

2012 ACOSVO Members Survey

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Introduction

This survey was conducted on behalf of The Association of Chief Officers of Scottish Voluntary Organisations (ACOSVO). The primary objectives were to provide ACOSVO with:

- an assessment of current and future needs of members
- a report of the level of member satisfaction in relation to the services that ACOSVO provides
- an overview of the diverse range of Third Sector professionals our members comprise and the organisations they come from

It should be noted that as with any such survey conducted by or on behalf of ACOSVO, all details given are kept confidential. Responses included in this report will be reported in such a way as to maintain the confidentiality expected by respondents.

Methodology

Similar to the previous members' survey, a web based survey (Survey Monkey) was developed to seek members' views which enable us to evaluate and improve our services. The survey was sent out to 277 ACOSVO members, which included 247 full members and 30 associate members. Responses were received from 78 members, a response rate of 28%, which was 10% higher than in the 2011 Members' Survey. Respondents were mostly full members. Out of 78 respondents, four were associate members.

Survey findings

This report provides an overview of the findings of the survey. This includes graphic representations of data, written descriptions of each survey question and its results, and occasional samples or an analysis of meaningful comments made by respondents on certain questions. Also included is a "Next Steps" section in which we offer comments on the findings and their implications for the future delivery of ACOSVO events and services.

We compared the 2012 survey results with last year's survey (2011) and have identified where there have been significant changes in members' responses to similar questions. Due to this year's survey size being larger than last year's, comparisons of responses to questions are made using relative percentages as opposed to raw number data.

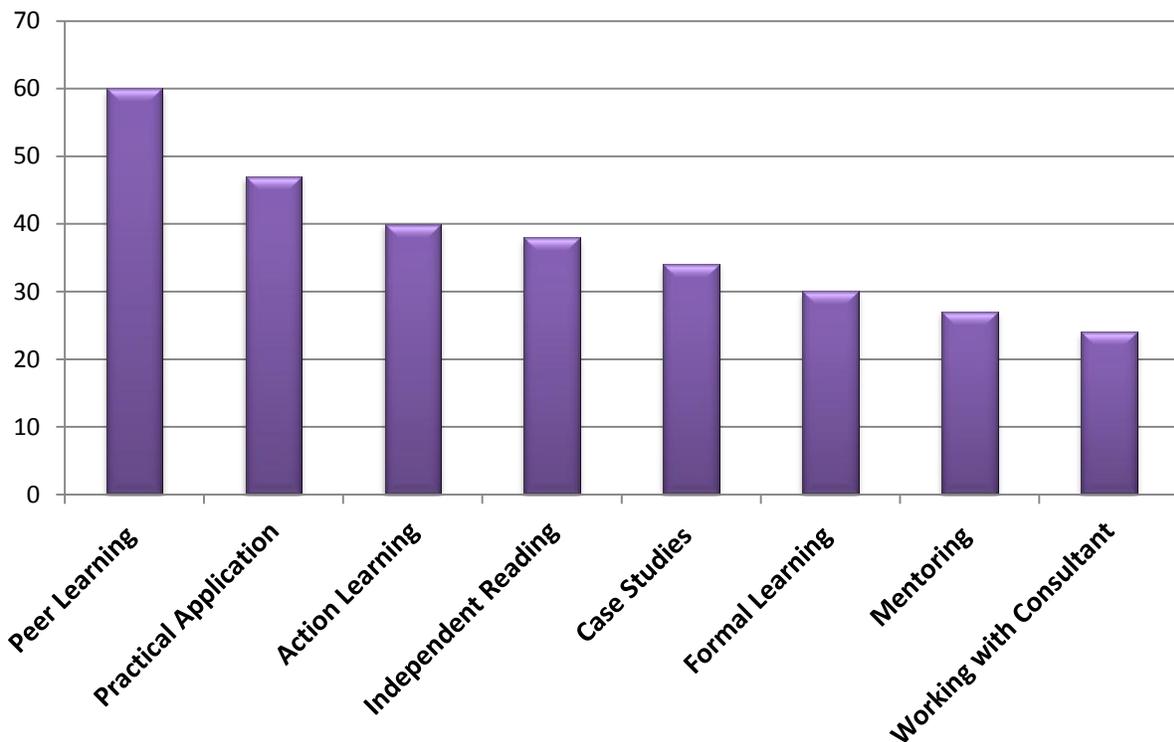
About You

The first section of the survey was concerned with features of ACOSVO members' personal and professional development, as well as that of their Boards of Trustees.

The first question asked the respondent's name.

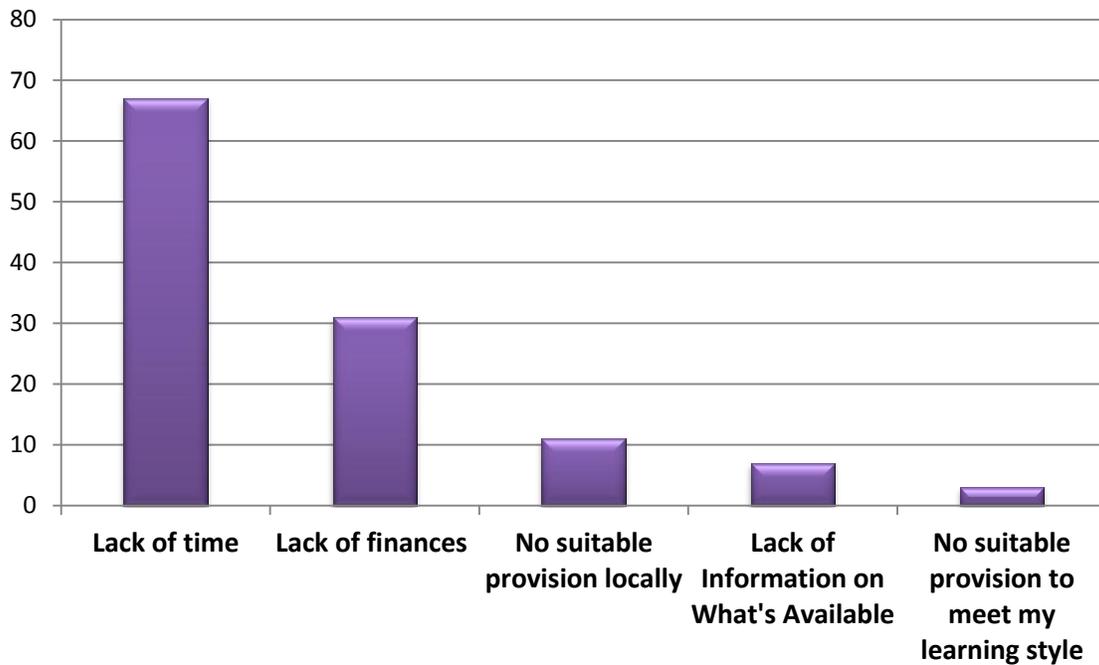
We asked respondents how they prefer to gain new skills and knowledge or expand existing skills and knowledge. From a prepared list, respondents could select one or more learning styles or approaches that they prefer. Respondents most preferred **Peer Learning** (60) as a mechanism for gaining new skills, while slightly more than half preferred **Practical Application** (47). Other more common preferences included **Action Learning** (40), **Independent Reading** (38), and **Case Studies** (34) (*Graph 1*).

In comparison with last year, a notable difference is that this year members showed a stronger preference for **Case Studies** and **Action Learning**. Last year 27% of respondents selected **Case Studies**, while this year 44% of respondents selected **Case Studies**. Also, last year 29% of respondents selected **Action Learning**, while this year 52% of respondents selected **Action Learning**.



