appendix 2).

**'I've been quite ill recently and Alistair had to persuade me to come but I'm so glad he did, I feel so much better'**

**'I came into the drop-in and I was really low but now I feel great it was brilliant getting to play some music.'**

**'It put a smile on our faces'**

**'It was really relaxing playing the instruments'**

Tutors frequently noted that the music groups promoted and discussed wellbeing:

**'He said "That was good, now I don't need to see my psychiatrist this afternoon." I laughed and he then said, "Huh, you think I'm joking?"'**

**'... 'everything will be alright'...One woman said she had been very low once and had written that line over and over again. Someone else asked her if it had helped and she said it did.'**

**'B. commented to Scott a couple of weeks ago that taking part in the Bethany Men's Group and the Music Group had increased his confidence and that he was stammering less. This is so brilliant!!!'**

**'It's not just about the music – problems with money, relationships, health all talked about.'**

### **4. VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers worked in the project in different capacities:

- Groups: 3 (Rock Trust 2, Bethany Trust 1)
- Support at SMG classes: 5
- Catering and other event tasks: 16 (including 5 Rock Trust group participants)

The volunteers who worked in the groups were mainly supported by the tutors. All felt that they had gained an enormous amount through their involvement in terms of skills, confidence and insight. Comments about the value of the project to themselves include:

**'Getting beyond any preconceptions or stereotypes of 'the homeless''**

**'A renewed appreciation for the socially positive power of collaborative music'**

**'It's been an amazing experience, I've met some wonderful people, learned an awful lot and to top it off that concert on Saturday was easily one of the most rewarding and worthwhile things I've ever been part of.'**

The tutors at these groups all commented on the value of the volunteers who worked with them.

Most of the volunteers who supported people in SMG classes were only involved for a short time. As it was felt important not to identify participants as coming from the Inspire Project, it was necessary to recruit volunteers who would already be attending the class, and this needed to happen very quickly once participants had decided they would like to attend. It was therefore not possible to hold prior training or necessarily recruit volunteers who could offer a time commitment to undertake extra work such as visiting the partner projects, which would have been useful. However, only one participant who dropped out of a class implied that more support would have been beneficial, but he himself said that he probably wasn't ready to join the class at that point. One volunteer who supported a participant to attend a guitar class was able to visit the participant at the music group, which was very beneficial to building a relationship.

The volunteers who helped with catering and set-up during the event were mainly from SMG class and the Rock Trust group. The SMG volunteers gained an insight into the project and the participants, and one volunteer has possibly come up with a small source of funding to help continue SMG's work in this area. The Rock Trust volunteers were invaluable in setting up the venue, and at one point collaborated on a task with the catering volunteers – the groups were from very different backgrounds but worked exceptionally well together.

## **5. THE IMPORTANCE OF TRADITIONAL ARTS**

**'It's the music of what happens!'**

**'We are noticing a real change in interest from the group. Everyone seems to be wanting to get more involved and after us being around for a couple of months, suddenly folk music is getting cool!'**

This project was not constrained by a narrow interpretation of traditional arts, and tutors often worked to engage participants in music in general by using popular songs from a variety of genres and by introducing easy instruments such as hand-held percussion and even kazoos (which helped those less confident in singing to begin to use their voice musically). Warm-ups and games were used to build skills and encourage involvement.

The place of traditional arts in the project was highlighted in the following areas:

- **It allowed people to connect with their own heritage**

One participant's grandfather had made fiddles and played and his father had played the fiddle, but he had never had the opportunity to take part in traditional music before. He said that the project gave him a connection with his family and his heritage. One young person at the Rock Trust had always wanted to learn the banjo since he'd seen Billy Connolly playing one. One participant said **'I feel more like singing Scots songs'**. One group regularly brought in Scots music CDs to play and discuss. Some participants had already been involved in traditional music, including a member of Jimmy Shand's band, an excellent guitarist, and an ex-army piper, who commented, **'All I'm here for is the music – every time I come in they try to feed me. I must look a bit shilpit!'**

- **Traditional songs and stories are often about issues that many people can relate to**  
Tutors were able to seek out traditional songs which related to participants' everyday experiences.
- **Storytelling was used to great effect**  
This was used regularly in a group and in the commission pieces where the tutor skilled in storytelling could work with participants to enable difficult, personal stories to be told in a creative way.
- **Traditional arts give enormous scope for collaborating with participants in creating new work**  
This was particularly true in the collaborative songwriting undertaken with the Bethany Trust and The Stafford Centre, where people were encouraged to be partners in the creative process and people felt real ownership of the traditional-style songs which resulted.
- **Traditional arts are accessible and allow meaningful participation by groups with a wide range of technical expertise**  
The groups were all able to develop the skills to give a quality performance at the final concert and those individuals who had developed a higher level of technical skill could be encouraged to sing harmonies, solos and play instruments within the whole group performance.

