Training Solutions

for the Community and Voluntary Sector in Ireland

A NICVA Research Unit report for

The Wheel

June 2005

Opinions expressed in the report are not necessarily those

of the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action

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1. Introduction

1. Introduction

> *"There has been an enormous growth in the community and voluntary sector in recent years. This has created increased needs for training and other technical supports to enable groups to do their work more effectively." (White Paper, 2000, p 111)*

The effectiveness of community and voluntary organisations depends on their having available well qualified and well trained people. The simple answer is to ensure that all paid and voluntary staff, including members of boards, get enough training to develop the right skills to fulfil their responsibilities. Unfortunately things are not as simple as that.

Because of internal and external factors, training provision has grown organically without any real strategic focus. Some argue that this flows from a lack of leadership and consensus about the sector's needs and also from uncertainty and instability around funding and political support. Under such conditions training is seen as the 'Cinderella' of the sector and training budgets are often the first things to be cut during times of uncertainty.

Against a political and economic environment where rhetoric about training and support is not translated into practice on the ground, the sector needs to take a comprehensive look at training provision, training needs and ultimately future skills needs. More importantly perhaps, this report presents a series of options for a more stable and focused platform from which the training needs of the sector can be met.

The issues we raise about training needs and provision are not unique to Ireland. Many of the discussions that form the bulk of our analysis have taken place many times before regardless of where you are talking about. An issue that remains at the centre of the training debate that is all too familiar to those working in the sector in Ireland today is accreditation, or more precisely the recognition of skills and competencies.

The debate on training and support is complex. The needs of different sub-sectors and the developmental stage of an organisation need to be considered, along with the actual logistics of training delivery which include factors such as location, accessibility, cost and relevancy.

1.1 Defining the community and voluntary sector

Especially during the last decade, community and voluntary groups have increased in importance as part of local and national development.

At local level, the representation and active participation of the community (and of specific groups within it) has been a central feature of the 'partnership' response to social exclusion. Local community development groups or projects have been formally recognised (especially through the Community Development Programme) as vehicles for empowerment and capacity-building in disadvantaged areas.

At national level, the sector has also won recognition in its own right — representing a whole range of more excluded and marginalised groups and areas. This is evident through its representation on the National Economic and Social Forum, National Social Partnership, the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, and various committees which monitor spending of European Structural Funds. More recent support for 'Anti-Poverty Networks' also recognises the importance of building a representative and inclusive voice for the dis-empowered.

A broad definition of the non-profit sector in Ireland is adopted by Donoghue, Anaheier and Salamon (1999) who make use of a well-respected comparative tool, the International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations (ICNPO). This broad definition includes among its 12 sub-headings the categories 'education and research' and 'health', as well as 'professional associations'.

However, the authors recognise that there is, within this broad non-profit sector, a 'community and voluntary' sub-sector. In delineating this, they exclude large areas of activity in health and education (hospitals and hospices; and primary, secondary and third-level education) as well as professional associations.

Included are:

- culture and arts,
- sports and recreation,
- education and research,
- nursing homes,
- mental and other health,

- social services,
- emergency and relief,
- income support and maintenance,
- community development,
- housing,
- employment and training,
- civic and advocacy,
- legal,
- foundations,
- international activities and
- religion

(Acheson et al, 2004).

This definition is in tune with the scope of this study.

It is important to get a sense of the scale of the paid and volunteer workforce which actually undertakes the wide range of activity in the community and voluntary sector. Although there is little research into this, the recent *Two Paths*, *One Purpose* (Acheson et al. 2004) provides a useful summary of available data, including the work of Donoghue et al. (1999). The figures depend on whether the broad or narrow definition is adopted. Using the broad definition of the non-profit sector outlined above, it employed 159,274 people in 1999 (including more than 33,690 'full-time equivalents' of in-kind or volunteer effort). If education and research, health, religion, professional associations and foundations are removed, the figure for the 'core' Irish community and voluntary sector is 64,055, of which just over half (31,919) is accounted for by in-kind/volunteer effort.

These figures suggest that the vast majority of the in-kind/volunteer contribution in the broadly defined non-profit sector actually takes place in the 'community and voluntary' sub-sector.

1.2 Background to the research

In April 2004 The Wheel submitted an application to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment/The National Training Fund which would result in:

- The creation of a library of information for and about skills development in the community and voluntary sector.
- The development of effective and affordable training delivery for community and voluntary organisations.

The proposal was broken down into three phases:

1. Feasibility and development of the model
2. Programme development
3. Roll out of training programmes

Objectives of Phase One: Investigation, exploration and feasibility

The outcome of Phase One is the identification of the most effective way to apply National Training Fund money to skills-building among employees in the community and voluntary sector.

Phase one can be broken down into:

- Research and analysis of the training requirements of community and voluntary organisations and the training currently available to them.
- Recruitment of a Reference Group of experts in the field, to advise on a final report.
- Development of a model based on research and the Reference Group recommendations and a feasibility study that details the staff and organisational support required to successfully manage the full project and the budget required to ensure its effective operation.
- A rollout plan for phases two and three, outlining the process to develop, implement and evaluate the next stages of the project.

As part of the investigation in Phase One, this research aims to feed into the overall feasibility study. It has these objectives:

- To appraise current training, by standard and geographical distribution, including facilities for training and assistance needed by organisations to avail of this training;
- To assess training needs, based on representative focus groups and/or a sample survey within the sector, and other relevant published reports, including the most suitable financial contribution which could be made by community and voluntary organisations towards any training which may be provided;
- To collate examples of relevant training models in Ireland or internationally.

1.3 Structure of the report

This research is not a training needs analysis, nor an audit of all available training; instead it provides an overview of the current training situation. It looks at a wide range of issues, from **attitudes** towards Government's support of training to the **barriers** organisations face when attempting to access training. It does not offer a single solution, but a menu of options and suggestions that individually or together could be part of a cohesive approach to training in the sector.

We encountered some issues of definition. It became clear that many organisations use the terms 'training' and 'facilitation' or 'consultation' interchangeably. Therefore the term 'training' as used in this report must be construed in its broadest possible sense. We also use the term 'employee' interchangeably for all workers in community and voluntary organisations whether they are paid or voluntary.

The structure of the report follows the various themes that the research addressed.

These start by looking at the **challenges** the community and voluntary sector believes it will face over the next twelve months.

We then assess the **infrastructure supporting training**. This includes a discussion about accessing training and the signposting of training information.

The next theme looks at **how training is supported** both by Government (from the point of view of organisations operating in the sector) and by the sector itself.

Training provision, training **benefits** and the **barriers** organisations face in accessing training each form a theme.

The final theme looks at future developments to help address training needs. This also looks at some of the suggestions made by respondents as to how best address future training provision. That is followed by a discussion of **future training needs** identified by respondents and the debate surrounding accreditation. Finally, we look at the views of respondents to a number of pre-defined options for a future training infrastructure.

Each theme concludes with a discussion about the findings. Where applicable examples of training provision and structures from other countries are included.

The report finishes by presenting a number of issues that have been loosely collated under the heading of an agenda for change in training provision. These recommendations are drawn directly from the findings and discussions associated with this research.

1.4 Methodology

The rationale behind our methodology arose from a desire to paint as wide as possible a picture of current training in the sector. As this is a unique study there was little existing data to draw on, so we felt that a combination of a questionnaire and interviews was the best way to proceed. Our intention was to supplement and develop themes covered in the questionnaire through interviews with individuals from key community and voluntary organisations and training providers. Throughout the report the findings from both the survey and the one to one interviews are combined to create an in-depth view of how respondents see training.

Our approach was broken down into three phases:

Phase One: Training and support provision analysis

This analysed existing training directories, signposting documents and discussions with main regional training providers to identify the most up to date information available on training provision. We also examined the overall training and support infrastructure.

Different models of training provision in Ireland and internationally were examined. Highlights from this part of the research are peppered throughout the findings section, to give examples of how certain issues have been addressed in other countries.

Phase Two: Survey

A representative sample of community and voluntary organisations (in line with the narrower definition of the sector as described above) was generated from The Wheel's database. To ensure as wide coverage as possible, we generated a sample of 2,000 organisations, each of which received a questionnaire during March 2005 (see Appendix 1 for a geographic breakdown of the sample and a profile of the respondent organisations). A total of 335 valid questionnaires were returned – a response rate of 17%.

The questionnaire was developed in conjunction with the Reference Group, and covered:

- Organisational profile
- Challenges facing the organisation
- Current provision/support of training
- Current barriers to accessing training
- Future training needs/provision

Phase Three: Interviews

In Phase Three a series of in depth, semi-structured interviews was conducted with personnel from a range of key training providers and community and voluntary organisations at both regional and local levels.

The list of organisations was developed in conjunction with the Reference Group to ensure all the key players were included. The interviews focused on current gaps in provision of training and support, and on future funding and development needs.