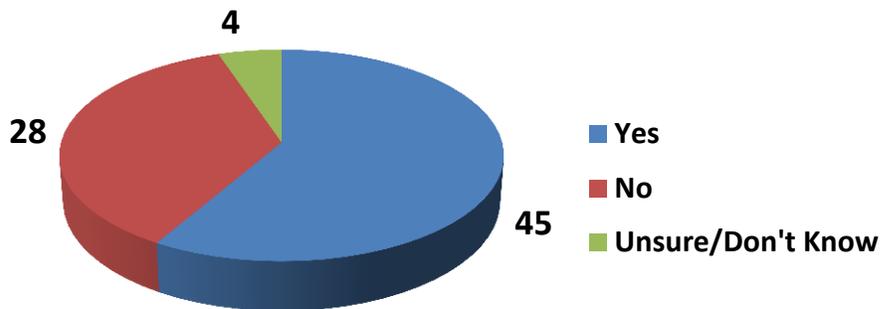
Graph 1

Respondents were asked about the things which get in the way of their personal development. A prepared list of options was presented and respondents could choose more than one option from that list. A strong majority of 67 respondents (90%) chose **Lack of Time** as the most significant factor which limits their development. Thirty-one respondents (42%) chose **Lack of Finance**, and 11 (15%) chose **No Suitable Provision Locally** (*Graph 2*).



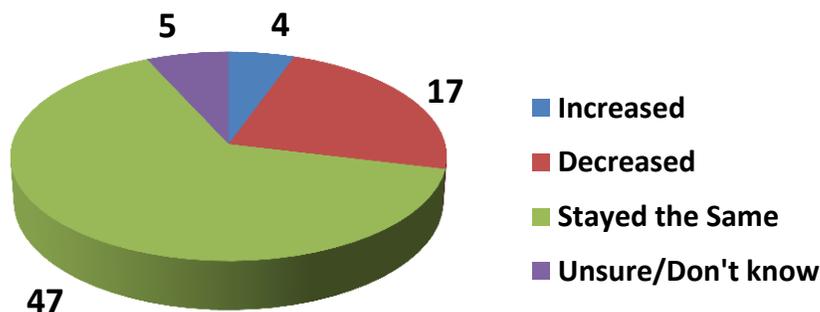
Graph 2

We asked respondents if they have a separate budget for their own training and development. Forty-five respondents (58%) said they did have a personal budget, while 28 (36%) said they did not. Four respondents (5%) indicated they weren't sure if they had a personal budget or not. (*Graph 3*)



Graph 3

We then asked members if their training and development budget has changed since last year. Four respondents (6%) said their personal budget **Increased**, 17 (23%) said their budget **Decreased**, 5 (7%) said they were **Unsure**, and 47 (64%) said their budget has **Stayed the Same** (*Graph 4*). Based on the data it's reasonable to conclude that the 28 respondents in the previous question who said they *did not* have a personal budget, selected **Stayed the Same** in this question (in the sense that they didn't have and still don't have a personal budget). This indicates that the other 19 respondents in this question who selected **Stayed the Same** have a personal budget that has stayed the same since last year.



Graph 4

We asked respondents to identify their **three** key priority areas for developing leadership skills. *Table 1* below displays the total responses. In each column (Key Area) the most common responses are grouped towards the top, with a number in parenthesis indicating how often the response was listed by different members. Responses without numbers in parenthesis were listed once by one member. It is clear that there were some common themes present, the strongest of which seems to be **Strategic Planning** (listed 19 times total across all key areas). Others included **Coaching** (listed 12 times total), **Financial Management** (listed 11 times total), **Change Management** (listed 10 times total), and a group of inter-related skills such as Staff/Team Management, Support, and Development, Conflict Resolution, and Mentoring.

In comparison with the Member Survey from 2011, a notable difference this year is that members are more interested in developing skills related to **Strategic Planning**, which was mentioned 5 times overall on last year's survey relative to this year's 19.

Key Area 1	Key Area 2	Key Area 3
Strategic planning (10)	Strategic Planning (4)	Strategic Planning (5)
Change management (6)	Financial Management/Planning (4)	Coaching (3)
Coaching (5)	Change Management (3)	Mentoring (2)
Financial skills/leadership (4)	Coaching (3)	Conflict resolution (2)
Managing difficult people (3)	Encouraging and supporting staff (3)	Social Enterprise (2)
Conflict resolution (3)	Mentoring (2)	Team Development (2)
Staff Management (3)	PR marketing (2)	Uses of technology
Partnership working (3)	Managing People (2)	Social Media
Assessing and changing culture (2)	Time management (2)	Fundraising/financial skills (2)
Practical Experience	Delegation and management (2)	Leadership style
Leadership	Formal accreditation of skills (2)	Political engagement
Team building, development and motivation	Networking (2)	Negotiation with Statutory Authorities
Dealing with poor performance	Partnership/joint ventures (2)	Strategic collaboration with Council and Health
Supporting senior management in their development	Mediation Skills	Showing leadership in my sector
Leading in a constantly changing environment	Human Resources Practice	Personal Support networks
Effective decision-making	Measuring results	Marketing

Online learning	Media	Equalities
Organisational Development skills	Team leadership	Organisational Development
Analytical work	Team Dynamics	Chang Management
Marketing and selling skills	Building high performing teams	Problem Solving
Negotiating Skills	Communication	Presentation Skills
Presentation	Assertiveness	Time management
Emotional intelligence	Handling emotional or aggressive behaviour	Self esteem
Confidence	Dealing with difficult Boards	Organisational responsibilities
Thinking out the box	Board development	How to nurture innovation
Facilitation Skills	Governance	Organisation Theory
	Managing the Trustees relationship	Communications for a CEO
	Managing difficult situations	Listening and involving others constructively
	Effective working	Keeping high quality staff motivated and getting the job done
	Maintaining confidence & focus	Staff Development
	Managing poor performance at a senior level	Legislative knowledge to underpin leadership and management
	Political agenda - what would separation mean?	
	Leadership of an expanding/contracting organisation	
	Social Enterprise Leadership	
	Self-Directed Support	
	Industry norms and real life examples from colleagues / peers	
	Next stage CMI	

Table 1

In addition to addressing leadership skills relevant to the Chief Executives themselves, we also asked ACOSVO members to reflect on what kind of board/trustee-related leadership skills would be relevant if they planned on investing in their board’s development. *Table 2* displays the total responses. Again, some major themes are clear. **Understanding of board roles**, listed 19 times overall across all three areas, was the strongest theme. Other strong themes included **Strategic Planning** (listed 17 times overall), **Financial Management** (listed 17 times overall), and **Governance** in general (listed 12 times overall).

No major differences were found in comparison between this and last year’s survey data on this topic.

Key Area 1	Key Area 2	Key Area 3
Understanding of governance roles/responsibilities (11)	Finance management (10)	Strategic planning (5)
Strategic planning (10)	Board roles and responsibilities (7)	Change management (2)
Governance (6)	Good Governance (5)	Financial governance (4)
Board member performance/evaluations (3)	Increasing Board professional skill base (4)	Board/staff effective communication (3)
Induction to trusteeship (2)	Managing board performance (2)	Networking (2)
Financial management (2)	Understanding strategic role (2)	Business Development
Governance versus micromanaging	Devolving power to staff/regional offices	Audit
Governance - difference between strategy and operations	Recruitment of the "right" trustees	Regulatory Responsibilities
Developing corporate leadership	Empowering Board members to take a more active role	Regulatory requirements (Social Housing Regulator)
Conflict of interest - what is it and how to handle it	Public affairs	Governance
Specific governance in HR	Profile of board/chairperson	Role of Trustees
Marketing & Promotion	Inspiring/sharing the vision	Management of CEO
Organisational development	Making best use of skills	Managing Staff
Business development	Data management and analysis	Relationship building with Chief Officer
Portfolio development	Self-Assertiveness	Motivational Techniques
Chairing Skills	Professionalism	Risk Assessment
Fiduciary duties	Leading on change	Setting goals
Communication	How to Influence Stakeholders	Personal Support networks
Working together as a group	Quality assurance	Personal behaviours
Networking	Knowledge of the sector	Bringing in new people and skills

