

## Grassic Gibbon Centre

### Introduction

The Grassic Gibbon Centre is based in Arbuthnott, in the Mearns area of South Aberdeenshire. Set up in 1992, the Centre celebrates the life and work of the celebrated novelist Lewis Grassic Gibbon who hailed from the area and whose classic 'Sunset Song' depicts the effect of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War on a small rural community through the eyes of a young woman.

### Social accounting and audit

Isabella Williamson, the manager at the Centre participated in a cluster group, and was attracted to the process of social accounting because *"I felt it was important that we were able to demonstrate the added value we generated and to help us demonstrate our impact with feedback from the people who used and visited the centre"*.

### Benefits and value of social accounting and audit

Being part of a cluster was seen as being a positive thing and was one of the reasons that the Centre decided to go down the social accounting route. The cluster that the Centre was involved in was completely free and additional resources were made available to produce the final report which was very important to a small organisation like the Centre.

### Negatives, problems, snags

One of the biggest challenges faced by Isabella was finding the time to actually do the social book-keeping and run the centre as well. Isabella notes that *"I just had to fit it in with all of the other pieces of work on the go"*.

The Centre carried out their one and only social audit in 2000/2001 and have not repeated the process since. The main reason for this was a feeling that *"we did not see any pay-off in terms of additional funding as a result of the time invested"*.

### General thoughts on social accounting and audit

The Grassic Gibbon Centre had got involved in social accounting for a number of reasons, but an important factor for them was to use the information generated to secure on-going funding. Isabella notes that *"We haven't applied for any major funding since the audit was done so it's not as though we had used the audit in funding applications and it hadn't helped us secure funding. It's more that having done the audit we haven't had the*

*opportunity to use it in the way we thought we might. Perhaps the point is that to undertake what was for us a major piece of work, you need to know exactly why you are producing it and for whom - other than just circulating around stakeholders and local community as we did, which is an okay reason but maybe for a smaller piece of work”*

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