

# Evaluation of the Local Film Festival Fund

A Report for Regional Screen Scotland



*Social Research*

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*Service Design & Innovation*

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*Strategy & Collaboration*

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*Evaluation Support*

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*Social Impact Measurement*

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May 2017



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# 1: Introduction

This report describes the impact of the Local Film Festival Fund on the supported organisations and the communities they are operating in.

## Regional Screen Scotland

Regional Screen Scotland (RSS) aims to help communities to enjoy great screen experiences.

To achieve this aim RSS:

- provides advice and information on setting up local screen facilities;
- operates the Screen Machine mobile cinema;
- manages grant funding for Local Film Festivals across Scotland; and
- advocates for the social and economic benefits of cinema for local communities.

RSS works with individuals and organisations in communities with no or limited access to screening possibilities to start or develop a local cinema.

RSS works together with a range of partners, including Film Hub Scotland, UK Cinema Association, Cinema for All and Film Mobile Scotland.

## The Local Film Festival Fund

In 2013 RSS was successful in accessing three-year funding to set up the Local Film Festival Fund (LFFF), which became operational at the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2014 and runs till the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2017.

The LFFF's aims were to:

- design and manage a Development Programme for five festivals;
- manage an Open Access Fund dispersing £20k grant funding annually with applications for a maximum of £3k.

The LFFF was funded by Creative Scotland (£262,500), with match funding by Film Hub Scotland (£48,000).

The main objectives of the Fund are audience development, increased programme diversity and an improved cinema infrastructure.

The LFFF consists of two distinct elements: the Development Programme (DP) and the Open Access Fund (OA).

The Development Programme supported five festivals with three-year grants of up to £37,500:

- Screenplay (Shetland)
- Dunoon Film Festival
- Hebrides International Film Festival
- Cromarty Film Festival
- South West Picture Show

The Open Access Fund awarded 22 grants of up to £3,000 to be spent in one year to 16 separate festivals.

## Study Objectives

RSS commissioned Social Value Lab to undertake an evaluation of the Fund (April 2014 - March 2017).

The main objectives of the evaluation were:

- To assess whether the Fund has achieved its stated goals;
- To evidence the impact of the fund on audience development, programme diversity and cinema infrastructure development; and
- To suggest further improvements for future funding programmes.

## Study Method

The study was carried out by Social Value Lab between December 2016 and March 2017. It was based on a mixed research design that involved a number of main stages:

- Desk-based review of application forms and quantitative monitoring data and the end of project evaluation forms.
- Desk-based review of strategic policy context.
- A survey completed by all five Development Programme festivals and ten Open Access Fund festivals.
- Semi-structured interviews with representatives of all five Development Programme festivals and three Open Access Fund festivals.
- Attendance at the Development Programme event on 28<sup>th</sup> February.
- Semi-structured telephone interviews with four key stakeholders.

In the report we have included quotes taken from the survey responses from Development Programme and Open Access festivals. We have ensured quotes from all five DP festivals and the ten OA festivals that responded have been used equally throughout the document.

The findings of the evaluation are set out in the following pages.

## 2: Strategic Context

This Section details the frameworks and policy documents in which the Local Film Festival Fund operates.

There are a number of policy and strategy documents that guide the development of film festivals and that set the context for the LFFF.

### Scottish Government Cultural Strategy

In 2016 the Scottish Government announced the development of a National Cultural Strategy which will be based on the principles of access, equality and excellence<sup>1</sup>.

The four key Scottish Government aims include “to improve meaningful access to culture and the arts for all of Scotland's people so that more people enjoy more forms of culture more regularly than at present.”

The Scottish Government's website<sup>2</sup> states as two of its four main aims to:

- focus on the contribution that culture can make to improving the health, wellbeing, confidence and quality of life for our communities
- raise the profile of Scotland at home and abroad, and ensure that as many people as possible in Scotland and overseas are able to benefit from, be inspired by and enjoy the very best of Scotland's creative, cultural and historic wealth

It is clear that a film fund that brings film to Scotland's remote communities without mainstream cinema provision fits well with the strategic aims of the Scottish Government.

### Creative Scotland: On Screen

On Screen is Creative Scotland's strategic document on the development of film in Scotland for the period 2014-17<sup>3</sup>.

Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits. It distributes funding from the Scottish Government and The National Lottery.

The main aim of the strategy is to: “generate the conditions necessary to position the film sector at the heart of Scotland's economic and cultural life.”

The ‘Distribution, Exhibition and Audiences’ strand of the strategy includes to:

- broaden cinema access and programming in Scotland for as wide and diverse an audience as possible and to encourage and deepen audience engagement with film.
- work with the key film festivals and cultural cinemas across Scotland to provide more opportunities for broadening engagement with film and the moving image.

The LFFF has helped in achieving these objectives.