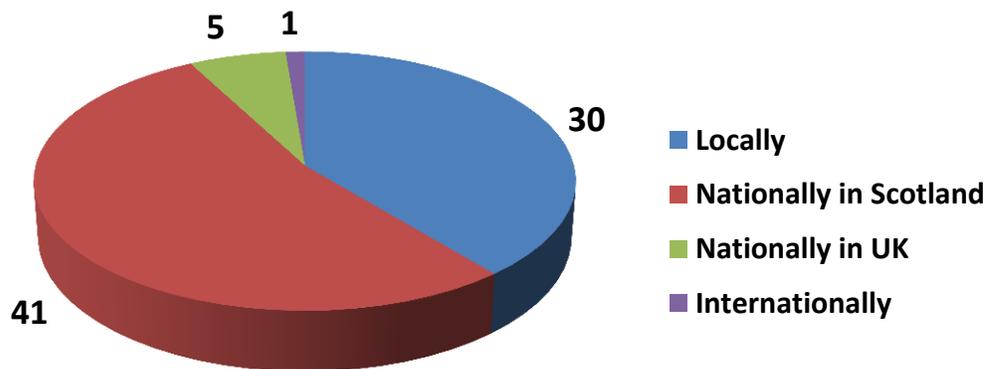
Equalities	Homelessness
Sector knowledge	Interagency collaboration
Risk Profile	Marketing
Representing others	Human Resources
Legislative requirements for organisations in the voluntary sector	
No plans - Board undergoing major changes	

Table 2

About Your Organisation

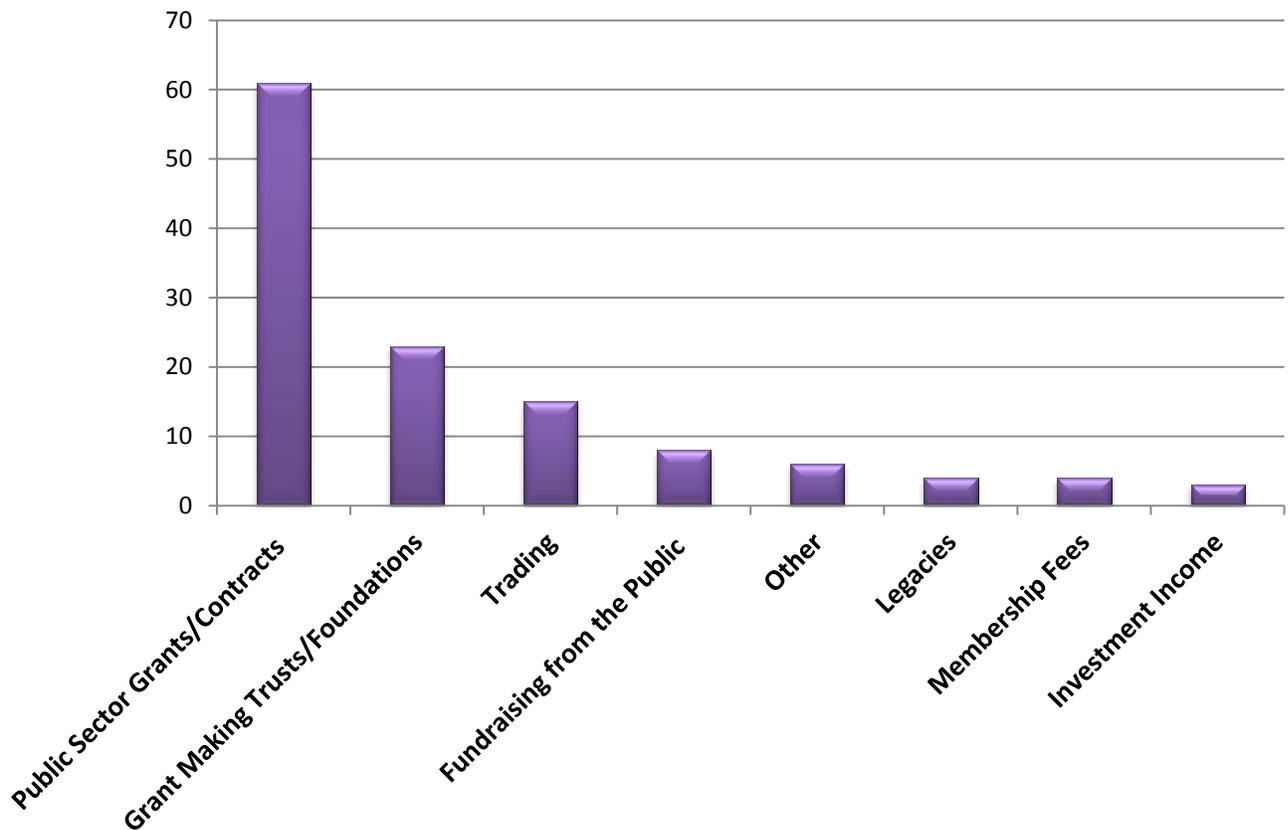
In this section of the survey we wished to find out more information about the organisation in which members or associate members work.

To begin, we asked members where their organisation provides services: locally, nationally in Scotland, nationally in UK, or internationally. Forty-one respondents (53%) indicated that their organisations provide services **Nationally in Scotland**, while 30 (39%) indicated that their organisations provide services **Locally** (*Graph 5*). A small portion of respondents said their organisations provide services **Nationally in UK** or **Internationally**.



Graph 5

We also asked members about the sources by which their organisations receive the majority of their income. A prepared list of options (sources of income) was presented and respondents could choose more than one option from that list. Sixty-one respondents selected **Public Sector Grants/Contracts** as a major source of income, while **Grant Making Trusts/Foundations** (23 selections) and **Trading** (15 selections) were also significant sources (*Graph 6*). Based on the Survey Monkey data, we can conclude that the respondents' organisations receive a majority of their income from multiple sources as opposed to one.



Graph 6

To gauge views on financial sustainability, we asked members if they thought their organisation's funding has been affected by recent changes to funding arrangements. Forty-one respondents (54%) said their organisation's funding has **Decreased**, 20 (26%) indicated their organisations funding has seen **No Significant Change**, and 9 (12%) indicated their organisation's funding has **Decreased Significantly** (Graph 7).

Respondents were given the opportunity to leave comments on this question. Listed below are some comments made by respondents on the nature of their funding arrangements in the recent past:

Static or even reduced level for recurring grants

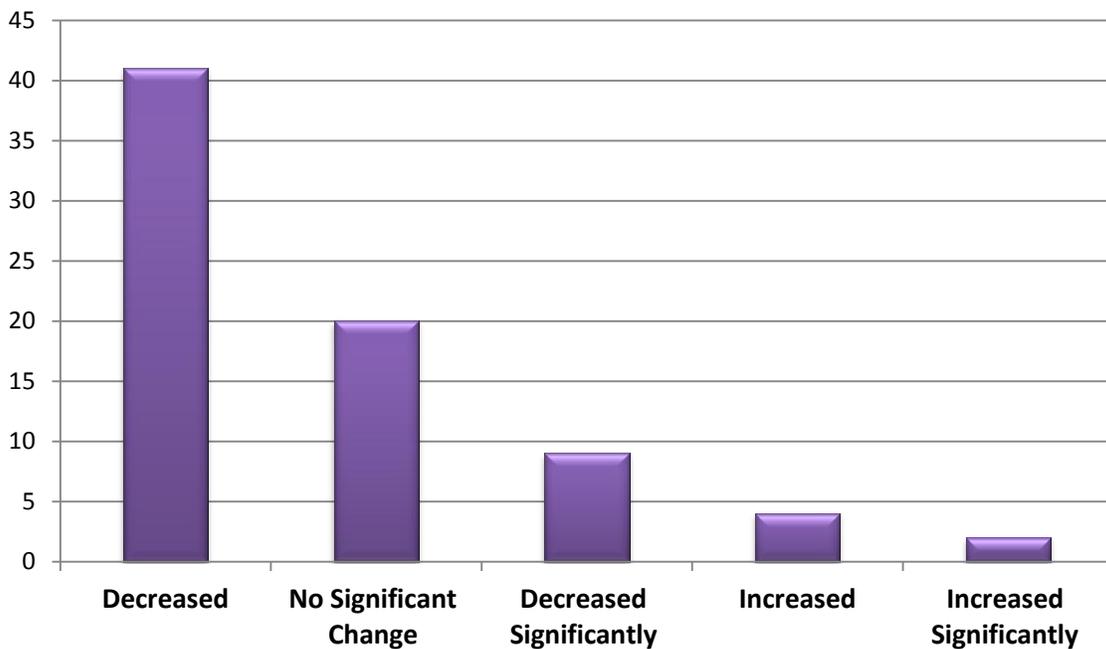
We have needed to be agile in identifying new sources of funding