Different interview schedules were developed, depending upon the nature of the organisation being interviewed. Two separate schedules were used:

a) Schedule for training providers

- General overview of training provision for the sector.
- Structure of training (for example, one-day courses/short courses/workshops).
- Overview of training provision infrastructure (is it fit for purpose?).
- Key players in training provision for the sector.
- What are the main training needs in the sector?
- Are there any gaps in training?

b) Schedule for community and voluntary groups

- General overview of the organisation's history and activities.
- General perspectives on the sector.
- What are the organisation's training needs?
- What problems have they met in accessing training?
- How is the training normally delivered?
- What are the gaps in this delivery/provision?
- What in their opinion is the best way to address these gaps?

As the focus of this research was from the community and voluntary sector's perspective, the views of government departments and officials were not included. Some 49 interviews were completed in February and March 2005 with key training providers and community and voluntary organisations (see Appendix 2 for a full list of the organisations and people interviewed).

In each section, where appropriate, we examine the findings in terms of the size of the organisation. Organisations were asked to self-classify (ie, select from a list of presented options) the current income of their organisation. Seven income strata in the questionnaire were collapsed into the three categories shown in Table A below.

Table A: Size of Organisation

	Income strata	Count	%	Category %
Small	Less than €10,000	49	15.7	30.8
	€10,000-€50,000	47	15.1	
Medium	€50,000-€100,000	31	9.9	39.4
	€100,000-€250,000	47	15.1	
	€250,000-€500,000	45	14.4	
Large	€500,000-€1 million	37	11.9	27.3
	More than €1 million	48	15.4	
	Don't know	8	2.6	2.5
	Total	**312**	**100**	**100**

Base: 335 responses (12 missing)

Where we examine data by size, only those organisations which responded to this question are included.

2. Findings

2.1 Challenges facing community and voluntary organisations

This section gives an overview of the challenges organisations expect to face over the next 12 months. Some of the key findings are:

- Attracting funding is the single biggest challenge.
- The next most important challenge is developing the organisation.
- Sustainability, covering core costs and dealing with budget cuts are all viewed as significant challenges.

Much of the data collected from the questionnaire was aimed at mapping current training provision and future training needs. We considered it important also to get some feedback from respondents about their overall attitudes to the challenges they expect to face over the coming 12 months.

We did this because the current situation facing the sector is characterised by uncertainty and complexity. For many commentators it is at a crossroads in its development; its future role and place in Irish society is viewed with both optimism and a degree of caution. For this reason we set out to ascertain the issues of most concern to organisations.

Responses to the questionnaire have been supported by a more general discussion of relevant issues that emerged during interviews. We hope this analysis will place in context the environment within which community and voluntary organisations operate.

Respondents to the questionnaire were asked to list what they believed to be the top three challenges their organisation would be facing over the next 12 months. Responses are based on open-ended questions and are not the result of presented options – no attempt has been made to force choices. As such they reflect what respondents feel are their most important challenges.

Table 1: Challenges facing the sector over the next 12 months

	n	%
Attracting and sustaining funds (dealing with budget cuts)	194	25.1
Developing the organisation (new services, premises, strategically)	154	19.9
Staff (recruitment, attracting and developing skills of employees)	93	12.0
Greater pressures/demands on services/organisation	75	9.7
Attracting volunteer/board members – governance issues	59	7.6
Sectoral specific issues	51	6.6
Raising public/government awareness about an issue or cause	48	6.2
Tackling social issues	40	5.2
Generating greater participation – attracting members/community	35	4.5
Meeting new and existing legislation (Disability Bill, Charity Law Reform)	24	3.1

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Perhaps unsurprisingly, funding emerged as the single most important challenge. Issues of sustainability, covering core costs and dealing with budgets cuts can all affect how an organisation performs. It also has knock-on effects on the development of staff, the capacity to undertake project work and the general morale within the organisation.

The second most important challenge identified by respondents is developing their organisation. Again, this covers a multitude of areas such as service delivery, strategic development and the modification or development of premises.

Some of the other challenges specifically mentioned are:

- *"Getting most of our committee members to be proactive in managing our organisation."*
- *"To ensure that the centre becomes economically viable and self-financing."*
- *"Funding to keep the group going to be able to employ someone."*
- *"Sustainability when grant ends."*
- *"Maintaining childcare provision depending on funding."*
- *"Budgets cuts in recent years have resulted in loss of staff and services."*
- *"Developing next strategy plan post 2006."*
- *"To persuade the health board to provide two more staff members."*
- *"Up-skilling of competencies."*
- *"Financial viability."*
- *"Expanding management board/committee."*
- *"Volunteer time and capacity."*

These challenges are not specifically related to training needs but the financial uncertainty expressed by many organisations has a direct impact on training. If the skills needed to achieve the aims of an organisation are not sufficiently developed, the potential to meet forthcoming challenges is very much reduced.

Challenges facing the sector also frequently emerged throughout the interviews. What follows is a brief discussion about how these issues were articulated.

Inevitably, funding and a general lack of resources were seen as a major issue that had a detrimental effect on strategic development. Without secure, long-term funding the

ability to look at how services may develop and how staff need to be skilled, etc, cannot be considered. Against this backdrop it is not surprising that the funding issue eclipses all others.

> *"We have a seat on the community and voluntary pillar of government but we have a very low attendance record. This is mainly because we are under-resourced. We have limited funding and therefore do not like to waste resources."*

> *"Due to the lack of funding and the competitive nature that currently exists there is paranoia in the sector where organisations are watching their own backs and stick to their own patch."*

As Table 1 shows, managing and recruiting volunteers as well as issues of governance are seen as significant challenges. Throughout the interviews the subject of board of management or management committees was never far from the main topic of discussion. Some feel that ensuring that boards are aware of their roles and responsibilities is a key requirement.

> *"Governance is the Achilles Heel of the organisation. If there is not a good structure in place and a long-term plan for development it is easy for organisations to come to a halt if a key staff member leaves or something happens to funding."*

Training did not feature as a major challenge. However, it is implicit in some of the responses on funding difficulties, staff recruitment, retention and development and the need to improve governance.

Discussion

There is a clear pattern of inter-relatedness in the top four challenges (funding, organisational development, staffing and meeting increased demands/needs). Without sufficient, guaranteed and sustained funding there is a real risk that an organisation may stagnate or decline.

A further link between the main concerns is that development is less likely to happen without staff, which again depends on funding. There are indications that issues around

resources for continuing professional development and long-term career paths are being raised rather than simply the availability of funding.

Examining responses more closely, it becomes apparent that the issues expressed by respondents are not solely focused on funding. Concern was also expressed at the challenges of attracting new volunteers for both delivering of and for participating on boards. This last challenge is more closely related to societal changes but nevertheless is an important aspect in the governance and development of organisations.

Each of these top four challenges are fundamental issues in the ongoing life of organisations.

Although the challenges articulated are not specifically related to training, the financial uncertainty reported has a direct impact on training provision. If the skills needed to achieve the aims of an organisation are not sufficiently developed, the potential to meet forthcoming challenges is very much reduced.

Training focused on strategic planning and organisational development should significantly assist organisations to face these challenges.

2.2 Infrastructure supporting training in the community and voluntary sector

This section looks at the infrastructure that supports training, and also at accessibility of training and how resources may be better shared. Issues to emerge are:

- There is no strategic overview of training in the sector. So any infrastructure that exists (which is very limited) has grown organically and is difficult to quantify or place into any context.
- Signposting and information provision are key gaps.
- At a local level some respondents felt that accessing training was not necessarily a problem but this perception was based on an informal and ad hoc method of finding out about what training was available.

One of the main objectives of this research was to appraise training currently available. This in itself is a significant task and one that proved difficult given our resource and time constraints. The task was made more difficult by the lack of any coherent infrastructure to support and provide training for the sector. There is a paucity of prospectuses or listings of available training and so it was not possible to list training courses or facilities. However, we list in Appendix 4 organisations that provide training or networking or support roles. This is not exhaustive but it does give a flavour of the range of organisations that provide some level of training and support for community and voluntary organisations.

Nevertheless respondents to the survey and the interviews provided their perspectives on the state of the training infrastructure for the sector, as well as expressing their attitudes on accessing training overall. Table 2 gives a breakdown of these attitudes based on the survey.

Table 2: Attitudes towards the infrastructure for training in the sector

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Neither**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	Missing	Total responses
There is a **well developed infrastructure** for the provision of training in the community and voluntary sector.	3.3	22.3	24.7	38.3	11.3	35	300
It is **easy to access information** on training provision for community and voluntary sector organisations.	2.6	28.9	25.6	35.4	7.5	30	305

The table shows that nearly half of all organisations do not believe there is a well-developed infrastructure for training in the sector. A large proportion of organisations (42.9%) did not think that information about training was easy to access. With both questions, a quarter of all organisations do not make either a positive or negative response. This may indicate a reticence or a lack of knowledge about the wider situation in training provision.

On training infrastructure, there was considerable debate during the interviews about its relative strengths and weaknesses. Interviewees discussed the lack of an overarching strategy for the sector in relation to training and support.