### Screen Sector Leadership Group<sup>4</sup>

In 2015 the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee of the Scottish Parliament published a report into the economic impact of the film, TV and video games industries, in which one of the key recommendations was the establishment of a

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<sup>1</sup> A Plan For Scotland: The Scottish Government's Programme For Scotland 2016-17, September 6, 2016, ISBN: 9781786524393

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/arts>

<sup>3</sup> On Screen, Film Strategy 2014-17, Creative Scotland, 2014

<sup>4</sup> Report to the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee, Final Report: January 2017, Screen Sector Leadership Group

leadership group to make recommendations on how the industry's needs could be better met.

In 2017 the group published a report which included a number of recommendations, including:

- Review the opportunities for enhancing cinema provision across Scotland.
- Establish a commissioning fund to support the development and promotion of live cinema and events, tours and local film festivals.

Although the Group mainly focussed on the development of the film industry, one of its key objectives for the next five years was: 'film exhibition reflects diversity of programming and distinct voices with growing audiences in a range of settings across all communities in Scotland.'

### **BFI 2022, Supporting UK Film**

BFI 2011 is the strategic plan of the British Film Institute (BFI) for the period 2017-22<sup>5</sup>. The BFI is the UK-wide organisation for the film industry in the UK.

The Plan states that 'We believe that everyone, everywhere in the UK, should have the opportunity to enjoy and learn from the richest and most diverse range of great British and international filmmaking, past, present and future.' The Plan mainly focuses on reaching the 16-30 age group.

The BFI aims to ensure 'that a diversity of film culture is readily available to audiences across the UK, both in venues and on demand.'

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<sup>5</sup> BFI 2022, Supporting UK Film, BFI Plan 2017-2022

# 3: Local Film Festival Fund

This Section describes the Local Film Festival Fund and its activities.

## The Festivals

The LFFF supported five organisations for a three-year period under the Development Fund and 16 organisations with 22 festivals under the Open Access Fund.

The Development Fund festivals were:

**Cromarty Film Festival** – a festival run by Cromarty and Resolis Film Society at various venues accompanied by workshops, Q&A sessions specialising in the choices and presence of individual film makers.

**Dunoon Film Festival** – run by the Dunoon Burgh Hall Trust to organise screenings with an inter-generational and / or local theme in a range of venues across the town in the period that the Burgh Hall was closed for refurbishment.

**Hebrides International Film Festival** – Rural Nations Scotland CIC organised high quality contemporary screenings of films from across the world on the themes of environment and islands, across the Isles of Lewis, Harris, North Uist, South Uist and Barra.

**Screenplay** – a festival consisting of a programme of films for all ages, around various themes with a Nordic slant, accompanied by Q&A, and workshops run by Shetland Arts Development Agency (SADA), based in Mareel, Shetland.

**South West Picture Show** – South West Picture Show co-ordinated a festival of venue and thematic collaborations across Dumfries and Galloway.

The Development Fund festivals used the funding for programming costs including licensing fees, employing staff (part-time and sessional), venue rental, equipment, travel and accommodation for guests and publicity.

The 16 festivals supported under the Open Access Fund are reported in table 3.1:

TABLE 3.1: OPEN ACCESS FESTIVALS

Organisation	Festival
Africa in Motion	Africa in Motion Film Festival (outreach programme)
Callander Film Society	Callander Film Festival
Comrie Cinema Club	Comrie Film Festival
Drimnin Hall	Drimnin Sheep Film Festival
Eastgate Theatre and Arts Centre	Peebles Outdoor Film Festival
Fife Cultural Trust	Kirkcaldy Film Festival
Heartland Film Society	Aberfeldy Film Festival
Ickle Film Fest Limited	Ickle Film Festival (Dundee)
North Glasgow Community Food Initiative	From Milton to the World
North Highland College	SKALD, The Caithness Creative Festival
Rob Roy Films	Scottish Paranormal Festival (Stirling)
Scottish Youth Film Festival (Armadale)	Scottish Youth Film Festival
Seaboard Film Society (Tain, Highland)	Fling
Southside Film	Southside Film Festival
Take One Action Film Festivals	Take One Action Film Festival (outreach programme)
Tower Digital Arts centre (Helensburgh)	Deborah Kerr Season

The Open Access festivals used the funding for venue hire, marketing, travel and transport and programming costs.

## The Audiences

In total the festivals funded by the LFFF attracted an audience of 34,360 people, 24,731 in the Development Programme and 9,629 in the Open Access Fund. The festival attendance is detailed in Table 3.2.