## **6. THE FUTURE**

The Scots Music Group has enhanced its skills base during The Inspire Project and all those involved have expressed their appreciation of the enormous value of working with vulnerable groups to widen access to the traditional arts within society and to offer all the benefits described about to those who may not otherwise be able to participate.

Several tutors and staff have committed to maintain some contact with groups in a voluntary capacity and to seek funding to continue the Scots Music Group's work. All the groups expressed the strong desire to continue, and several project staff commented that participants would miss the project very much and that some would find it difficult to cope with the groups ending after the 'high' of the final concert. One person forgot that the group had ended and turned up on the following week.

**The Scots Music Group would like to thank all participants, volunteers, tutors and project staff for their hard work and enthusiasm during a project which has had a huge impact on many who have been involved. The Scots Music Group Board have stated their commitment to future work in this area if suitable funding can be found.**

## APPENDIX 1: GROUP SESSION STATISTICS

### **Total number of group sessions: 166**

- Bethany Trust: 46
- Rock Trust: 43
- Stafford Centre: 25
- Stepping Stones/Alma Project: 41

### **Total numbers of people recorded at sessions (includes drop-in attenders etc): 1976**

- Bethany Trust:
- Rock Trust:
- Stafford Centre:
- Stepping Stones/Alma Project:

### **Total of active session places taken up: 995**

- Bethany Trust:
- Rock Trust:
- Stafford Centre:
- Stepping Stones/Alma Project:

### **Total number of 1:1/small group lessons: 343**

- Bethany Trust (whistle): 5
- Stafford Centre (guitar): 49
- Rock Trust (song, fiddle, banjo, guitar): 289

### **Total number of volunteer hours at group sessions: 154**

**At the 3 projects where music sessions took place at drop-ins (not including Bethany sessions at Learning Centre and Rock Trust workshops), the percentage of active participants out of the total attending the drop-in was: Bethany 26%; Rock Trust 34%; Stafford Centre 65%.**

## APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANT EVALUATION RESULTS

### 1. THE ALMA PROJECT (STEPPING STONES) – method: questionnaire, 6 completed

#### ***Do you feel that you have learnt new skills at the music group? If so, what skills?***

Yes – I have reconnected with music. In particular singing in a group.

Being able to sing confidently

Yes – singing. Noticed the instruments recording session, most interesting music skills.

Yes, I feel I learnt a lot at the music group

Yes, singing and guitar playing

Yes

#### ***Do you think that the music group has helped you feel more confident?***

Definitely – when I first started I could barely speak within the group.

Yes with singing

Music makes my life pleasanter so maybe I feel more confident about life.

Yes, I feel more confident about my singing

Yes, very much so

Most definitely!

#### ***Have you got to know people in your group better through coming to the music group?***

Yes – the arrangements and songs and music in general have brought us together giving a sense of belonging.

Only knew one person initially have now expanded this considerably

Yes spending time together working together, the fellowship of music, song and people

Yes

Got to know people better

Yes

***Have you taken part in other groups or events in the community because of the music group?***

Because of the music group I was able to join a beginners whistle group with the Scots Music Group – this was the first class (outwith an art group) I had managed to go to in 10 years. I was also encouraged to join another singing group (through SMG).

Yes Café Ceilidh [Scots Music Group]

When Stepping Stones was available there were music sessions on the go [probably early Inspire sessions]

No, but I would think about it in the future

Café Ceilidh at St Colm's [Scots Music Group]

Yes

***Would you like the music group to continue? (This may be possible if we can get more funding)***

Yes definitely. As a group we have come a long way but I think there is much more we could achieve.

This would be brilliant

Yes, a proper and excellent place to be

Yes I really enjoyed taking part in the music group

Yes very much so. Like it to continue.