Regular giving maintained, one -off gifts fallen

Services are being dramatically reduced due to funding cuts

Reduced grants for affordable housing & wider role activities

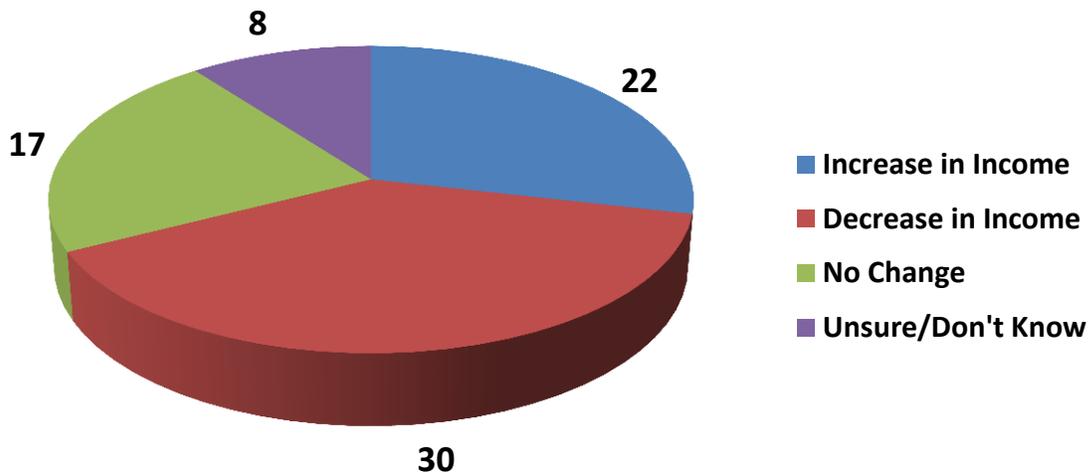
Key issues are due to core costs not being met in contracts and short term funding arrangements



Graph 7

Looking to the future, we asked members what kind of changes to their organisation's income they foresee in the next twelve months. The results were somewhat even, with 30 respondents (39%) indicating their organization will experience a **Decrease in Income**, 22 (28%) indicating their organisation will experience and **Increase in Income**, 17 (22%) indicating their organization will experience **no change** in income, and 8 (10%) indicating they are **Unsure** or they **Don't Know** how their organisation's income may change (*Graph 8*).

Compared with last year's survey, this year's data shows that members are slightly more confident that their organisation will experience a rise in income. Last year **Increase in Income** was selected by 20% of respondents, while this year **Increase in Income** was selected by 29% of respondents. Also, last year **Decrease in Income** was selected by 48% of respondents, while this year **Decrease in Income** was selected by 39% of respondents.



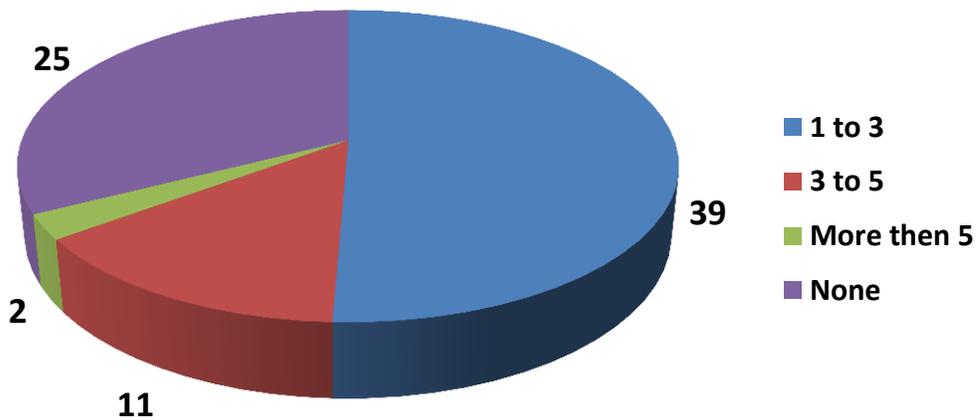
Graph 8

About ACOSVO's Services

This section of the survey asked members a number of questions about their experiences receiving ACOSVO's services, as well as how useful they view ACOSVO's benefits and discounts.

First we asked respondents how many ACOSVO events they have attended in the past year. Thirty-nine respondents (51%) said they attended **1 to 3** events, with 11 (14%) saying they attended **3-5** events, and 2 (3%) saying they attended **More than 5** events. A fairly significant 25 respondents (33%) said they haven't attended any events in the past year.

Respondents were given the opportunity to leave comments on this question. Upon evaluating these comments, the following reasons were offered for not attending any events: *not enough time* (mentioned 12 times), *new member* (mentioned 5 times), and *not relevant to needs* (mentioned 5 times) (*Graph 9*).



Graph 9

Next we asked if the content of the events members attended met their needs and expectations. All respondents marked **fully met**, **partially met**, or **not applicable**, not applicable meaning they didn't attend any events of that category (*Graph 10*).

General Events and **Networking Opportunities** were attended more than **Masterclasses** and **Scottish Leaders Dinners**. In the category of **General Events**, about two thirds (68%) of those who attended said the content **fully met** their needs and expectations, with the remaining third (32%) of respondents selecting **partially met**. In the category of **Networking Opportunities**, slightly more than half (56%) of those who attended said the content **fully met** their expectations, with the remaining (43%) selecting **partially met**.

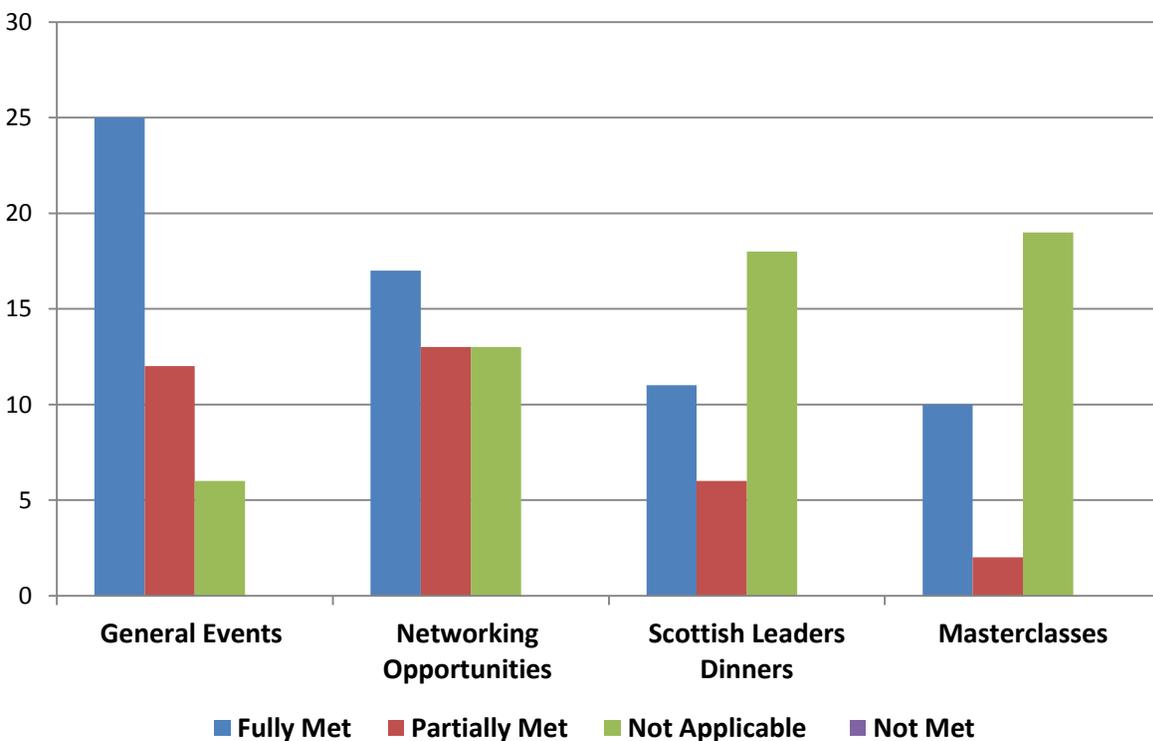
Respondents were given the opportunity to leave comments on this question. Listed below are some comments made by respondents on ACOSVO's range of events:

Have found it difficult to attend owing to time pressures. Generally needs have been met.

Events are generally excellent - a great opportunity to meet other people and refresh or learn new skills

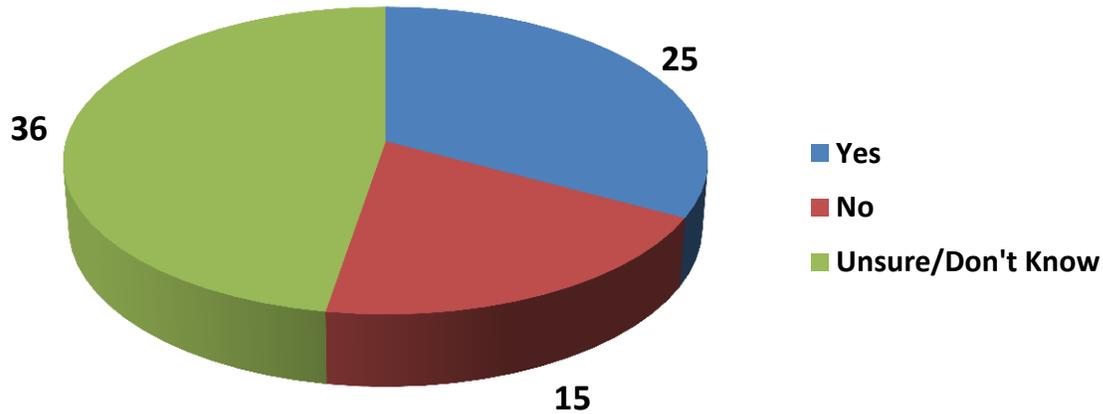
Sorry, I've been exceptionally busy!

All events helpful. As a new member I have not followed through on some of the opportunities particularly with networking.



Graph 10

We asked members whether they felt a Local Network is necessary in their geographical area. Results were somewhat divided, with 25 (33%) responding **Yes**, 15 (20%) responding **No**, and 36 (47%) responding **Unsure/Don't know** (Graph 11).



Graph 11

Staying on Local Networks, we asked respondents who felt there was a need for a Local Network to describe specifically what they would seek to gain from attending a Local Network Meeting. Some common themes found in these responses included *sharing information and perspective* (9 mentions), *peer contact and support* (8 mentions), *local networking* (6 mentions), *smaller time commitment* (4 mentions), *a united voice on Third Sector policy issues* (2 mentions), and *partnership working* (2 mentions).

Moving on to benefits, we asked members to review a list of the Member Benefits ACOSVO offers, and to then mark their top three most valued benefits. The **Member's Annual Conference** and the **Programme of Events** were selected as the most valuable benefits (with 19 and 18 responses respectively) (*Graph 12*). Twenty-nine respondents noted how they **haven't used any ACOSVO benefits**.

Respondents were given the opportunity to leave comments on this question. Listed below are some comments made by respondents on ACOSVO's range of benefits:

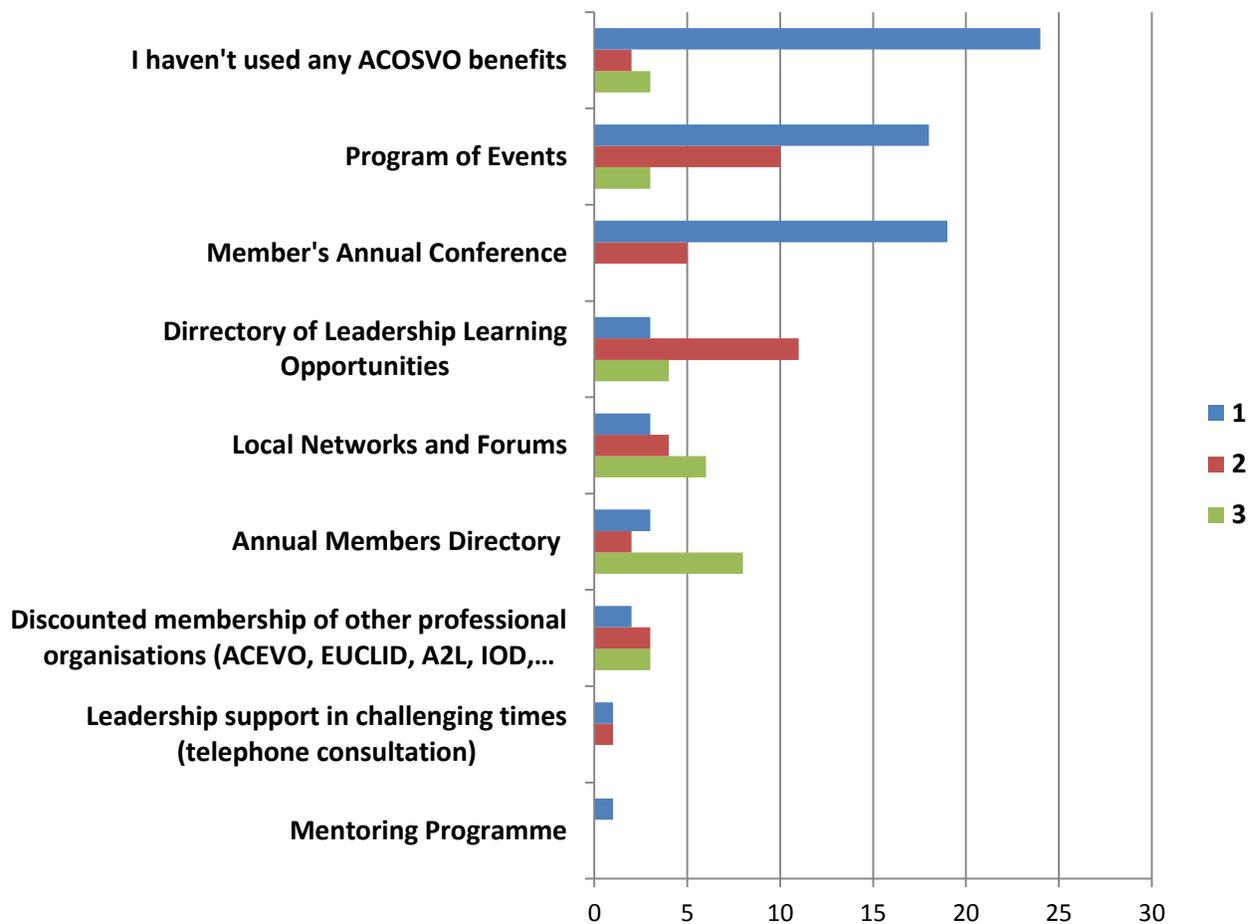
I clearly need to re-visit the services you offer!