**TABLE 3.2: FILM FESTIVAL ATTENDANCE**

Development Programme	Audience
Cromarty Film Festival	2,853
Dunoon Film Festival	3,992
Hebrides International Film Festival	2,947
Screenplay	12,254
South West Picture Show	2,685
<b>Total Development Programme</b>	<b>24,731</b>
<b>Open Access</b>	
Africa in Motion Film Festival (2 festivals)	580
Callander Film Festival (2 festivals)	208
Comrie Film Festival (2 festivals)	882
Drimnin Sheep Film Festival	42
Peebles Outdoor Film Festival (2 festivals)	1,416
Kirkcaldy Film Festival	1,126
Aberfeldy Film Festival 2016	528
Ickle Film Festival	260
From Milton to the World	40
SKALD, The Caithness Creative Festival	69
Scottish Paranormal Festival	299
Scottish Youth Film Festival	1,127
Seaboard Fling! (2 festivals)	658
Southside Film Festival	1,322
Take One Action Film Festival	1,072
Deborah Kerr Season <sup>6</sup>	---
<b>Total Open Access</b>	<b>9,629</b>
<b>Total LFFF</b>	<b>34,360</b>

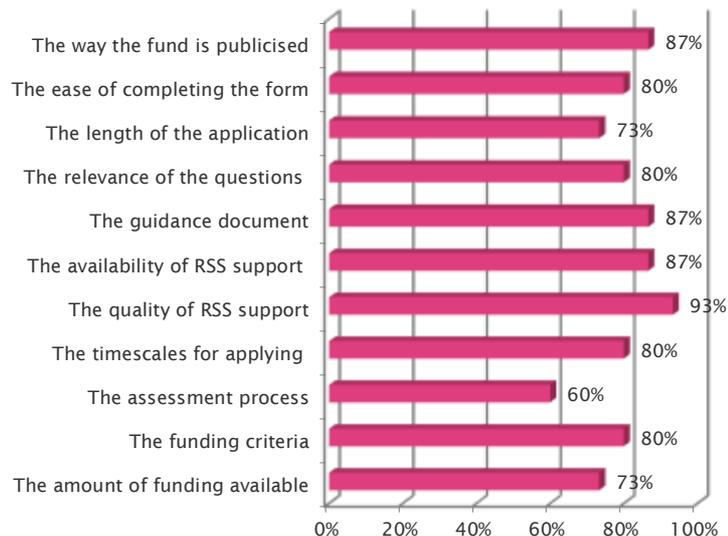
### The Application Process

The vast majority of survey respondents (93%) reported a high satisfaction (very good or good) with the application process, the makeup of the Fund and the role and support from Regional Screen Scotland.



The satisfaction with the distinct elements of the Fund are shown in Figure 3.1

**Figure 3.1: Satisfaction with the application process**



*“It was comprehensive without being overly bureaucratic. All the information requested was reasonable and pertinent.”*

*“The timescales for applying and receiving funds did not match the timing of our festival so we had to build them into our plans, a bit more flexibility would help. That said we were pleased to get our funding, so evidently it worked!”*

*“We got all the help we needed and in a personal way. When we called up we weren’t a number and a project. We were known and our situation was known to the people we were speaking to. It makes so much difference.”*

### Fund Management

The management cost for the fund was £5,000 per year, £15,000 in total, which equates to 4.8% of the total cost for the LFFF. This compares favourably to most other grant funds. For example, Foundation Scotland’s operational ratio for the past three years varies from 9.7% to 20.4%.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> For this project no reports have been submitted.

<sup>7</sup> Foundation Scotland, Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements, 31 March 2016.

When asked the festivals reported a high satisfaction rate with the way RSS support the festivals, communicate with them and the monitoring and evaluation requirements. This is shown in Table 3.3.

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**TABLE 3.3: SATISFACTION WITH FUND MANAGEMENT**

	<b>Good / Very Good</b>
Support from RSS	93%
Communication of RSS	93%
Ease of complying with monitoring and evaluation requirements	80%
Ease of completing the RSS Evaluation Report	80%
Ease of completing the British Film Institute (BFI) Quantitative Report	53%
Ease of completing the Film Audience Network (FAN) Survey	40%

The end of project evaluation form that festivals need to complete was reported as easy to use. However, the additional monitoring requirements, the Quantitative Report for the British Film Institute and the Audience Survey, were harder to complete.

When asked about barriers to applying to the LFFF, the Development Programme festivals did not mention any and just two Open Access festivals mentioned that they felt they had to put in more effort than expected.

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*“Because we were a little different I think it took a lot for the fund to pitch in for us. We are glad that they did.”*

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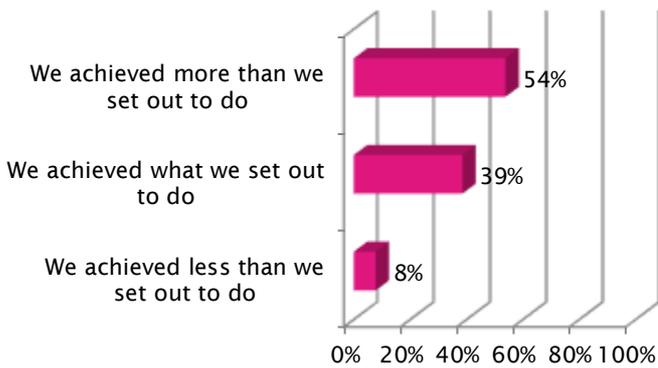
# 4: Impact of the Local Film Festival Fund

This Section explores the impact that the Fund has made on the festival organisations, their audiences and communities.