Yes

***What else would you like to say about the music group?***

From having little confidence particularly around a lot of people I have gained so much from the music group and the encouragement of the tutors. I've found my voice again.

It is an excellent way of socialising and enjoyment

It is needed – maybe even an essential service – therapy, people, use of time

I really enjoyed singing and mixing with the group every Friday and it lifted my spirits and I thought the people (Jenny and Amy) ran the group well and we had plenty of time to rehearse for the main event on Sat 18 June.

I have a recording of myself singing Hurt and "I have no voice"

The tutors and others were kind to me, and encouraged me to sing. Thank you tutors and pupils and others.

## **2. THE ROCK TRUST - method: questionnaire, 5 completed**

### ***Do you feel that you have learnt new skills at the music group? If so, what skills?***

Yes I have learned how to play the guitar not perfectly but I have the key notes to continue to play on my own

Yes banjo, read music

Playing the fiddle, breathing technique. Maybe a bit less anxious about performing. Became happy to have my photo taken.

Yes, I have worked on my vocals and improved greatly and developed my confidence. I have learned to play the fiddle.

Yes I have learnt to play the bass guitar much better than before, and I have increased my confidence in singing and learnt how to control my voice

### ***Do you think that the music group has helped you feel more confident?***

I was always confident but I feel more at ease in front of large crowds of people

Yes

Yes, now I can sing in public, don't care what other people think.

It has, I honestly would not have got up and performed at the concert in front of people if it had not been for the support of Amy and Michelle and the group.

YES!!!

### ***Have you got to know people in your group better through coming to the music group?***

Yes I have grown closer to Mousey and Marco better than I did at the start

Some people – Jeebs, Richard, Calum

Yes, we've grown closer. We've met up outside the group when we haven't done that ever before. So socially things are better.

Yes although I was already friends with many of the group I got to know Richard, Michelle and Amy and supported Rachel joining the group.

They are all my friends anyway but the staffs are second to none

***Have you taken part in other groups or events in the community because of the music group?***

Not yet but I fully intend on joining Venture Scotland and taking my guitar on residential will help to pass the time

The concert at the Acorn Centre

Not really, but I plan to. Went to a concert at the Bongo Club.

Not yet but I would feel more confident about this now.

Nope

***Would you like the music group to continue? (This may be possible if we can get more funding)***

Yes I would like the music group to continue

Of course

Yes, and for my children too, so I can do music with them and sing to them.

Yes

YES!!!!!!!!!!

***What else would you like to say about the music group?***

It was fun and interesting and I always wanted to learn to play the guitar and it has given me a chance to do so

More relaxed environment than if you got private lessons, more support. I wouldn't have done it without the group.

Now I sing to the kids, couldn't before

Great environment to be in, the people are awesome. Learned things I never thought I would get the opportunity to do, learn fiddle, tried lots of new different types of repertoire that I had never heard before through songs

You never feel embarrassed about letting your talent flow and you feel a sense of belonging after a few weeks (if I'm not asleep that is :p)

### **3. THE BETHANY TRUST – method: group discussion with Development Worker (5 participants present)**

Comments from the group have been put into the following categories after the discussion.

#### **LEARNING NEW SKILLS**

Tried playing instruments

Learning the tin whistle

“It’s made me happier – I always thought I couldn’t sing”

“How to write music – I didn’t think I would ever do it” [writing ‘Twa Fields O Dreams’ with help from Scott]

Reviving old skills – Benny the Bethany tambourine player used to play with Jimmy Shand’s band

#### **COMMENTS ABOUT CONFIDENCE**

All agreed that the music group definitely helps their confidence.

Bobby’s stutter is much better through singing.

“It gives you confidence to open up and share things”

“I’ve done things that I wouldn’t normally do”

#### **COMMENTS ABOUT FEELING LESS ISOLATED**

“Brotherhood of musicians”

“We help each other out”

“We were made to feel very, very welcome”

“I always look forward to coming”

#### **COMMENTS ABOUT MUSIC & WELLBEING**

“Music helps the psychological side”

“It’s made me happier – I always thought I couldn’t sing”

Bobby’s stutter is much better through singing

“It’s had a major impact on my life – I can talk about other issues as well”

“It helps get it out of your mind”

## **COMMENTS ABOUT TAKING PART IN OTHER GROUPS OR EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY**

“When’s your next gig?”