Only recently joined

I'm a bit shocked to see how many of these I didn't know about - which is probably my own fault!

I've had to miss a couple of events due to work pressures, so only have a partial view of what's on offer

As a new member not sure if I have had any of the above?



Graph 12

Similarly to the question on ACOSVO benefits, we asked members to review a list of discounts ACOSVO offers its members and rate their top three most valuable. Surprisingly, most of the respondents on this question (64 out of 78) selected **I haven't used any ACOSVO discounts** (*Graph 13*).

Respondents had the opportunity to leave comments on this question. Listed below are some comments made by respondents on ACOSVO's range of discounts:

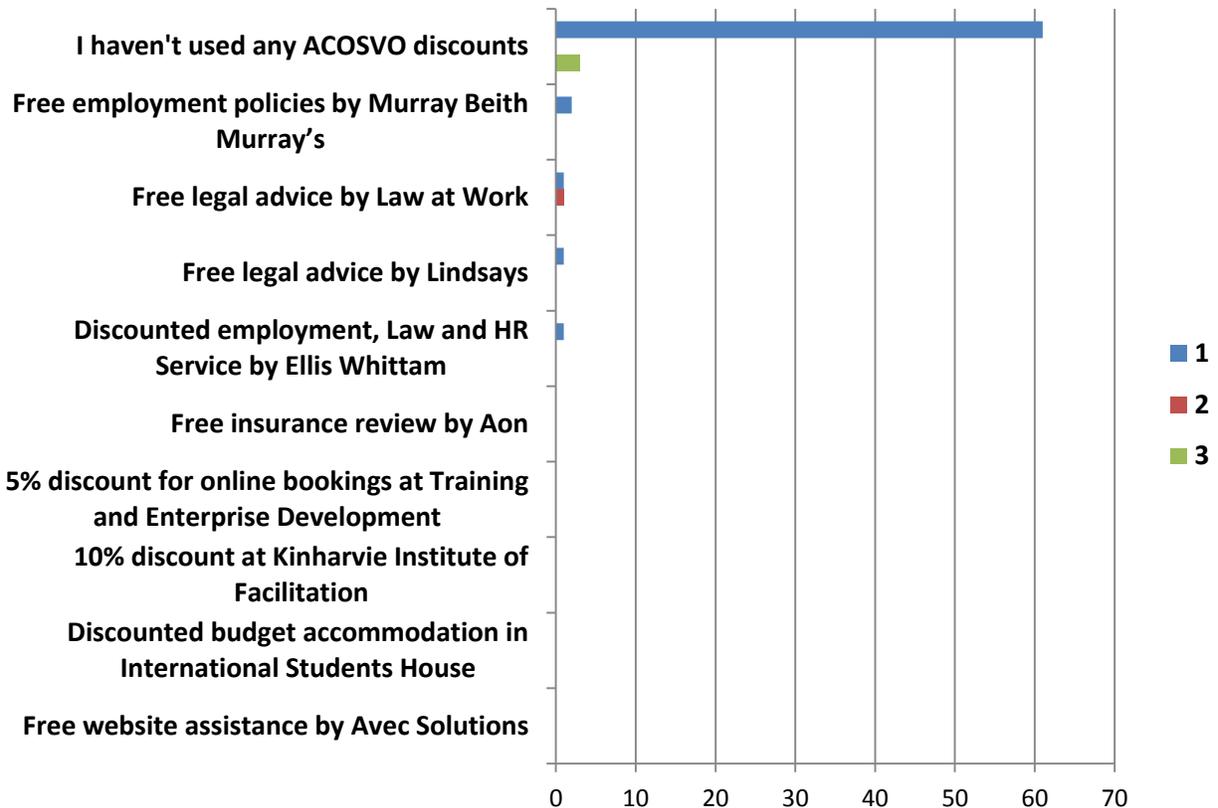
Haven't used yet!

Only recently joined

Oops, I didn't know about any of these!

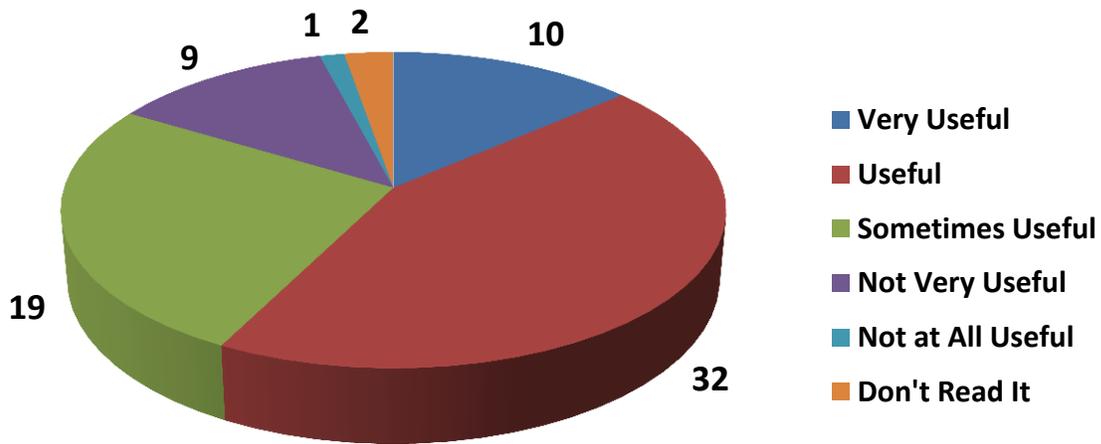
Perhaps it isn't quite clear enough how accessible these benefits are to members but I could have made better use of the benefits I suppose

Didn't know about them



Graph 13

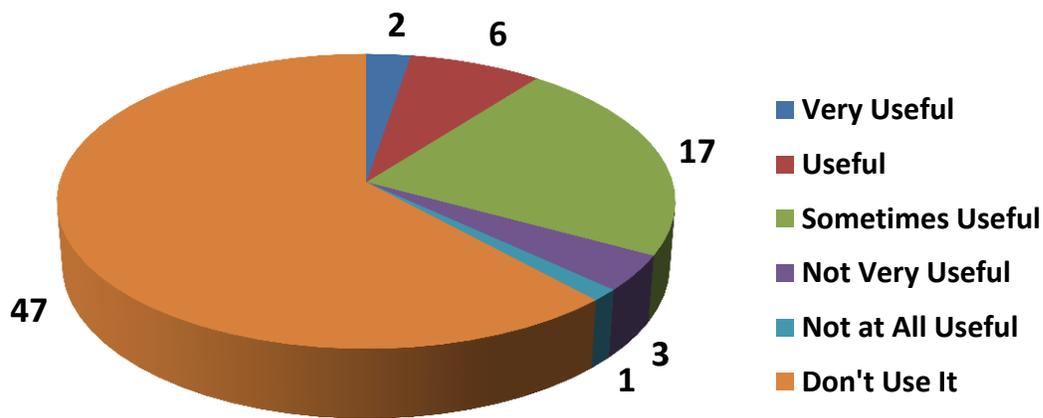
Next we asked members how useful they would describe the ACOSVO Monthly Email Newsletter. Ten respondents (14%) described the newsletter as **Very Useful**, 32 (44%) described it as **Useful**, 19 described it as **Sometimes Useful**, 9 described it as **Not Very Useful**, 1 described it as **Not at All Useful**, and 2 selected **Don't Read It** (*Graph 14*).



Graph 14

We also asked members to describe how useful they thought the LinkedIn online support network to be. Referring to LinkedIn, the majority of respondents said that they **Don't Use It** (47). Seventeen respondents said they found it to be **Sometimes Useful**, and 6 said they found it to be **Useful** (Graph 15).