## Exceeding Expectations

Figure 4.1 shows how the festivals rated whether they have achieved what they set out to do.

Figure 4.1: Achievement of objectives



More than half of the festivals (54%) reported that they have exceeded their initial objectives and only a small minority (8%) said that they have achieved less than expected.

*"We met all our goals for audience growth, Committee development and improving our processes but have not secured any sponsorship which had been another goal."*

The Development Programme Festivals said that in particular the security of three-year funding has helped them to exceed their expectations.

*"Having three years security has meant that we could plan, be creative and deliver. Each year our audience and our confidence has grown."*

Five of the Open Access festivals (56%) reported that they have exceeded their expectations, in particular on the number of people that attended.

*"Turnout to the festival was higher than expected with most screenings sold out or close to sold out. We had a very wide and diverse audience who accessed a very diverse range of films and events."*

*"We were pleased with the level of engagement we achieved at the screenings but had hoped to reach a wider public. The learning from these two events has fed into our planning for subsequent festivals."*

*"The children and young people's film competition was more successful than we anticipated both in terms of entrants and of audience attendances. We got more diverse audiences than usual."*

*"This model is now going to be taken on and adapted and improved so that it can be done in a bigger and better fashion across the country. That's how successful it was".*

## Developing Audiences

### Development Programme

Most DP festivals reported to have reached new audiences and increased their public profile.

#### DEVELOPING AUDIENCES

We have reached new audiences that we did not reach before	80%
More people know we exist now	80%
We have developed a reputation in our community	80%

Due to the multi-annual funding the festivals were able to attract audiences from a wider community, introduce cinema to new groups (e.g. elderly people, young people) and make connections with other organisations to introduce their programme (e.g. Secondary Schools).

The DP festivals, again because of the security of multi-annual funding, were able to increase the number of people attending their festival.

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*“The grant gave us the security to plan for 3 years of Festivals which meant we were able to programme much earlier in the year allowing us to market more effectively. By the end of our 3 years we were at capacity in most of our events.”*

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*“Security of funding has allowed us to be more effective and this in turn created a bigger demand from our audience.”*

The continuity of funding also helped festivals to establish their name, which in turn helped to attract more and more people to the screenings.

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*“Being able to consistently offer the festival annually over the three years has helped raise awareness and although attending films in rural venues is a relatively new thing for the rural audiences the audiences are growing.”*

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*“The content and theme of the programming is progressive. We are supporting recent environmental films and indigenous people / small island issues which makes it interesting and relevant for the audiences.”*

Organisations also said that not having to worry about fundraising gave them more time to develop their festival and focus their attention at attracting new audiences.

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*“The answer to this lies in the grace time it gave us not worrying about and spending all our time fundraising. Audience development takes time - that's what the funding gave us.”*

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*“Without the LFFF grant we would not have been able to establish ourselves as a key event in the local calendar.”*

## Open Access

The OA festivals have also used the funding to reach new audiences and raise their profile.

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### DEVELOPING AUDIENCES

We have reached new audiences that we did not reach before	100%
More people know we exist now	89%
We have developed a reputation in our community	86%

The OA grants have allowed festivals to think about and try out engaging with new audiences and bring cultural events to new places.

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*“It has helped us to introduce a wider range of films to local audiences with dedicated marketing around a festival format.”*

*“Yes, the grant has enabled us to develop audiences in the areas outside of our cultural city centres - Glasgow and Edinburgh.”*

*“The funding helped us expand our reach into new venues in new areas such as Toryglen and Gorbals to reach new audiences as a result. Without the funding we would not have been able to expand in this way.”*

*“The grant also allowed us to increase our audience development with special events and workshops.”*

*“We were able to attract younger people and families who don't usually attend our festivals. We now have a profile in more remote rural areas.”*

The LFFF grants have also been used to increase and improve marketing and publicity, which have led to reaching wider audiences.

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*“We were also able to produce better quality and quantity marketing materials to increase our audience reach.”*

*“We have raised awareness of our film society in the local and surrounding communities.”*

*“The two day festival meant that people who would not normally come to our films*

*or who had not heard of us, now access our pop up cinema.”*

## Diverse and Daring Programming

### Development Programme

The DP support has enabled festivals to develop and diversify their programming.