The group had performed at Bethany events for St Andrew’s Night and Burns Night, at the Storytelling Centre, and at a cabaret night at The Acorn Centre – they expressed pride in this.

Comments about the Inspire event:

“I thought it was great”

“We couldn’t have done better”

“The co-ordination of the event was good”

## **WOULD YOU LIKE THE GROUP TO CONTINUE?**

Everyone was adamant that the group was very valuable and that everything possible should be done to help it continue. There was a long discussion about possible sources of funding and ways that the group could carry on. One person was going to visit his MP and MSP to ask them to help get funding for the group.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE GROUP**

There was a real sense of “partnership with the tutors”

Not everyone liked the wee games.

#### **4. THE STAFFORD CENTRE – method: group discussion with Development Worker and tutors (4 participants present)**

Comments from the group have been put into the following categories after the discussion.

##### **LEARNING NEW SKILLS**

Most of the group did feel they had learnt new skills generally but this wasn't what they focussed on in the feedback.

##### **COMMENTS ABOUT CONFIDENCE**

"Music brings something out of you"

"Using your voice helps confidence"

"Since coming to the group, I can now do karaoke sober"

"I now do karaoke and I didn't before"

"I've been singing out loud" [in everyday life – story about singing "Psychokiller" song!]

"I conquered my fears to take part in the concert"

"I didn't think I could do it to start with"

##### **COMMENTS ABOUT FEELING LESS ISOLATED**

"When you learn to sing, you're in another world, in a big family"

"It's about unity and togetherness"

##### **SCOTS HERITAGE & CULTURE**

"I like Scottish songs & history"

"I feel more like singing Scots songs"

"Singing about our national heritage"

##### **COMMENTS ABOUT MUSIC & WELLBEING**

"Stimulating – helped get people out of their apathy"

"Breath of fresh air"

"Music brings something out of you"

Satisfaction from group

"Music tells a story"

Emotion – happy & sad

“It’s amazing what music does”

“Music helps spiritual wellbeing – any kind of music”

“I go home and sing them to myself – it’s cheerie”

#### **COMMENTS ABOUT TAKING PART IN OTHER GROUPS OR EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY**

One person talked about the experience of having gone to an SMG class – he didn’t continue because of his own difficulties, which he acknowledged

The Inspire event was discussed:

“I conquered my fears to take part in the concert”

“Support of friends helped me to take part”

#### **WOULD YOU LIKE THE GROUP TO CONTINUE?**

All said that they did, that it felt important

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE GROUP**

The group felt settled at the start, then fragmented, but always managed to keep it a bit together.

One person who doesn’t come anymore had said “I just don’t like it anymore”.

SMG should also talk to 2 key people who aren’t here.

Better for the group to happen at The Stafford Centre – “feel safer in this environment”

“It made a good atmosphere here” [at the Stafford Centre]

“Maybe the group should have moved upstairs sooner”

### APPENDIX 3: AUDIENCE FEEDBACK AT FINAL EVENT

It was absolutely fantastic!!

Loved it. Well done to all who took part.

Great and excellent, from Benny King's family x

A great night I enjoyed it so much

Inspired! So professional

Really enjoyed it. Great to see the spirit of taking music to the community has been done so well.

Very good performance. Good work.

Very enjoyable an excellent evening of entertainment, lovely baking

What an amazing and inspiring evening...It's a travesty that projects like this have such a short time span! But the music will live on for sure x

So enjoyed the whole performance. Such a wonderful effort by all concerned.

It's really inspiring to see how much people can blossom if given access to the opportunity to do so. Certainly a project worthy of further public funding support as it can bring so many life changing moments for tutors & participants alike. From an inspired taxpayer!

Thank you for all the warmth and love you gave us

Every participant should feel very proud of themselves

Excellent entertainment. Wonderful to watch the groups in action.

This should be taken to a wider audience – perhaps a Fringe concert?!

Absolutely marvellous. Totally inspirational.

Fantastic evening. Great to hear so many voices raised in song.

Lets teach the world to sing

Fabulous, really enjoyed the evening. So much hard work was put in. Very moving.

Absolutely brilliant occasion. I loved the informality and the sense of community. I imagine there will be a fair number of folk going home with a feeling of having played a very positive part in the whole and with self-esteem raised. Thank you for a lovely evening. What's next?

Great stuff, good value for money.

Fabulous! Really enjoyed myself.