> *"Training should come from a strategy. At the minute training is not focused."*
>
> *"There is a lack of cohesion in training and training in the sector lacks a core curriculum. These are issues that need to be addressed."*
>
> *"There is much interest in community training from the very community level to third level, but there is no focus."*
>
> *"Training can be very ad hoc and higgly-piggly… There is a lot of very good training but the problem is fragmentation. People often do not know about training."*
>
> *"It is patchy and there are different standards in training."*
>
> *"It is not well developed. The main providers are Comhairle and Carmichael Centre. Many individual organisations run ad hoc training programmes for their staff, the area-based partnerships being the best … Academic programmes are run by Dublin City University, the Business School in Dublin University (Trinity College) and the National College of Ireland."*
>
> *"There is no core funding for the provision of training, it always seems an add-on. There is no real scope for being proactive … training is seen as a luxury."*

There was a general sense that the growth of training provision for the sector has gone unchecked. Individuals often refer to training available within their local area, but are less informed about training available regionally or nationally.

> *"It is not well signposted … There is a huge gap because people are not working together."*

> *"I do not think there is enough networking. People should be able to find out about training in Ireland much easier than is the case at the minute."*

> *"Training does not exist or operate in a vacuum. We have to look at the overall structure of the community sector in Ireland. There is a lot of good work but not sufficient networking. People do not know what is happening beyond their areas."*

The second area we examined was the ease with which organisations access training.

As was shown in Table 2, more than two in five people we surveyed believed it was difficult to access information on available training. This view was expanded on in the interviews: respondents felt there was training available locally but it was sometimes not well signposted beyond word of mouth or local advertisements. Many of the interviewees, particularly those with a strategic view, identified signposting and information provision as key gaps.

> "*Signposting of training? No, not at all!! I think that Citizen Information Centre does some of this but it is quite small scale*."

> "*I think there is a need for signposting in each regional area. I think this could be done through umbrella organisations to provide support and enhance work that is already going on*."

Indeed many struggled when asked to name the key training providers.

> "*There are loads of wannabes … but I wouldn't know anyone I would consider to be the key player."*

There are organisations that provide an element of sign-posting to training and educational opportunities and it probably features as part of the work of most community and voluntary organisations. For those with internet access, and aware of it, the service provided by Activelink through their Community Exchange website (www.activelink.ie) is valuable. However, this depends on individual organisations submitting details of their events. Several other organisations regularly produce directories of available training.

> "*As an organisation we have had problems accessing information, so I do think there needs to be concentration on information dissemination*."

> "*I see a role for [named organisation] in information provision and documenting the infrastructure of the sector. There was also a real need for signposting in the sector in many areas but it needs to be delivered in a facilitative, non-combative way.*"

Networking and the sharing of resources featured prominently in the interviews.

> "*The biggest obstacle we have to training is funding and also there is so much competition.*"

There is not much doubt that for individual organisations and the sector in general, funding is the greatest barrier to training provision. It probably also underlies the lack of a cohesive infrastructure of training providers and systems throughout the sector. As indicated in the quotation above, lack of funding also leads to increased competition within the sector which ultimately works against sharing of resources and effective networking. This competition not only applies to funding but also to the sharing of information, resources and experiences between training providers.

> "*There is good quality training out there but there is an unwillingness to share knowledge and experiences. Training organisations are very guarded as they are frightened about being swamped or taken over by the universities.*"

> "*A lot of the colleges are buying into community training however these courses are written by academics. I am not sure if this reaches those that really need the training.*"

The range of training providers is quite wide and they all have their own sources of funding, target audiences and operational criteria to follow. However, training providers highlighted the fact that resources and materials are often jealously guarded as they are seen as the organisation's most vital resource.

One area where sharing does take place and appears to have quite a profound effect is with community organisations with a radical, sometime feminist, philosophy which see their role as one of empowerment. This type of organisation will often offer training to their target audience at no or very little cost and expect that they will take away the

learning and the skills to pass on the techniques they have learned, with the aim that it will generate further positive change within local communities. This type of organisation will often never have received any form of statutory funding for their work:

> "*Our aim is to pass on facilitation skills to the sector in general. We expect participants to then go on and transfer what they have learned to their local communities. We have never been funded by anyone to do this, it is a core part of our philosophy.*"

This form of skills transference amongst training providers, effectively passing on the 'secrets of the trade', is the exception rather than the rule. Once an organisation has developed a successful course, or series of courses, the view is that they cannot afford to lose competitive advantage by sharing or exchanging with other training providers. This is perhaps why there are no networks or even informal groupings of training providers in the sector. Sharing does appear to occur within the community sector, as there are common sources of funding and participation in nationwide programmes (Partnerships, CDPs, Specialist Support Agencies, etc) that necessitate a relatively standard approach to training and development. Within the voluntary sector, however, this commonality is absent and so the element of competition is greater.

Universities and third level institutes increasingly provide community development and other forms of training. Unfortunately, many organisations see this as just another source of competition rather than an additional layer to the existing infrastructure, which is how it is viewed in other countries with less competition for financial resources.

Discussion

The locality of operation and view, whereby the frame of reference of many organisations is rarely national or strategic, often came through in interviews. A question about training infrastructure within the sector would often be met by incomprehension. It was not just that many people did not know about major training providers like Comhairle and Carmichael Centre, but it wasn't of any relevance to them unless they had previously had a local connection with these organisations. They would only be aware of these providers if they were involved in a larger networking organisation or paid attention to national issues of development for the sector. This perhaps reflects the absence of effective information provision and networking organisations.

In our opinion the availability of a centralised but flexible information resource about training opportunities might alleviate the isolation and insularity that featured during many interviews.

It might also reduce the apparent duplication of information and training that several interviewees also identified. It could also encourage the growth of networking among training providers and practitioners and the general sense of a 'sector' and a shared resource.

An example of how this has been achieved elsewhere is the work of the Canadian Volunteer Centre Training Network (CVCTN). The CVCTN is a network of facilitators, trainers and consultants affiliated with volunteer centres which offer their expertise, experience and services in communities across the country. This way of working tackles the twin issues of using an existing infrastructure of volunteer centres and the sharing of resources and expertise.

A clear need emerged during the research for a network through which community and voluntary organisations can access information about training in their areas.

Using existing infrastructure and methodologies wherever possible, structures should also be developed to allow more networking and communication between and links with national training providers (including possibly regionally-based training resource centres). This would better co-ordinate training provision and keep duplication to a minimum. Although this approach focuses on training providers, there is also a need for community and voluntary organisations to form local partnerships to help find more effective ways of accessing training.

The signposting function identified by several interviewees is seen as a much more proactive, comprehensive, up to date and dynamic service than this. It would also need to be accessible through several formats (online, newsletter, calendars, CD Rom, etc) and be dynamically marketed and targeted to all organisations in the sector, preferably on a regional basis.

In Canada there is no single training provider for the sector but activities (training courses) of specialist training providers are collated on a single website called www.charityvillage.com. In the UK the Workforce Development Hub (www.voluntarysectorskills.org.uk) gives community and voluntary organisations easy access to information and resources on training and development via a web-based solution. Another UK example of a web based resource which looks at training and

development opportunities for people who work and volunteer in the sector in the North East of England can be found at www.voluntaryskills.com.

Many comments during the interviews suggest the need to invest in more effective and comprehensive methods of signposting training. A problem often associated with signposting exercises is keeping the information up to date. It is therefore imperative that a signposting facility should have dedicated resources.

2.3 Supporting training

This section looks at support for training in the sector. The analysis takes a twin track approach: how organisations themselves internally support training and how training is seen to be supported by Government. The main findings are:

- Fewer than three out of five organisations have any internal training policy.
- Just over four out of every ten organisations have no training budget. Even for those with a budget, the sums are small – more than a third budget less than €5,000 a year.
- Over half of organisations consider there is not enough recognition by Government of the importance of training.
- Over two thirds of organisations were unhappy about the support from Government for training.

This section looks first at how organisations support training internally from both a policy and a financial perspective.

First, we attempted to determine if organisations had an internal policy that relates to staff development. This could range from a single paragraph recognising the need to develop staff to a more detailed strategic training plan. Just over 58% of all organisations said they had some sort of internal training policy (Table 3). Small organisations were the least likely to have one (almost two thirds reported they had no policy).

Table 3: Internal training policy by economic size of organisation

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)	Total (n)
Small	36.6	60.2	3.2	93
Medium	59.7	39.5	0.8	119
Large	81.7	17.1	1.2	82
Total (%)	**58.5**	**39.7**	**1.7**	**100**
Total (n)	**172**	**117**	**5**	**294**

Base: 294 organisations (Missing: Small 3, Medium 4, and Large 3)

The financial resources available to an organisation to provide training are another obvious area that dictates the level of training. Of all the organisations surveyed, 57% said they had a training budget. Not all training carries a financial burden but the existence of a training budget, as examined in Table 4, does demonstrate a financial commitment to train and support staff.