#### PROGRAMMING

The grant showed people in our community films they would otherwise not have seen	100%
We deliver a high quality festival	80%
We deliver a unique cinema experience for our local area	100%
We have tested a new market and can develop that now	60%

The DP grants have encouraged festivals to take more risk in their programming. Some festivals said that the grant allowed them to show other films than ‘blockbusters’ or enabled them to develop theme nights on less commercial themes (e.g. Amnesty International, short films). This helped to familiarise their audiences with new and alternative films and installed trust in the organisation’s programming.

*“The festival has got bigger, each year so we have showed more diverse films. The success of the film festival rubs off on our film society with more people coming as they trust our programming judgement.”*

*“The finance enabled us to be brave and think about programming world film, to seek it out and present the best quality and most current environmental cinema we could find.”*

*“[The grant] covers the cost of the screenings to enable us to take a risk.”*

*“We always had ideas about further diversification; we just needed the time and the security to do it.”*

*“With support for our film festival over three years we have been able to establish a programme that includes international and foreign language film; experimental work; short films and documentaries. We have also introduced children and young people to international film; animation and*

*film making skills and supported them to organise film events.”*

### Open Access

The OA funding has also led to festivals being able to develop and diversify their programming.

#### PROGRAMMING

The grant showed people in our community films they would otherwise not have seen	100%
We deliver a high quality festival	67%
We deliver a unique cinema experience for our local area	89%
We have tested a new market and can develop that now	78%

The OA grant also enabled festivals to show a more diverse programme of films, because (part of) the cost for the screening was covered by the grant.

*“It meant we didn't have to focus on 'bums on seats' we could take more risks with the content.”*

*“We were able to take more risks with programming as we didn't have to worry so much about making money back with 'safe' film titles.”*

The OA grant has given festivals the means and confidence to take alternative films to new audiences.

*“One of the main aims ... was to expose new audiences to African film in order for them to gain an informed and nuanced understanding of the African continent. By screening 6 films across the two regions we were able to challenge stereotypical perceptions of the continent through a programme that celebrates the richness, diversity and multiplicity of African cultures, histories and traditions.”*

*“The grant enabled us to hire more tech equipment for larger previously too expensive venues and to put on screenings there helped increase the diversity of our film programme and our audience. It also enabled us to put on more free events than we normally could afford.”*

*“This has slotted in nicely and there would never have been an audience watching*

*short films in Armadale without the festival and the grant."*

## Local Cinema Infrastructure

### Development Programme

The DP funding has helped festivals to develop the local cinema infrastructure by enabling them to earn more from ticket sales and involving more people to the organisation.

#### LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The grant enhanced the cultural infrastructure in our local area	80%
We have accessed new funding streams	20%
We have attracted new people to our organisation	80%
We have increased ticket sales	100%
We now have the facilities and/or equipment to run a festival in the future	20%

The DP festivals have organised screenings in communities that are remote from mainstream cinema. Some festivals reported the use of new venues that they have never used before. This has helped to build a cinema structure in these remote communities.

*"We put on film screenings in a range of venues across the region, and in a sense the whole festival was a driver to develop the local cinema infrastructure."*

*"The funding helped us engage more with rural island venues and other film interested partners. Film mobile worked on delivering the projection in different venues over the two years and local people could attend high quality presentations, this gave an idea of what was possible."*

*"Some were new venues so the training, advice and support showing new venues how to do this has helped quite significantly to develop the local cinema infrastructure."*

*"Other existing film clubs, cinemas, etc., were helped as they were able to take more of a risk in their programming, put more resource into the screening, benefited from increased exposure and retained all box office income"*

Some organisations used the funded festival to increase the audience for their regular activities (e.g. community cinema, pop-up cinema, film club), making them more sustainable.

*"Our LFFF grant allowed us to develop joint work with our local independent cinema, introducing new local audiences and visitors to their general programme and adding monthly Cinema Club bookings in to their facility."*

*"Our cinema feeds off the festival."*

*"The Festival draws in a much more diverse audience as it is seen as a big event in the local community calendar. This in turn has increased the attendance at our monthly screenings so we are now able to offer regular films to an area without a cinema."*

Some local cinema organisations are driven by the efforts and enthusiastic efforts of just one individual. The organisation of a festival over more than one year has helped with attracting more people and has strengthened the capacity and skills of the organisation.

### Open Access

The OA grants have enabled festivals to attract more money and people and helped to acquire new equipment and facilities.

#### LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The grant enhanced the cultural infrastructure in our local area	88%
We have accessed new funding streams	56%
We have attracted new people to our organisation	88%
We have increased ticket sales	44%
We now have the facilities and/or equipment to run a festival in the future	33%

The OA grants have helped local organisations establish their presence in the area, which in turn has led to further activity.

*"Both regions do not have full-time working cinemas screening independent films, and do not receive much artistic or festival attention ... through these festivals we wanted to bring African cinema to ... areas"*

*we had never screened in previously, giving them the opportunity to engage with non-mainstream cinema.”*

*“We are the only film festival/exhibitor in the Southside of Glasgow so support from the fund really cemented our presence in the area and again highlighted the lack of a local cinema/permanent cinema infrastructure.”*

The grant was also used to buy equipment that otherwise would not have been bought.