Absolutely fantastic! Well done to everyone, tutors but especially the performers for all their hard work – and for singing the last song without dissolving into pieces!

Fantastic! Great musicians, singers, songs and craic!

It was a great evening, I really enjoyed myself.

Very, very special and so moving. This show should be seen & heard all over Edinburgh (People's Festival, Fringe?)

Fantastic! Best £5 I've spent. Well done for being so brave. You all did really well. Thanks for a great night of entertainment.

It was a lovely evening, I really enjoyed it. And the cakes were delicious.

Inspirational! Very confident performers – all supporting each other – great!

Very moving! More work like this needs funded!

Truly inspirational! A really enjoyable evening.

I was very impressed by the skilled performances of so many who took part. Coupled with this was the friendly atmosphere and warmth between audience and players. One player I know has never performed before and was great!

Really inspiring (as your name suggests) – so much warmth and care for the people involved. A lot of the singing and individual performances very moving and also the tutors' responses to the people they have been working with. Would like to see much more of this – would help all aspects of our communities in inclusion, confidence building etc.

#### APPENDIX 4: EVENT STATISTICS

Note that some people are included in more than one section, so the total number of people involved is less than the sum of the separate sections.

**STAFF: 13** SMG staff, tutors, technical = 11; Partner project staff actively involved = 2 (Alma Project & Stafford Centre)

**VOLUNTEERS: 21** Volunteers (catering, set up) = 16 (9 SMG, 5 Rock Trust, 2 Inspire volunteers); volunteers performing with groups = 3; Leith Festival volunteers = 2

**PERFORMERS: 53** Inspire group performers = 22 (Alma 6, Bethany 6, Rock Trust 7, Stafford 3); volunteers performing with groups = 3; performers from SMG classes = 16; tutors, other SMG staff, partner project staff = 12

**TOTAL NUMBER OF DIFFERENT PEOPLE INVOLVED IN SET UP AND PERFORMANCE: 72**

**TOTAL AUDIENCE: 82** Paying = 50 (26 full price, 24 concessions); comps – friends of performers: 20; comps – invited guests = 12

## APPENDIX 5: STATISTICAL ASSESSMENT OF CHANGE

### QUESTIONS

Q1 = Increase in creative & learning skills?

Q2 = Increase in confidence?

Q3 = Reduced isolation?

Q4 = New goals?

Q5 = More able to engage with rest of group?

Q6 = More able to engage with wider community?

### KEY

**P1, P2 etc** = individual participants

**S** = scores given by development worker based on answers to individual questionnaires

**T** = scores given by tutors

**PS** = scores given by project staff

**Scores:** 1 = no change; 2 = some change; 3 = significant change; 4 = total transformation

**(1)** etc = single scores not counted in totals due to lack of corroboration

### 1. BETHANY TRUST

	P1		P2		P3		P4		P5		Total	Reports	Average
	T	PS	T	PS	T	PS	T	PS	T	PS			
Q1	3	4	3	4	3	4	1	4	2	4	32	10	3.2
Q2	1	4	3	4	2	4	1	4	2	4	29	10	2.9
Q3	(2)		2	4	(2)		(1)		(2)		6	2	3
Q4	2	3	2	4	2	4	1	4	2	3	27	10	2.7
Q5	1	3	1	4	2	4	1	4	1	4	25	10	2.5
Q6		(4)		(4)		(4)		(4)		(4)			
<b>Totals</b>	7	14	11	20	9	16	4	16	7	15	<b>119</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>Average/Q</b>	1.8	3.5	2.2	4.0	2.3	4.0	1.0	4.0	1.8	3.8			

## 2. ROCK TRUST

	P1		P2		P3		P4		P5		P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	Total	Reports	Average	
	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	T	T	T	T	T	T				
Q1	4	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	2	(3)	(3)	(3)	(2)	(4)	(4)	32	10	3.2	
Q2	3	4	3	2	2	4	3	2	(2)		(3)	(3)	(3)	(1)	(4)	(4)	23	8	2.8	
Q3	3	2	3	1	3	3	(2)		(2)		(4)		(3)	(1)			15	6	2.5	
Q4	3	4	3	3	3	4	1	2	3	2	(4)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(4)	(4)	28	10	2.8	
Q5	3	2	3	2	2	3	(1)		(3)		(4)		(3)	(1)	(4)		15	6	2.5	
Q6	(2)		(2)		3	3	(1)		(3)		(4)	(3)					6	2	3	
<b>Totals</b>	16	16	15	11	16	21	7	7	9	4							<b>Totals</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>Average/Q</b>	3.2	3.2	3.0	2.2	2.7	3.5	2.3	2.3	3.0	2.0										