Table 4: Training budget by economic size of organisation

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (n)
Small	31.3	68.7	**83**
Medium	65.8	34.2	**117**
Large	74.4	25.6	**78**
Total (%)	**57.9**	**42.1**	**100**
Total (n)	**161**	**117**	**278**

Base: 278 organisations (Missing: Small 13, Medium 6, and Large 7)

Even for those with a training budget, sums are small – with 35% having a budget of less than €5,000 a year. Table 5 shows that, as the income of the organisation increases, so does the likelihood that a training budget exists. Surprisingly however, among the largest organisations, a quarter make no provision at all for training.

Table 5: Size of training budget against size of organisation

	Small (%)	Medium (%)	Large (%)
Less than €1,000	10.8	13.7	5.1
€1,000 - €2,000	7.2	14.5	7.7
€2,000 - €3,000	6.0	10.3	7.7
€3,000 - €5,000	1.2	12.0	9.0
€5,000 - €15,000	6	12.0	20.5
€15,000 - €40,000	0	0	10.3
€40,000 - €75,000	0	2.4	6.4
Over €75,000	0	0.9	7.7
No specific training budget	68.7	34.2	25.6
Total (%)	**100**	**100**	**100**

Base: 278 organisations (Missing: Small 13, Medium 6, and Large 7)

We then asked organisations what forms of training they supported, or which methods of training worked best for them. Day release is by far the most common method supported (Table 6 below). In-house (non-accredited) training is the second most common approach. Other forms of support, such as study leave and in-house accredited training, are much less popular.

Table 6: How training is supported in organisations(Table 6 below)

	Count	%
Day release	202	60.3
Provide in-house non-accredited training	143	42.7
Study leave	88	26.3
Provide in-house accredited training	78	23.3
Distance learning	65	19.4
Residential	58	17.3
None of the above	52	15.5
On-line learning	40	11.9

Total exceeds 335 as this was a multiple response question

There were variations between different sized organisations in the type of training support offered (Figure 1). Day release, non-accredited in house training and study leave were used more often by 'large' organisations. As perhaps would be expected, in 'small' organisations there is less inclination to support training needing an extended time commitment from staff. It is also clear from Figure 1 that as the economies of scale increase, training that involves greater time and resource commitments can be more easily absorbed.

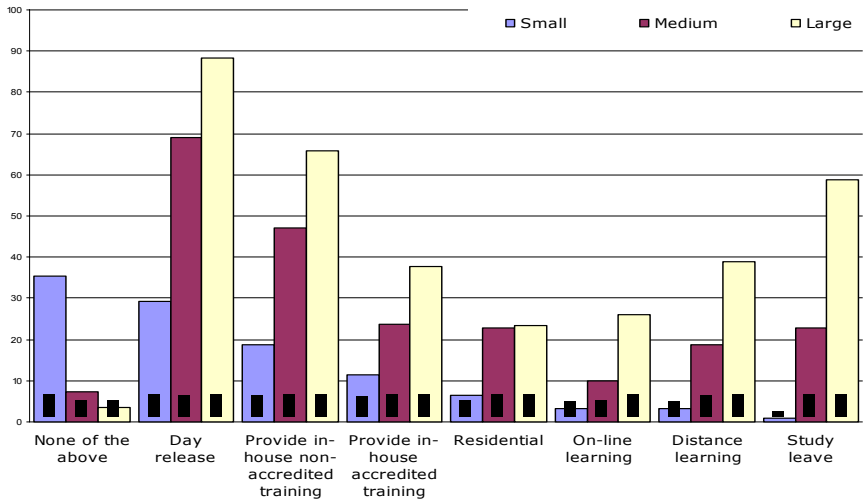


Figure 1: Training supported by the economic size of organisations

The next part of this section examines how the respondents view the importance and support offered by the Government in relation to training for the sector.

Over half of all organisations consider there is not enough recognition by Government of the importance of training provision to the sector (Table 7). There was some support for Government efforts, with nearly 20% of organisations indicating that they felt Government does recognise the importance of training. There was, however, very little recognition of the actual support that Government had provided to the sector to meet training needs. Well over two-thirds of organisations were unhappy about the support from Government for training, with only one in ten organisations agreeing that there is sufficient Government support for training.

Table 7: Attitudes towards Government's recognition and support of training

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Neither**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	Missing	Total responses
The **Government** recognises the **importance of training provision** in the community and voluntary sector.	1.6	18.1	24.7	28.3	27.3	31	304
There is sufficient **Government support for the provision of training** for the community and voluntary sector.	3.0	6.6	21.8	35.6	33.0	32	302

It became apparent from interviewees' comments that without clear support from Government, community and voluntary groups would continue to provide training independently of one another. Without a clear political imperative to co-ordinate their work, many interviewees felt the situation would not improve.

> *"In the South there is no real recognition of a community and voluntary 'sector' as an entity as there would be in Northern Ireland or the United Kingdom. There is no real fully developed sense of self or of the contribution of the sector."*

Differences emerged between different-sized organisations for all the attitudinal items but perhaps the most interesting centre on Government support and recognition of training provision in the sector (Figure 2).

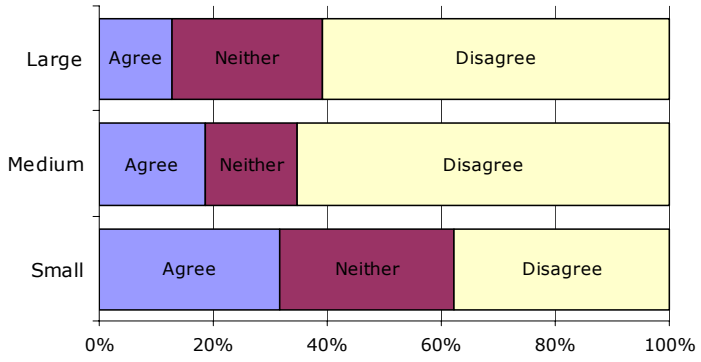


Figure 2: Attitudes towards Government's recognition of the importance of training provision

Figure 3 shows that dissatisfaction with Government support for training is greatest among organisations with medium levels of income. Dissatisfaction with the support by

Government for training is similar for organisations with both the highest and lowest levels of income.

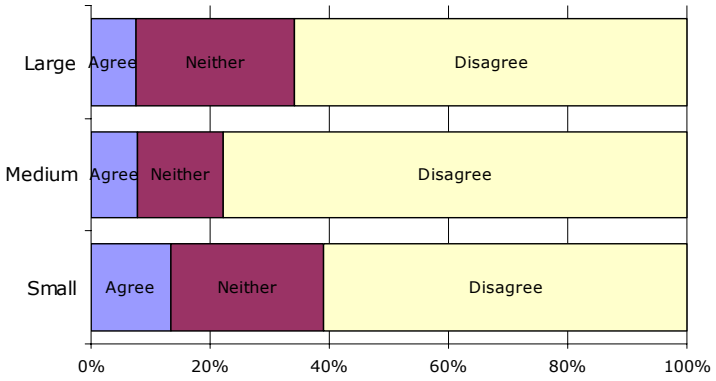


Figure 3: Attitudes towards Government's support of training in the sector

Discussion

A clear message emerges: if the sector is to progress there must be a strategic vision on training and development.

Many believe that such a strategic vision is achievable only with support and a political will in Government that embraces the value of training. This has been the case in the UK, where a new political will to develop skills has driven a new agenda in skills development and training.

The structure of training is changing in the UK in all areas of skills development. In the voluntary and community sector the Voluntary Sector National Training Organisation (part of NCVO) provided training within the sector (now replaced by the Workforce Development Hub).

The Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) funds, supports and champions the new UK-wide network of influential employer-led Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) which cover all the major industries and sectors. The SSDA underpins and develops SSCs. SSCs are independent, UK-wide organisations developed by groups of influential employers in sectors of economic or strategic significance. They are employer-led and actively involve trade unions, professional bodies and other stakeholders. SSCs are licensed by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, in consultation with Ministers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, to tackle the skills and productivity needs of their sector[1].

[1] http://www.ssda.org.uk/ssda/default.aspx?page=1

Each SSC agrees sector priorities and targets with its employers and partners to address four key goals, one of which is to reduce skills gap and shortages.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the UK Voluntary Sector Partner Organisations and the Sector Skills Development Agency specified a strategic aim to promote skills development and good employment practices to support the recruitment, retention and development of staff, volunteers and trustees and board or committee members.

At present plans have been submitted to the SSDA for a Workforce Development Hub. The hub's aim is to make it easier for community and voluntary organisations to be great places to work, be good employers and embrace a culture of learning and development. The Hub has two main objectives. The first is for community and voluntary organisations to have easy access to information and resources to support a culture of learning and development, underpinned by good management and employment practice. The second objective is that voluntary and community organisations are able to recruit and retain a skilled workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities they work in[2]. To deliver this the Workforce Development Hub intends to support voluntary and community organisations to recruit and retain a diverse workforce.

Another example of a strong relationship between government and sector in training is in Canada, where the voluntary and community sector has a robust relationship with government. Training and skills development features prominently in how government interacts with the sector. There are voluntary sector joint tables established under the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) and the Capacity Joint Table (CJT) which work on three main capacity issues: human resources (i.e. knowledge and skills); research and information sharing, and policy participation.