*“Without the LFFF grant the charity behind the festival would not have felt confident enough to invest in a screen and projector and facilities to show films locally. These are now in place.”*

## Increasing Skills

### Development Programme

The DP funding has helped some festivals to increase the skills available in their organisations and for most enhanced their capacity.

#### SKILLS

The grant helped us to develop new skills in the organisation	40%
The grant increased capacity to deliver festivals in the future	80%

The DP festivals have learned from running their festival in consecutive years, gaining more skills each year. For some DP festivals developing essential skills was one of the main objectives.

*“We were able to spend time mentoring individuals in aspects of festival management, and afford to get them to the mainland for development events such as the EIFF and Discovery Young People's Film Festival”.*

*“The LFFF grant allowed us to work alongside our freelance festival producers over three years, developing our understanding of the workings of film distribution and event cinema. Key volunteers gained new skills and are now more confident in programming.”*

*“One of our primary aims with the grant was to develop a handbook for our committee so that we could improve the consistency of our management and facilitate skills transfer and succession planning.”*

*“We have all got better at the skills needed to run the Festival. We have a diverse committee all of us having our own strengths and weaknesses. We share skills and pick up new ones as we go along.”*

The DP grants have also helped to instil essential skills in other voluntary organisations they worked with.

*“Local venue promoters were able to develop skills in promoting film in their region. Local film makers got involved as projectionists in different regions and developed their skills.”*

*“Skills were developed in community cinemas across the region”.*

### Open Access

The OA grants have supported the development of skills and capacity in most festivals.

#### SKILLS

The grant helped us to develop new skills in the organisation	78%
The grant increased capacity to deliver festivals in the future	75%

The OA festivals also learned from their experiences, which benefitted the organisations and the communities they are working in.

*“We did this by providing locals with the opportunity to not only experience the festival, but also offer opportunities to become involved in the curatorial process and the implementation of the festivals.”*

*“The grant helped us recruit new volunteers to the festival who in turned were trained up in all aspects of events management and film festival production including Front of House, Box Office, programming, licensing, press and online marketing.”*

*“Running the film festival is always a learning experience! Our IT and social media skills are better, and we are now more familiar with digital submissions for our film competitions.”*

*“The skills gained by the community groups provide a foundation to continue to put events on in their respective communities, as well as critical thinking*

*“The sense of community building around the event gave it a 'real' film festival feel with the reputation growing for delivering premieres, classic films and great guests.”*

*“The children and young people's film competition was more successful than we anticipated both in terms of entrants and of audience attendances. We got more diverse audiences than usual.”*

## Bringing the Community Together

### Development Programme

The DP funding has had a positive impact on the festival's communities, by bringing the community together around the screening and developing relationships with other organisations.

#### COMMUNITY COHESION

The grant helped us to bring the community together	80%
We have developed new relations with other organisations	100%
The grant helped us to develop community facilities	40%

For some festivals the grant has also an impact on community facilities

*“We were able to present films in Barra and Uist consistently and all the screenings happened in the four festival days which felt like the island venues were linked up and part of something bigger.”*

### Open Access

The one off OA festivals also contributed to bringing the community together.

#### COMMUNITY COHESION

The grant helped us to bring the community together	88%
We have developed new relations with other organisations	89%
The grant helped us to develop community facilities	50%
The grant helped making new equipment available for our community	25%

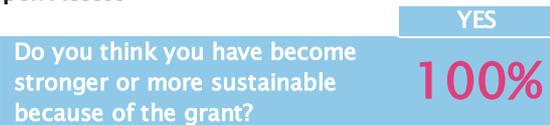
## Increasing Sustainability

The funding has increased the financial sustainability of both DP and OA festivals.

### Development Programme



### Open Access



The funding also had a rippling effect on the local cultural sector in the festival communities.

### Development Programme



### Open Access



## Stakeholder Perspectives

We interviewed four key stakeholders: representatives of Film Hub Scotland and Creative Scotland and a RSS Board member.

### Strategic Fit

Although the remit and strategic priorities of Regional Screen Scotland (RSS), Creative Scotland and Film Hub Scotland (FHS) have changed slightly

over the years, the LFFF seems to fit well with their strategic aims.

There seemed to be some overlap between the activities of RSS and FHS, as both want to diversify audiences, with more specialised and adventurous programming wherever possible. The specific rural focus of the LFFF fitted well with FHS's strategic priorities.

### Efficient and Effective Delivery

Overall, the Fund was delivered efficiently and effectively. However, interviewees said that they had a much better idea of the delivery of the DP than the OA.

The application process and delivery of the Fund was done well and RSS has provided appropriate level of support where required.