## 3. STAFFORD CENTRE

	P1		P2		P3		P4		P5		P6		P7		P8		Total	Reports	Average
	T	PS	T	PS	T	PS	T	PS	T	PS	T	PS	T	PS	T	PS			
Q1	2	2	2	2	(2)		3	3	1	2	3	2	(1)		(1)		22	10	2.2
Q2	2	3	1	2	(2)		2	3	2	2	2	3	1	2	1	2	28	14	2
Q3	1	3	1	3	2	2	1	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	33	16	2.1
Q4	2	2	(2)		(2)		2	3	(1)		(2)		(1)		(1)		9	4	2.3
Q5	1	3	1	1	(2)		2	3	2	2	2	2	1	2	(2)		22	12	1.8
Q6		(3)	1	1				(3)		(3)				(3)			2	2	1
<b>Totals</b>	8	13	6	9	2	2	10	15	7	9	9	9	4	6	3	4	<b>116</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Average/Q</b>	1.6	2.6	1.2	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	1.8	2.3	2.3	2.3	1.3	2.0	1.5	2.0			

#### 4. STEPPING STONES/ALMA PROJECT

	P1			P2			P3			P4			P5			P6			P7		P8		P9		P10		Total	Reports	Average
	S	T	PS	S	T	PS	S	T	PS	S	T	PS	S	T	PS	S	T	PS	T	PS	T	PS	T	PS	T	PS			
Q1	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	3	2	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	2	3	3	3	2	68	26	2.6
Q2	2	1	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	4	4	2	2	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	2	3	2	2	2	63	26	2.4
Q3	2	1	1	2	2	3	3	1	2	2	2	4	2	2	1	4	2	4	2	2	1	2	1	4	1	2	55	26	2.2
Q4	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	2	2	2	4	3	4	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	58	26	2.2
Q5	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	4	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	54	26	2.1
Q6	1		2	2		4	2		2	2	2	4	1		2	4		4		(3)		(2)		(2)		(2)	32	13	2.5
Totals	10	8	11	13	10	18	14	11	14	15	16	23	13	10	13	24	13	20	6	12	5	10	10	13	9	9	330	143	2.3
Average/Q	1.7	1.6	1.8	2.2	2.0	3.0	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.7	3.8	2.2	2.0	2.2	4.0	2.6	3.3	1.2	2.4	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.6	1.8	1.8			

#### 5. CHANGE IN CREATIVE COLLABORATION WITH TUTORS

Creative collaboration with tutor	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	Total	Reports (total number of people)	Average
Alma Project	1	2	2	3	2	2	1	1	2	1		17	10	1.7
Rock Trust	4	2	3	2	1	4			2	4	1	23	9	2.6
Bethany Trust	3	3	3	2	2							13	5	2.6
Stafford Centre	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	1				14	8	1.8
												67	32	2.1

## 6. AVERAGES PER QUESTION

<b>Q1 average</b>		<b>Q2 average</b>		<b>Q3 average</b>	
Bethany Trust	3.2	Bethany Trust	2.9	Bethany Trust	3.0
Rock Trust	3.2	Rock Trust	2.8	Rock Trust	2.5
Stafford Centre	2.2	Stafford Centre	2.0	Stafford Centre	2.1
Stepping Stones/Alma	2.6	Stepping Stones/Alma	2.4	Stepping Stones/Alma	2.2
<b>Overall average</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>Overall average</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>Overall average</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Q4 average</b>		<b>Q5 average</b>		<b>Q6 average</b>	
Bethany Trust	2.7	Bethany Trust	2.7	(Bethany Trust	no result)
Rock Trust	2.8	Rock Trust	2.5	Rock Trust	3.0
Stafford Centre	2.3	Stafford Centre	1.8	Stafford Centre	1.0
Stepping Stones/Alma	2.2	Stepping Stones/Alma	2.1	Stepping Stones/Alma	2.5
<b>Overall average</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>Overall average</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>Overall average</b>	<b>2.2</b>