In Ireland the review of community development programmes and agencies in the White Paper (2000) on the sector would lead one to believe that support is as equally comprehensive as elsewhere. Over the past ten years there is no doubt that support has grown enormously and that there are far more Government resources available for community development. However, organisations we surveyed did not feel that this was the case and that there were major gaps in support and resources for community development.

[2] Summary of The Workforce Development Hub Business Plan, http://www.voluntarysectorskills.org.uk/shared_asp_files/uploadedfiles/3803864E-8143-4077-98C3-FF7E5317937F_SummaryoftheBusinessPlan.doc

The issue of resources for training is clearly one that organisations continue to grapple with. The size of training budgets, even among the largest organisations, is an area of concern. Training is not always predicated on the ability to pay but it obviously helps when attempting to develop a strategic approach.

An example of how the financial burden of training has been lessened is the Management Development Programme (MDP) developed by NICVA (Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action). Although the NICVA is not a training provider *per se*, the organisation secured funds for a co-ordinated management development programme across the sector. The MDP aims to help managers develop skills and competencies and thereby see their organisation, and the sector, improve and change. It provides both accredited and non-accredited courses ranging from two days to two years. More recently it has introduced an MSc in Voluntary Sector Management with CASS Business School, City University, London. NICVA provided all participants with 75% of the MDP fee. In some cases organisations saved up to £1,350 and with the Master's the saving is £6,000. Funds for the bursaries came from a charitable trust; government departments in Northern Ireland have yet to fully engage in this type of support and resourcing.

It became increasing evident during this research that there was a desire to see training as a strategic investment in the organisation, as opposed to a luxury item on a budget that in the final analysis is often expendable.

It is not clear if such a view exists among Government departments and funders in general, but given the small amounts that organisations commit to training (and indeed the general uncertainty organisations feel about funding generally), there is certainly a case to be made for dialogue between government, funders, training providers and the sector.

2.4 Current training provision

Next we look at what training is being offered. The main findings of this section are:

- There was quite a high rate of recent training, with nearly three-quarters of organisations reporting some training over the past 12 months.
- However, only one in four organisations with an income under €50,000 reported any sort of training in the last 12 months.
- Of organisations that reported providing training, 47% provided employees with training in Information Technology (IT). This was followed by training in strategic development, planning, diversity/equal opportunities, fundraising and community development.

There was quite a high rate of recent training by all organisations, with nearly three-quarters reporting some provision over the past 12 months. Training was less common in 'small' organisations; just over one in four organisations provided any training.

Table 8: Provision of training by economic size

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)	Total (n)
Small	44.2	55.8	**100**	**86**
Medium	82.5	17.5	**100**	**120**
Large	92.7	7.3	**100**	**82**
Total %	**73.9**	**26.1**	**100**	
Total (n)	**213**	**75**		**288**

Base: 288 organisations (Missing: Small 10, Medium 3, and Large 3)

Training is clearly related to organisation size. The larger the organisation, the more likely it is to provide training.

A wide range of courses was offered (Table 9). By far the most common was information technology (IT) skills, provided by over 47% of organisations that reported training over the last 12 months. This was followed by more global training areas such as strategic development (30%), planning, diversity/equal opportunities, fundraising and community development. The level of IT training is not surprising as the growth in personal computers and the internet as core business tools requires these new skills to be acquired by staff. Strategic Development and Planning are also core skills for organisation leaders as well as for members of voluntary management committees.

Table 9: Areas in which training had been provided over the past twelve months*

	Count	%
IT skills	109	47.2
Strategic development	70	30.3
Planning	59	25.5
Diversity/equal opportunities training	56	24.2
Fundraising	51	22.1
Community development	51	22.1
Financial management	48	20.8
Staff recruitment and management	47	20.3
Monitoring/evaluation/research	40	17.3
Committee/board skills	39	16.9
Volunteer recruitment and management	38	16.5
Campaigning/lobbying	34	14.7
Public relations	31	13.4
Service user/consumer training	31	13.4
Negotiation skills	19	8.2
Language skills	12	5.2

Total exceeds 335 as this was a multiple response question

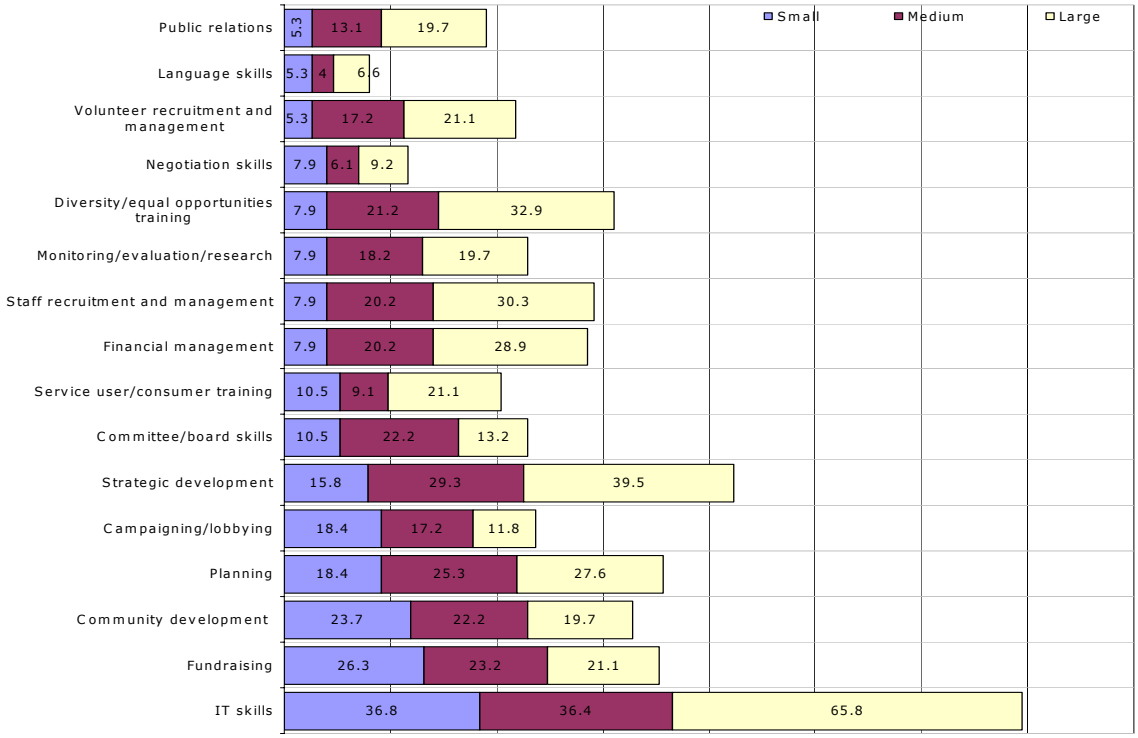
The ranking of diversity/equal opportunities training probably reflects the growth of work with members of the 'new communities' (immigrants), as does the training in language skills. It may also indicate the impact of equality legislation generally, and specifically in relation to employment, and of the requirement for community and voluntary organisations to establish as companies limited by guarantee. Training in fundraising and community development received equal billing in the top five of this list.

The remainder of these courses largely concern the range of technical and professional skills required by staff in the daily operation of organisations. Negotiation skills does not appear as one of the more popular training options availed of by organisations – somewhat surprisingly, given the range of opportunities to engage in partnership working with local and national government.

'Small' organisations listed IT skills, fundraising and community development training as the training most often provided. For 'large' organisations IT skills was the most common training offered, but there any similarity with 'small' organisations ends. The second and third most common areas of training provided by 'large' organisations were strategic development and diversity training (a similar pattern is seen for 'medium' sized organisations).

* Organisations were asked to give a response from a list of presented options

Figure 4: Training over the past 12 months by size of organisation*



Discussion

Organisations seem to have embraced the need to have staff proficient in IT skills but clearly there are differences in the types of training seen as a priority as the size of the organisation increases.

One example of how training has been tailored to better target the needs of organisations can be found in the US. Maryland Nonprofits (a membership based organisation) has a consultancy service that provides high-quality professional resources to meet their organisations' consulting and technical support needs, including services tailored to critical stages in the organisations' lifecycles (eg leadership transition). It also offers comprehensive training and technical assistance for existing and new non-profit board members, executives and staff, enabling them to achieve excellence in governance, executive leadership, financial and human resources management, legal and regulatory compliance, and resource development.

* Organisations were asked to give a response from a list of presented options.

The findings in this report suggest the need for a staged-model of training for community and voluntary organisations that takes account of where they are in terms of their development as well as the particular area in which they operate.

In Ireland for example, many organisations are developing and providing training to meet these needs at a local level. They generally relate to the technical aspects of company law and the administration and management of these 'small businesses'. In many cases, services of professionals such as accountants, solicitors and personnel specialists are called on to provide information on technical and specialist areas. This information is then translated so as to be more accessible for people working in local projects and implemented through short training sessions or one to one facilitation.

However, this could far more easily be rolled out as a single service open to every organisation with similar needs. Much of the information could be made available online and through user-friendly guides such as draft policies and procedures that could be adapted easily for individual organisations. The gold standard version of this service would also make available staff to answer questions that were not covered through direct information provision.