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*"The Fund was certainly adaptive and responsive to needs."*

*"Activities happened that would not have happened without the Fund."*

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There were some initial tensions between RSS and FHS about the recognition of FHS as a funder and the reporting structures. These were resolved eventually, but the resulting reporting structures were seen as confusing for the festivals.

Festivals needed to complete three sets of reports: the bespoke reporting designed by RSS and the quantitative data and audience survey required for the British Film Institute (funder of FHS). It was felt that gathering monitoring and evaluation data could be more co-ordinated and guidelines could be clearer.

### The Impact of the LFFF

The impact of the DP festivals was acknowledged. The confidence of the organisations has grown and they made progress towards audience development, programme diversity and local cinema infrastructure development.

However, it is also acknowledged that it is too early to tell the longer-term impact of the Fund.

Interviewees were less sure about the impact of the OA festivals. They knew little about them and it is unclear how much of an impact can be expected from a relatively small amount of funding.

Interviewees, however, acknowledged that both the DP and OA grants have enabled local cinema organisations to show more and different films in a greater variety of localities and venues than before. Also the gained skills and experience have an impact on the future of these organisations. Most importantly, it was hoped that the inspiration from delivering a festival in a place without regular screening sparks a fire.

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*"You roll the dice and take the risk."*

*"For the Open Access festivals it's more about establishing the need."*

*"Festivals have grown more high profile, more publicity. As for sustainability, I'm not so sure yet."*

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### Added Value

Interviewees found it difficult to assess the added value of the LFFF, because it is too early to oversee the longer-term impact of the Fund.

The skills development, networking and peer-to-peer learning were seen as very helpful. Also easily accessible funding for smaller scale festivals in rural locations really plugged a gap.

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*"For other funds you have to do quite a lot of work for not huge amounts of money."*

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### Value for Money

Interviewees generally agreed that the LFFF has delivered value for money.

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*"The amounts are quite small but appropriate."*

*"The ratio of funding and effort was good."*

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### Future Need for the LFFF

Creative Scotland and Film Hub Scotland usually fund more established organisations, so the LFFF filled a gap in funding opportunities as a necessary stepping stone for festivals to accessing mainstream grant funding (e.g. Creative Scotland, BIG Lottery).

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*"To go from zero to Creative Scotland is daunting so the LFFF is a good stepping stone."*

*"Festivals should grow at their own ratio and scale. It's about slowly trying to perfect what they're doing."*

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The LFFF was seen as valuable because it supports audience development in rural places, in particular with the current pressures on Local Authority budgets and mainstream funders.

There is still unmet need in the currently funded festivals, such as volunteer development and marketing.

Interviewees suggested some areas for further consideration:

- The Fund could be more publicised to attract more applicants.
- The monitoring and evaluation process could be more streamlined.
- Collaboration between the Fund and (funding) partners and Local Authorities could be developed.
- Succession planning in festival organisation should be addressed, in particular where festivals are driven by one individual.

## Final Reflections of Development Programme Festivals

At the end of February 2017, and with the funding period drawing to a close, RSS organised a final gathering of all five DP festivals to gather their views on and experiences with the Fund.

The knowledge sharing aspect of previous gatherings had been appreciated by DP festivals and the representatives were again given the chance to summarise their festivals: what they had achieved; the lessons learned; the impact on their communities; and future plans.

### Achievements

The festivals highlighted a number of achievements.

**Cromarty Film Festival** achieved most of their objectives. They now have a funded Co-ordinator

post and constituted the group as a SCIO. Succession planning was an issue as they realised the importance of others to carry the torch.

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*"It's a tremendous boon to the town."*

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**Dunoon Film Festival** is now strongly established in the community, a local cinema club has been set up and strong partnerships have been developed. The local cinema now sees them as an audience development partner. The group achieved their development goal of working with children and young people.

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*"Local schools are now asking us what we will be doing next year."*

*"We had a young person doing the programming for young people; they went to Shetland for training, film picking at Edinburgh and encouraged her peers to attend. We identified the best mix for our audience. Having three year funding meant we could gallop forward with the development side of things."*

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For **Hebrides International Film Festival**, audience numbers have increased over the last three years. They have created networks and expanded and diversified the programme offering with features, shorts, and documentaries. The group has used new venues and engaged with young people via schools and families.

**Screenplay (Shetland)** reported achieving the holy grail of 'trust' – trust from the audience in the curator.

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*"Previously if the audience didn't know the guest they wouldn't come, now they come whoever it is."*

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The purpose has been to offer diverse films and the best film professionals and to promote Scottish and UK films where possible. The festival attracted bigger audiences than ever before. There were 110 screenings along with workshops and events. The 'Look North' strand of Scandinavian films was particularly well received, as were the education screenings. Films by Shetlanders were also screened. It is a guest-led festival and more than twenty guests attended and took part in post-screening Q&As.

