INVESTING IN SOCIAL CAPITAL

A Strategic Partnership between

Voluntary Action Fund and Assist Social Capital

Voluntary Action Fund (VAF)

The Voluntary Action Fund (VAF) has been a leading independent grant making organisation since 1982. Over that period VAF has distributed more than £80 million to voluntary organisations and community groups in Scotland.

Our Mission is to release existing and potential resources within communities by investing money, increasing capacity and building relationships.

Through a range of grant programmes we provide resources to the third sector that enable local, regional and national organisations to tackle disadvantage, inequality and build strong, resilient communities.

An essential part of our work is investing “More than just money” through our grant programmes by providing development support and opportunities to build social capital. This approach has been developed over many years to build on the strengths of funded organisations, encourage shared learning and develop relationships and networks within the Third Sector and communities. VAF is recognised as a pioneer of this approach to grant making.

www.voluntaryactionfund.org.uk

Assist Social Capital CIC (ASC)

ASC was set up in 2004 as a bridge between academic evidence for the importance of social capital and its practical application. ASC promotes the value of social capital in civil society. We work with government agencies, research institutes and civil society organisations in the UK, Canada, Austria, Spain, Sri Lanka and Sweden.

Our work focuses on evaluation, policy, programmes and activities that promote social capital such as social enterprise and public participation. We are currently working on projects covering the environment, health and wellbeing and lifelong learning. We are one of 5 organisations being supported by the Scottish Government’s International Social Enterprise Programme and a co-founder of the Social Capital World Forum, which this year takes place in Scotland in September. www.social-capital.net, www.sc-wf.org.
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VAF and ASC formed a strategic partnership in 2012 to enable VAF to develop its approach to building Social Capital and investing in local communities.

From 2014-18, with support from ASC, VAF aims to build knowledge and understanding of Social Capital as a critical community asset. The aim of the Investing is Social Capital strategic partnership is to maximise outcomes from grant investment to the organisations, their communities and immediate beneficiaries.

The strategic partnership has three main areas of work:

1. Develop staff and trustees’ understanding of and commitment to Social Capital principles and practice. Generate increased Social Capital within VAF.
2. Release existing and potential resources within communities by investing money, increasing capacity and building relationships. Embedding Social Capital and asset-based approaches in VAF grant making.
3. Develop an understanding of and commitment to Social Capital principles and practice in the public, private and third sectors to inform evidence based policy making and investment decisions.

By working in partnership both organisations aim to build on our mutual strengths to create added value for VAFs stakeholders and the money invested through funding to Scotland’s communities.

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