From the findings it is clear that technical support (such as legal advice, strategic development, fundraising, governance issues, human resources and equality issues) for the sector should be a priority; its delivery and co-ordination should sit with a single organisation or training provider.

Such technical support should be based on a strategy that recognises the diversity across the sector and the different stages of development organisations are in. The Maryland example clearly demonstrates how the twin issues of diversity and need can be addressed.

2.5 The benefits of training

This section attempts to articulate the value of training to organisations both in strategic terms and at the more immediate level of the operations of the organisation. The main findings are:

- Over 70% of organisations see training and development as a key part of organisational strategy.
- The proficiency of staff and their motivation are seen as the two most significant benefits of training.
- 85% of organisations agree that greater access to training and development could contribute to their long-term sustainability.

There is wide agreement with the statement that '*training and development is a key part of organisational strategy'* (Table 10). Over 70% of organisations support this view and only a small proportion are undecided.

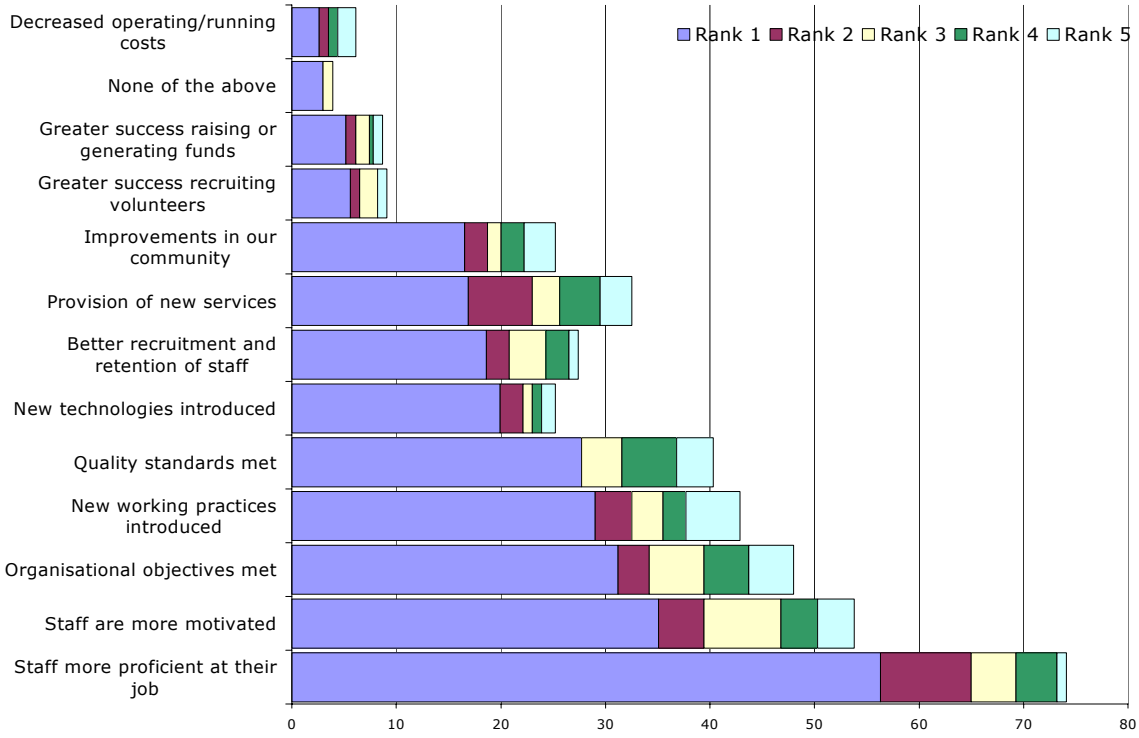
Most organisations clearly recognise the importance of training, as there was very high agreement (over 85%) with the view that '*greater access to training and development could contribute to their long-term sustainability'*. (However this view of the importance of training is not translated into substantial training budgets.)

Table 10: Attitudes towards the value of training

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Neither**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	Missing	Total responses
Greater access to training and development opportunities contributes to the **long-term sustainability** of our organisation.	55.1	30.8	7.9	1.6	4.6	30	305
Training and development is a key part of our **organisation/group development strategy**.	39.1	33.2	14.8	8.2	4.6	31	304

Respondents were very clear about the benefits accruing from training (Figure 5) and the impact it has on staff. The factors ranked first and second place in this choice were '*staff more proficient at their job*' and '*staff are more motivated*'. Training also has wider benefits for the organisation in meeting their objectives, introducing new working practices and being able to meet quality standards.

Figure 5: Benefits of training



Discussion

The results clearly endorse the value of training and development activities to the organisation and the sector in general. The findings perhaps reinforce the view that training is an investment in the organisation, as respondents clearly articulate its strategic and operational value.

There appears to be a logical structure to the order of the benefits. For instance, more proficient staff, who are increasingly motivated are more likely to ensure that organisational objectives are met. Organisations clearly do not view the benefits of training as a one dimensional outcome but as an interconnected system that is integral to staff and organisational development.

The benefits of training as articulated by respondents show the strategic value organisations clearly see in accessing good quality training. Despite the lack of significant training budgets, organisations find significant value in the training they are able to access.

In our opinion every effort should be made to consolidate this investment in the sector's workforce, as there is clearly a significant return in how organisations are developing.

2.6 Barriers to training

This section examines why organisations do not provide training. Not all reasons given for not providing training are necessarily barriers and this section attempts to develop the discussion a little further. The main findings are:

- About half the organisations had difficulties accessing training.
- Lack of funds was the number one reason why they did not provide training.
- One in five respondents identified inaccessible trainers, no appropriate training available and a lack of knowledge about their own training needs.

To assess the barriers organisations face, we asked respondents if they had any difficulties accessing training. Half the organisations said they did. As Table 11 shows, difficulties were not restricted to one size of organisation but experienced in equal measure across the board.

Table 11: Did your organisation face any difficulties accessing training?

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)	Total (n)
Small	47.2	52.8	**100**	**72**
Medium	48.5	51.5	**100**	**114**
Large	48.8	51.3	**100**	**80**
Total (%)	**48.3**	**51.7**	**100**	
Total (n)	**128**	**138**		**266**

Base: 288 organisations (Missing: Small 24, Medium 9 and Large 5)

We then looked for specific reasons why they had not provided training. As shown previously in Table 8, one in every four organisations did not provide any training at all. The reasons are given in Table 12.

Table 12: Reasons for not providing training

	Count	%
Lack of funds	31	21.8
Lack of time for training	23	16.2
Training is not a priority	17	12.0
We don't know what our training needs are	16	11.3
No appropriate training available	13	9.2
No training necessary	12	8.5
Accessibility to training providers	9	6.3
Staff not keen to participate	7	4.9
High staff turnover	5	3.5
Lack of cover for training	5	3.5
Don't know of any training providers	4	2.8

Total exceeds 82 as this was a multiple response question

Given our findings in the *Challenges* section, it is not surprising that '*lack of funds*' was the number one reason for not providing training followed by a '*lack of time available*'. '*Lack of knowledge about training needs'* and '*training not being a priority'* are the next most common reasons. This indicates scope for further education about the benefits of training to organisations as well as a skills deficit in the practicalities of identifying needs.

There are also indications from these results that there may be a certain resistance to training ('*No training necessary*' and '*Staff not keen to participate*') as well as a lack of access to training providers ('*No appropriate training available*' and '*Don't know of any training providers*').

We also asked about specific barriers organisations met that prevented them from offering training. Yet again, '*lack of funding*' emerged as the main reason. '*Pressure of work*' was the second main factor, followed by '*lack of training providers*'.

Differences emerge between organisations of different size when it comes to barriers to training. Lack of funding is an issue common to all, but it is more pronounced in smaller organisations. In medium to large sized organisations pressure of work is the number one barrier.

Table 13: Barriers to training by economic size (rank order)

	Small	Medium	Large
Lack of funding	1	1	2
Pressure of work	2	1	1
Lack of training providers	3	3	5
Lack of support from the organisation	4	6	6
Lack of appropriate provision	5	4	3
Lack of appropriate accreditation	6	6	5

These results indicate that there are subtle, but real, differences between the three types of organisations that reflect the varying pressures that they are under.

Points raised during the interviews add depth to the issues. The lack of training providers indicated as a barrier is not simply that there are no providers but is a more complex issue about suitability and access.

> *"There is a lot out there if you can access it and if you can access it there is another question, can you afford it?"*
>
> "*Locally there is a lot of training going on. Some are more ahead of the game than others and there are many variations*."

The issue may not be of availability but of suitability. Some interviewees certainly gave the impression that many training providers did not meet their needs at all. Several said the general quality of training and trainers was not acceptable and that there was no way of determining how suitable a course would be until afterwards. For many small organisations with limited resources this was too late, a waste of time and frustrating for everyone involved.