**South West Picture Show** developed a model to deliver screenings across the whole Dumfries and Galloway region. On the whole, attendee numbers have increased and the events involved community cinemas, pop ups, combined arts venues and the mixed arts.

### Lessons Learned

The Festivals reported a number of lessons learned:

The funding has enabled festivals to become more professional. For example, the use of freelance producers takes the weight off film distributor negotiations.

The security of three year funding has allowed some festivals to attract sponsorship from local businesses.

By having three years funding some festivals could experiment with programming (e.g. themed programmes) and the best time to organise their festival.

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*“Three year (guaranteed) money means you can concentrate on development or programming rather than continually writing funding applications.”*

*“The biggest single lesson learned was that outside experience adds value.”*

*“We got a lot of praise for the programming that builds on the islands themes. It’s been a huge learning curve over the three years.”*

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The continuity of funding has enabled some festivals to develop their audiences, particularly attracting a younger audience.

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*“Like many of the festivals we have older audiences but the young people are coming.”*

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The three year involvement allowed festivals to learn from each other.

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*“The fund allowed us to attend the Dundee Film Festival for Young Audiences due to RSS mentoring part of the Fund and we brought back lessons to Shetland.”*

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*“Networking opportunities have been really valuable, especially if you’re in a rural area because isolation is inevitable.”*

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### Community Impact

The festivals are now part of the local cultural calendar.

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*“It’s really good for the village and a real highlight of the year.”*

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There was also a local economic impact of the festivals, especially in remote communities.

The use of local venues by the festivals had a positive impact on the community and where there was a local cinema the festivals had a positive effect, rather than operating in direct competition.

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*“We’re a tiny town and all rooms and beds are used during the festival. In terms of sales, locals say it’s the best of the year.”*

*“People are not scared of international films anymore. It’s attracted lots of new people who continue to come and there’s no harm whatsoever to the local cinema.”*

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Finally, the increase of supply of films was seen as positive for the community.

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*“The community can now access mainstream films, arthouse films, documentaries, etc.”*

*“It encourages cinema ecology and a useful audience development tool.”*

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### Future Plans

All festivals planned to have another festival next year, though many were concerned about the funding landscape for future editions.

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*“If we can’t have cash in the future [from RSS], at least they could give us a reference relating to our value, impact and worthiness.”*

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Festivals planned to continue to develop a younger audience.

The development of the festival volunteers was another point of attention. Without new volunteers to organise and assist the festival, they could become unsustainable in the future.

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*“Succession planning is really the key to this – build the committee and the volunteer base then professionalise them.”*

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Festivals had a range of plans to develop their festivals in the future, including:

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- Developing a container cinema as a less expensive option to venue hire.

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  - Introducing new programmes and themes (e.g. animation; environmentalism).

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  - Switching to digital in the future.

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  - Pursuing corporate/partner sponsorship.

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*“More people showing more films in more areas is surely a good thing?”*

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# 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

This Section draws conclusions from the research and makes recommendations for future development.

## Conclusions

From this evaluation we can draw the following conclusions:

### Strategic Context

1. The LFFF fits with Scottish and UK strategic priorities, including Creative Scotland and Film Hub Scotland.

### Application Process and Delivery

2. Applicants were very satisfied with the application process, the fund management and the support and guidance provided by RSS.
3. The LFFF festivals attracted an audience of over 34,000.
4. Delivery through devolved funding is highly effective, with management costs of less than 5%.

### Impact of the Fund

5. The majority of applicants (54%) have exceeded their expectations; only 8% achieved less than they set out to do.
6. Both Development Fund and Open Access festivals have succeeded in **developing new audiences**.
7. The LFFF has enabled festivals to take risks in their offering and **diversify their programming**.
8. The LFFF has contributed to the **development of local cinema infrastructure** in remote communities without mainstream cinemas. Funding increased ticket sales, attracted new volunteers and developed new/refurbished existing venues.

9. The Development Programme festivals have had a positive impact on the regular activities of the funded organisations.
10. The LFFF has helped to build skills in the funded organisations, in particular with the Open Access festivals.
11. The funded festivals have contributed to more community cohesion.
12. The LFFF has had a positive impact on the festival's financial sustainability and some effect on the sustainability of the local cultural sector as a whole.
13. For the Development Fund festivals, the three year funding has accelerated their progression and development and significantly strengthened the outcomes achieved.

## Recommendations

From this evaluation the following recommendations for future development can be made:

1. There is still a need for a successor fund to the LFFF.
2. For Open Access festivals a successor fund is required to bridge the gap between starting up and accessing mainstream funding.
3. For Development Fund festivals a multi-annual funding package, delivered by an organisation that understands their needs and requirements, is essential for growth.
4. Reporting processes and guidance documents need to be aligned to the requirements of all funders/stakeholders to minimise the burden on the grant recipients.

5. Any future funding programme should review the potential structure and benefits of the Open Access festivals.

Find out more

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