Respondents were given the opportunity to leave comments on this question. Upon evaluating these comments, the three most common reasons for not using LinkedIn were *unaware of it* (8 mentions), *no time to explore it* (7 mentions), and *use other online networks* (3 mentions).



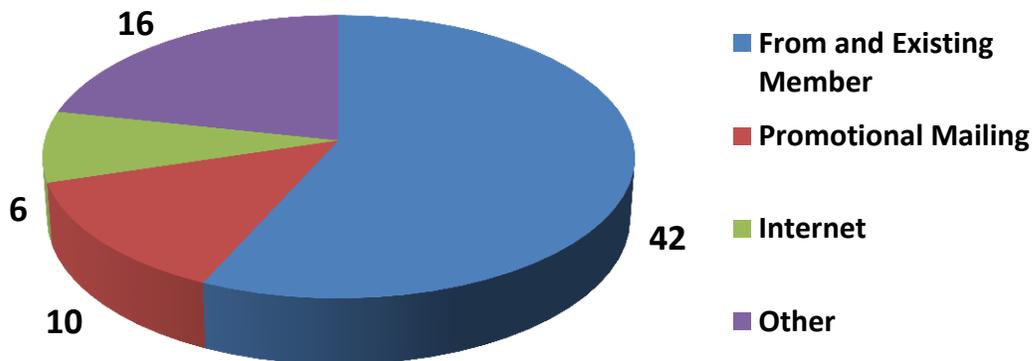
Graph 15

The Value of Your ACOSVO Membership

The purpose of this section of the survey was to learn a bit more about how our members found ACOSVO and what prompted them to join. Also, after they 'd had a chance to reflect on everything an ACOSVO membership offers, we wanted to gauge their overall impression of how valuable their membership is to their work as a Third Sector leader.

First we asked how each respondent learned about ACOSVO's existence. A majority of respondents (42) learned of ACOSVO **From an Existing Member**, 10 learned of ACOSVO through a **Promotional Mailer**, 6 learned of ACOSVO through the **Internet**, and 16 learned of ACOSVO through **Other** sources (*Graph 16*).

Respondents were given the opportunity to leave comments on this question. Upon evaluating these comments, the two most common **Other** sources were *via another Third Sector organisation* and *via another Third Sector leader*.



Graph 16

We then asked members what prompted them to join ACOSVO. A significant majority of responses indicated **Networking Opportunities, Personal Development Opportunities, and Peer Support** as the services which prompted members to join (*Graph 18*).

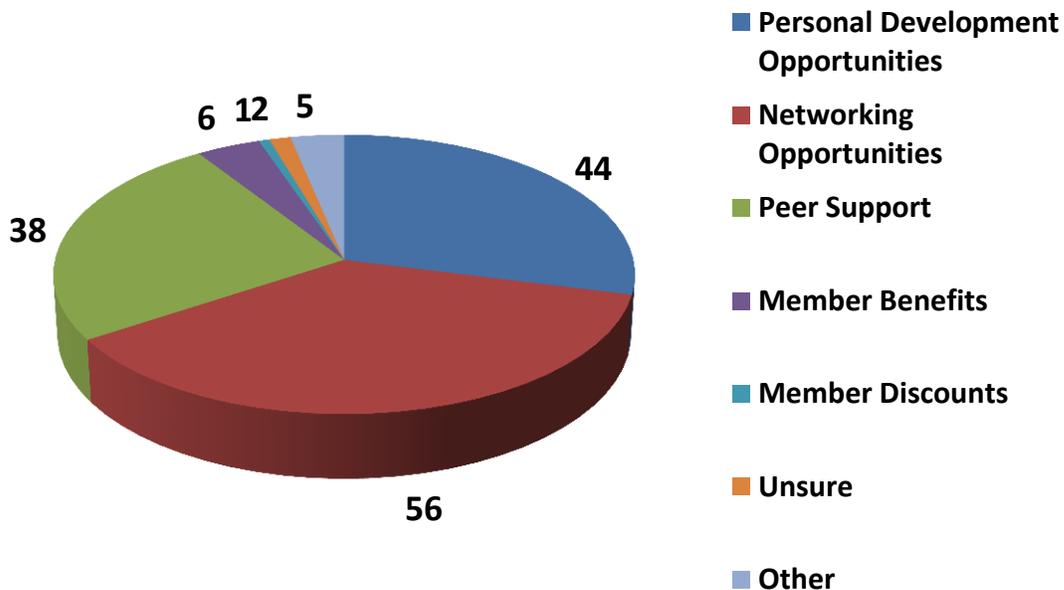
Respondents were given an opportunity to leave comments on this question. Listed below are some comments made by respondents about what prompted them to join ACOSVO:

The membership was about me as an individual rather than the organisation I work for

Training

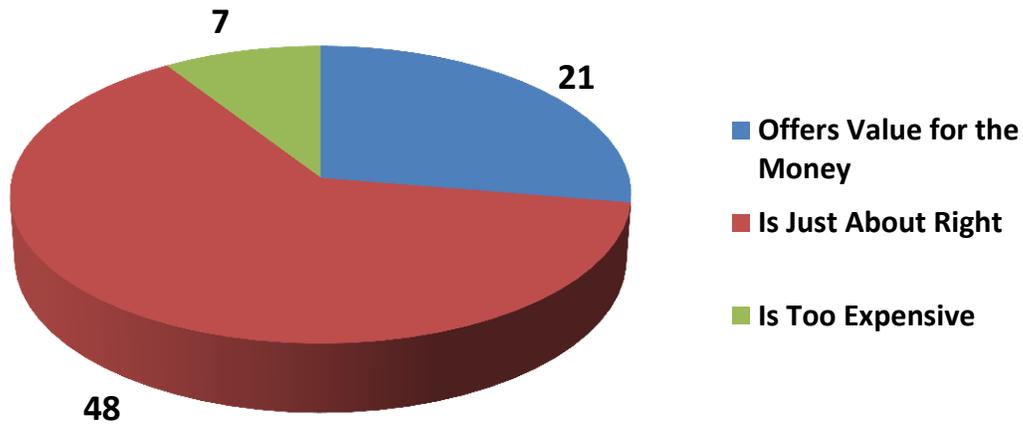
That we're better off having a collective voice