> "*There are many specialised trainers. We maintain contact with good trainers but cease to keep contact with poor trainers. There is a very wide spectrum in terms of the quality of training that is provided. Some of it is very bad.*"

> "*Much of the training is abysmal.*"

Because of the complete absence of certification and accreditation of trainers, organisations found the best way to ensure quality was through personal recommendations and word of mouth. The same few names kept cropping up in recommendations about reliable trainers or providers. In some cases organisations realised that, though the training they needed might not be the specialist area of a particular trainer or provider, they would prefer to have them come and develop something specifically for them rather than risk trying an untested source. This is also what is meant in the survey when organisations talk about lack of training providers and lack of appropriate training provision.

> "*At the moment we have some resource problems as we are unable to get sufficient high quality trainers to provide consultancy for other groups. It appears to be a real gap.*"

One of the main training providers to the sector, Carmichael Centre, also commented on this issue as they identified lack of high quality trainers as a real barrier to further development. The esteem this training provider is held in is shown by the fact that, though based in Dublin, many of the requests for training they get come from Cork, Galway and other major towns around the country. If major training providers are complaining about the quality in trainers and the absence of any form of standardisation, it is clear that this is a real gap in the training infrastructure.

Another aspect of this lack of suitability of training for organisations appears to be an inability to accurately identify training needs.

> "*One of the difficulties is that many groups do not know themselves what it is they need and they may need consultancy work to assist them with this identification*."

During the interviews this seemed to be more of a problem for voluntary rather than community organisations. The latter had access to support services that would spend a lot of time in the process of consultation and facilitation which nearly always included a detailed training needs analysis with an experienced community development worker.

For many smaller voluntary organisations the resources available to them, if they were lucky, consisted of funding for some form of limited training. Identifying specific training needs depended on the skills and experiences of the individual project co-ordinator or members of a management committee. In the absence of early facilitation and development work within the organisation the likelihood of getting it wrong in the choice of training provider and provision was greater.

For some organisations it was often better not to make a choice at all rather than waste valuable resources on the wrong choice with the inevitable frustration and recriminations this would bring.

> *"The whole process of training needs to be looked at. It is very easy to set yourself up as a trainer, so there is a need to actually look at the role of accreditation of trainers there is a mixed bunch of trainers at the minute; some are very good, however others are poor. Therefore this raises the need for accreditation of those providing training in the community and voluntary sector."*

However, there does not seem to be a lack of 'training the trainers' courses. Several organisations we interviewed said they offered such courses due to the demand from the sector. It appears that many of these programmes train people to deliver specific courses in specialist areas such as money advice, advocacy, rights and benefits.

There is no guarantee that these programmes are turning out trainers with the skills required to analyse training needs, develop targeted training courses, and monitor and assess progress outside of this specialist training area. In the absence of an accepted qualification or standard for professional trainers anyone can, and does, set up as a trainer within the sector.

It is unlikely that this situation would be acceptable in any other area of industry or business so there is no reason that it should be in this sector.

> *"Our experience has shown that planned training sessions have a low turnout. This is partly due to people in the sector not thinking ahead about what their issues and problems [are] and what could potentially be future needs."*

> *"There is much more money around for capacity-building with groups although sometimes there is not much difference between the two activities. There is a big demand for assistance from newer groups starting up."*

Another factor that may be contributing to the confusion between availability and suitability of training provision is the fact that many organisations use the terms 'training' and 'facilitation' or 'consultation' interchangeably.

Earlier we have seen how some groups were unable to identify their training needs because of the absence of developmental work that would allow them to isolate areas where group development was required rather than structured training.

This sort of work is generally seen to be capacity-building in its truest sense as it is assisting organisations to get to the stage where they can make informed decisions about things like funding, training and future aims and objectives.

It is only when organisations have basic values, structures and direction in place that they can identify needs for structured training. It may be that this inability to identify training needs is stemming from organisations that have not reached the appropriate stage of development. Several interviewees, highly experienced professionals in the field, echoed this view. They said that identifying training needs in the sector overall was next to impossible, as they differed depending on the stage of development the particular group or organisation was at:

> "*The community and voluntary sector in Ireland covers such a wide area and therefore their training needs are very diverse. People come with different experiences. There is no 'one-fits all scenario/solution'."*

> "*It is very difficult to identify the training needs of groups as they have a natural lifecycle and their needs change according to the stage of development they are at*."

Discussion

The findings clearly indicate that resources should be provided to organisations that wish to invest in the skills of their own workforce.

We also saw in this section that the ability to make staff available for training is a key factor in whether training is provided, particularly in larger organisations. When this is allied to the types of training that are supported by organisations (day release and study leave are two of the top three methods through which training is supported in larger organisations), the pressure of work issue begins to make sense in these larger organisations despite the fact that they may have more staff, etc. There is a need to explore methods of training that do not involve staff being away from the office for an extended period.

Again the concept of training as an investment in an organisation's development should be developed, to instil both within funders and community and voluntary organisations the value and benefit of training.

Lack of information about training is another significant issue to emerge. Whether organisations struggle to access trainers or are not sure of their own training needs, the need for clearer lines of communication are evident. We have already raised the issue of signposting which is extremely important, but the issue of awareness and identifying need within organisations is equally important**.** A research strategy should be developed to examine, among other things, the identification of skills and training needs in organisations.

Finally the inconsistency in the quality of some trainers was raised on a number of occasions during the interviews. There is a need to develop standards for trainers and to establish a set of core competencies required of trainers providing training for this sector.

2.7 Addressing future training needs

This final section looks at future skills needs and developments, as well as general improvements that respondents would like to see in training provision. Respondents' preferences for the future shape of training in the sector is also briefly examined. The debate about accreditation is also included. The main findings are:

- More resources to either access training or increase the level of training is seen by the majority of respondents to be the main development that would improve training provision.
- Anticipated future skills needs relate to organisations' recognition that their environment is increasingly uncertain and complex. Skills to enable them deal with complexity and uncertainty (such as funding, planning and organising) will become more important.
- 45% of organisations felt fundraising skills were their most important future need.
- One out of every two organisations chose a consortium of existing training providers as their first preference for future training provision.

We asked organisations for their opinion on what they felt would be a significant development in terms of training provision in the future.

Table 14 sums up the responses to this open-ended question, though it should be noted that only about a third of organisations responded. More resources to either access training or increase the level of training was seen by the majority of respondents to be the main development that would improve the situation.

Improving accessibility to training was seen as potentially beneficial, whether this referred to providing transport (in rural areas for example), better location or the development of outreach training facilities. Developing specific training courses and some means of supporting organisations while staff were absent at training were also put forward.

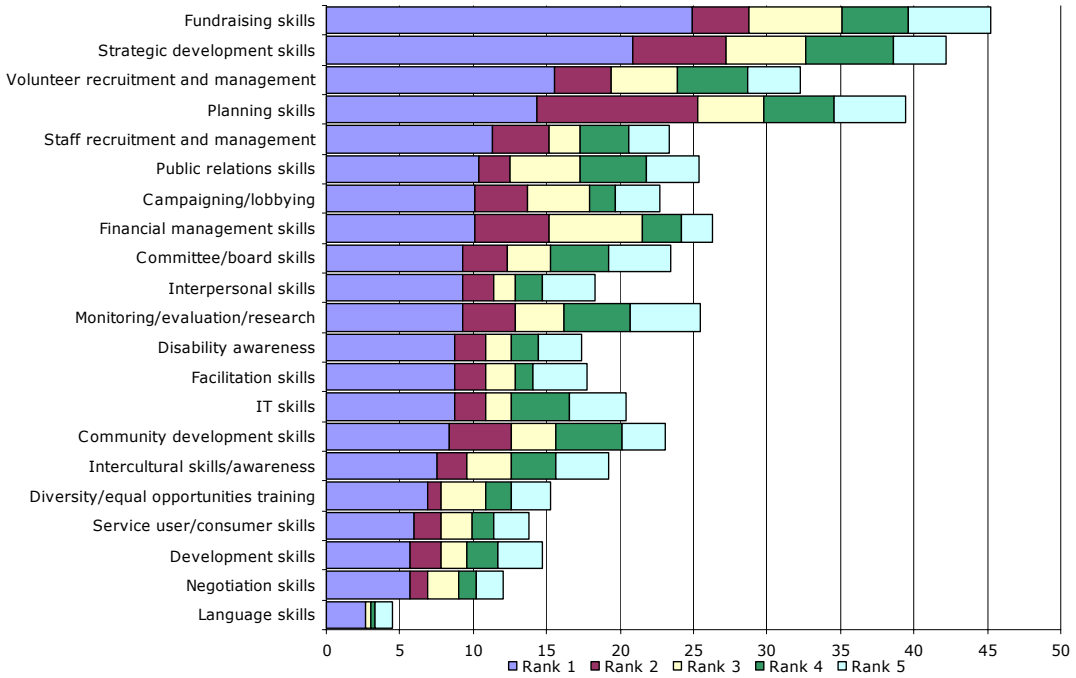
Clearly there are many external and internal forces that drive change within organisations. The impact of these drivers on the quantity or breadth of skills required within the sector is difficult to predict with any accuracy. Similarly, it is difficult to say where skills deficiencies will be concentrated in the medium term.