Organisation already a member



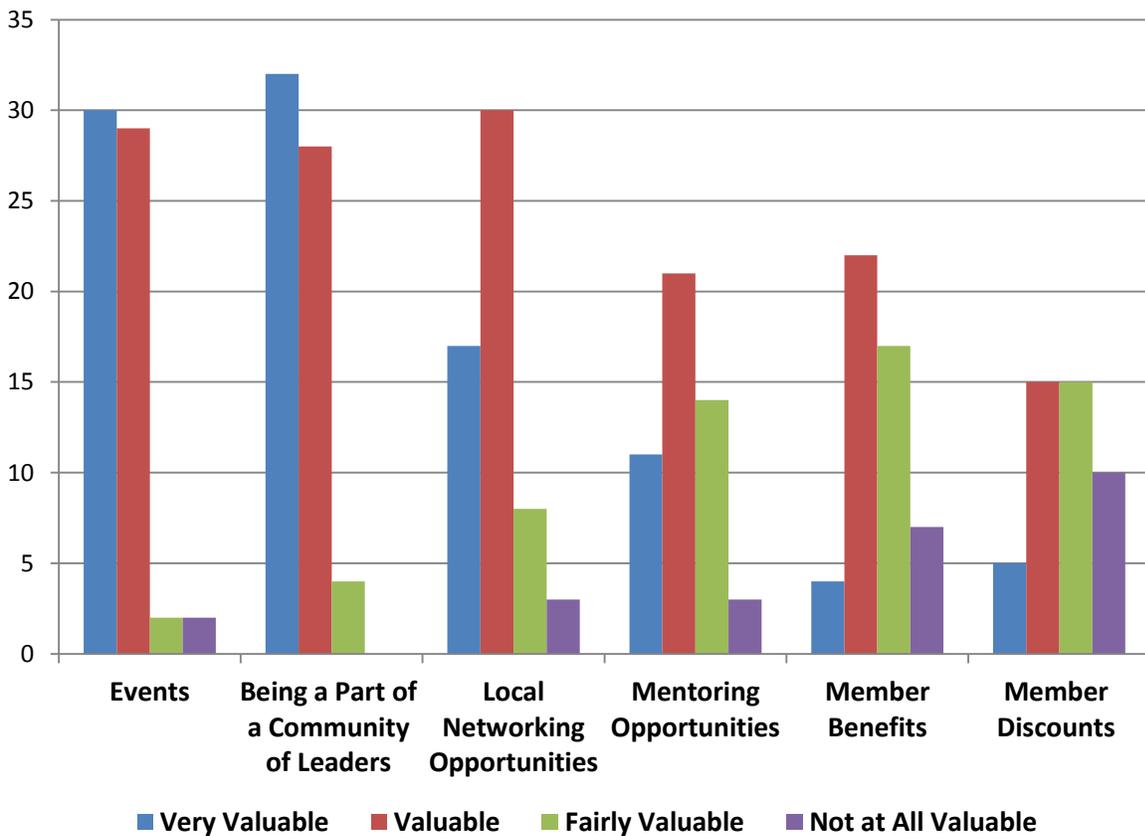
Graph 18

We wanted to gauge how members felt about the monetary cost of membership. A majority of respondents (48) felt that the ACOSVO membership fee is **Just About Right**, while 21 felt that the membership fee **Offers Value for the Money**, and 7 felt that the membership fee is **Too Expensive** (*Graph 19*).



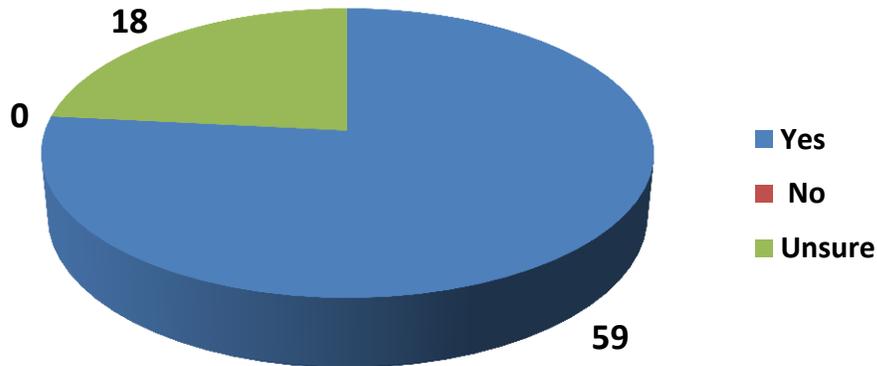
Graph 19

Having given members a chance to reflect on all the services and features of ACOSVO, we wanted to ask in an overall sense which feature was most valuable to them. Members selected **Events** and **Being a Part of a Community of Leaders** as the two most valuable features of ACOSVO, with a respective 30 and 32 responses as **Very Valuable**. Other strong indications of value were 30 responses going to **Local Networking Opportunities** as **Valuable** (17 as **Very Valuable**), and **Mentoring Opportunities** and **Member Benefits** marked as **Valuable** by 21 and 20 members respectively (*Graph 20*).



Graph 20

We asked members if they would recommend ACOSVO membership to their friends or colleagues. Zero respondents said they wouldn't recommend ACOSVO, while 59 (77%) said **Yes**, they would recommend ACOSVO, and 18 (23%) said that they were **Unsure** (Graph 21).



Graph 21

We also asked members if they believed the Third Sector needs an organisation such as ACOSVO to support its leaders. Almost all respondents (72, 94%) answered **Yes**, with 5 respondents (6%) answering **Unsure/Don't Know**, and zero respondents answering **No**.

Lastly, we gave members the opportunity to make any further comments or suggestions for improvement about ACOSVO and its services. Overall responses were very positive. The following is a representative sample of responses.

I think that leaders are by the nature of their jobs very isolated and it is this element that I would enjoy more support with in a non-threatening environment where I can learn from either more experienced leaders or leaders who have faced particular challenges and won!

Although I haven't been able to use ACOSVO facilities since I recently joined, I believe you offer a great service to the sector and will be encouraging my staff to join as associate members.

I have used some services in the past and found them useful. Overall I would say that it is probably useful to have an organisation which can offer peer support to Senior Officers.

Geographical location is a major hindrance to participating in events.

I think the very existence of ACOSVO is helpful. Whilst I may be very remotely connected it is useful to have such a vehicle in place and operational - I/we may need it at some point in the future in ways we cannot conceive of.

Keep up the good work in what are challenging times and thanks for the opportunity to feedback.

I feel that membership of ACOSVO does help to generate a sense of "feeling supported" in very challenging circumstances at times and it provides almost a "rubber stamp" of recognition from peers as a fellow leader experiencing many similar challenges. However, I feel that membership does not quite make enough of a difference to costs levied for events in comparison to non-members.

If membership can be reduced I may re-new. However I don't have the time unfortunately (or the budget) to partake in the variety of events etc on offer. I don't doubt you are a good org, however I feel it's more for larger orgs.

I have been very impressed with ACOSVO in my limited contacts over the past year, particularly by the range of services/events such a small organisation is able to sustain.

I appreciate most of what ACOSVO offers and would like to embrace more opportunities but time restricts my involvement and finances are limited.

Next Steps

This survey was designed in such a manner as to encourage each respondent to reflect on their ACOSVO membership as well as their unique needs in relation to ACOSVO services. While almost all the questions in this survey yielded useful and interesting data, a few specific aspects of the results have been especially revealing and will prove to be particularly important in our effort to revise our service delivery and meet the shifting needs of our members. The following is a short list of how these specific aspects of the survey data will impact our service delivery to ACOSVO members:

- In terms of ACOSVO events, as with last year Peer Learning was the most preferred learning style among members, though this year members have a markedly increased preference to learn through the use of Case Studies and Action Learning. Also, members are more interested in learning about Strategic Planning than in previous years. In light of this, over the course of the next year we hope to provide more event content related to Strategic Planning, and more use of Case Studies and Action Learning techniques.
- With the exception of the ACOSVO Programme of Events and our Annual Conference, members made it clear that ACOSVO benefits and discounts are largely underused. Therefore, one of ACOSVO's goals over the next year will be to regularly and directly inform members of the benefits and discounts available to them so they are continually informed of able to take full advantage of the features of their ACOSVO membership. We will also determine how best to develop new benefits and discounts which members may find more useful.
- Our LinkedIn online networking service also proved to be largely underused. However, other data indicates that Networking Opportunities is a priority for many ACOSVO members. In light of this, another goal for ACOSVO will be to further develop the LinkedIn online network as an effective and responsive networking tool, which will partly include informing members of its availability and encouraging them of its potential as an efficient and helpful resource.

While an important function of this survey was to enable us to more effectively serve our members, we also wanted to learn what ACOSVO is doing especially well. The following are some aspects of the data which confirm what ACOSVO has done especially well in past year:

- When we asked members whether or not ACOSVO events met their needs and expectations, all respondents that attended ACOSVO's events marked either "fully met" or "partially met."
- When it comes to the cost of membership, 62% of respondents said that the ACOSVO membership fee is "just about right," and 27% of respondents said that the fee "offers value for the money."
- Regarding the Monthly Email Newsletter, 83% of respondents found it to be Very Useful, Useful, or Sometimes Useful.
- To get an overall view of how members value ACOSVO, 77% of respondents said they would recommend ACOSVO membership to their friends or colleagues, and 94% of respondents said that the Third Sector in Scotland needs and organization like ACOSVO.