Table 14: Future developments in relation to training provision

	Count	%
Funding (training budgets, more resources to access training)	40	37.0
Accessibility (transport, time, location and development of outreach)	21	19.4
Development of **specific training** (committee skills, human resources)	16	14.8
Staffing issues (lack of staff to cover absence during training)	14	12.9
Identification of training and training providers (signposting)	8	7.5
Not sure	5	4.7
Linkages to **existing resources** and training providers	4	3.7
Total	**108**	**100**

Looking at the organisational skills needs, we asked respondents to rank a number of different skills areas in terms of which one they felt would be most relevant to their organisation in the future. Figure 6 shows the rank scores for each option.

Figure 6: Future skills development/needs



Overall 45% of respondents felt that fundraising skills were important future skills needs with 25% of those ranking this as the number one need.

This is consistent with other findings in this research. Fundraising and the need for greater, more diverse resources dominate all discussions about the sector's training needs. There are many different skills associated with fundraising, ranging from accessing and applying for grants to developing strategies to increase donations from the

general public. We did not delve into this topic further but the desire for skills development in this area indicates the sector's increasingly complex and competitive funding environment.

Below are examples from the interviews which underline the importance of this area.

> *"There is great demand for fundraising training and how to manage money and be sustainable."*

> *"Increasingly voluntary groups require training in financial management. This is part of the increasingly complex funding landscape."*

> *"The other real need they identified at the moment was for assistance with identifying, accessing and applying for funding."*

> *"Another training and information request we regularly get is in relation to accessing and managing funding."*

Strategic development was a close second in future skills needs identified. Clearly the skills and competencies required to ensure that an organisation develops effectively are in demand. Like fundraising, strategic development skills cover a vast array of competencies but what is clear from previous chapters is that such training specific to the sector is not widely available or availed of by organisations and is perceived as a significant gap.

> *"Strategic leadership training, at all levels, is a huge gap."*

> *"The single biggest issue in youth services is around governance and development of organisations. In most cases there is an over-reliance on a Regional Director and insufficient skills at the committee level."*

Recruiting and managing volunteers featured significantly with organisations when they considered their future skills needs.

> *"There are huge needs in terms of volunteers … a lot of work is carried out by volunteers in the sector, but there are not always appropriate skills."*

Of the ten most relevant future skills needs identified, the focus is squarely on organisational development skills which include funding, volunteer management, management committees and planning. This perhaps reflects the ever-increasing professionalism within the sector due to funder requirements and the greater accountability and transparency expected of organisations. This focus on skills necessary for organisations to perform in such an environment was clearly articulated.

> *"One of the greatest training needs I see is some sort of work with individuals from boards of management that have to deal with statutory agencies or become involved in partnership working. They are unprepared for the amount of work and the professional approach required at this level and could really benefit from structured training, support and mentoring."*

> *"There is a huge demand for training courses particularly in relation to management and development skills."*

> *"The delivery of public services is putting a lot of pressure on organisations to perform and become far more professional in their approach and their skills development."*

> *"The greatest need for training in the sector is 'skilling-up' people to work in partnership with statutory authorities and government. There is a wide range of mechanisms for the sector to interact with and influence government but it was being let down because of a lack of experiences and skills in negotiation and discussion with skilled professionals."*

As in other respects, we see differences between organisation of different sizes in regard to future skill needs.

Skills requirements such as fundraising, strategic development and planning are dominant across all income strata and there is little variation between organisations of different size.

The only exception is for the smallest organisations where recruiting and managing volunteers feature in the top three skills needs. This could be because organisations of this size tend to rely more on volunteers and have few or no paid staff.

In the areas of monitoring/evaluation/research and service user/consumer skills, larger organisations see them as a greater priority than do smaller organisations. This reflects the different functions that larger organisations generally perform compared to smaller ones.

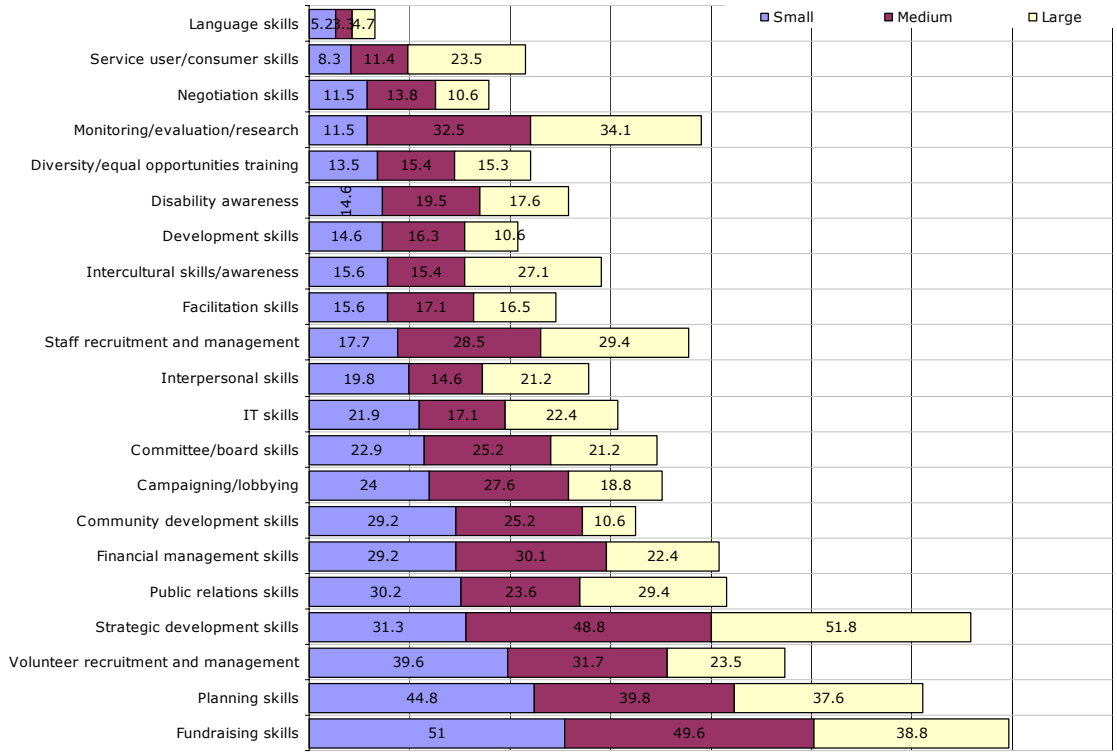
Another fairly obvious area of difference between large and small organisations is in skills needs in recruiting and managing paid staff. Clearly as the organisations increases in size the number of staff increases, which adds to the administrative and managerial burden on the organisation.

Some organisations pointed to the effect changing legislation is having on organisations and its impact on skills needs.

> *"A key need for the centres is training and support around company law and all the elements required to manage staff, projects and budgets."*

> *"Community and voluntary groups need to understand laws and regulations … the laws that impinge on an organisation and the individuals in the organisation might not even realise they are breaking the law."*

Figure 7: Future skills development/needs by economic size of organisation



Many anticipated future skills needs relate to organisations' recognition that the operating environment for organisations is increasingly uncertain and complex. Respondents therefore argue that skills which enable their organisation to deal with complexity and uncertainty, such as funding, planning and organising, will become more important.

Another area which focused minds was the issue of accreditation. This is not surprising given that the accreditation of training can be viewed either as an essential stage in the recognition of the field of community and voluntary work or a means of excluding many 'ordinary' volunteers and controlling access to the sector.

Table 15: Attitudes towards accredited training

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Neither**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	Missing	Total responses
The provision of **accredited training** aimed at the community and voluntary sector is important for our organisation.	39.3	35.1	16.4	5.6	3.6	30	305

There is much middle ground in the debate that talks about the need for a range of options that meet the needs of those who wish to acquire qualifications while respecting the rights and valuing the contributions of those who do not. Unfortunately, the debate at the moment is dominated by the loudest voices at opposite ends of the spectrum.

> "*In [named county] it seemed that there were a lot of people involved in various training however they did not have anything to show for the training. We believed that in order to be able to get a 'career' out of the training there was a need to introduce accreditation.*"

> "*The big lacking in training was seen to be the absence of accreditation*."

The proponents of accreditation as a key gap in training in the sector, and they come from both community and voluntary perspectives, feel that there is no real ultimate value to training unless it has been verified by an established authority and leads to a recognised qualification. There is so much training going on in the sector, they argue, that may well develop people's skills but because of the lack of accreditation its value is doubtful. The second part of this argument is that to be recognised as a professional field of endeavour, community and voluntary work requires a structured system of

accreditation that leads people through standardised progression routes. For organisations with a community perspective there are core principles and values of community development that have to be brought into such training before it can be validated.

> "*We are keen to see greater cohesion and agreement on national standards of training. There is a need for clear progression routes at different levels so that it is possible for someone who is working in a voluntary capacity to move on into more formal community development education*."

For organisations with a voluntary perspective there is an immediate need to ensure that staff employed in the sector have standardised qualifications to increase the sector's professional image and reassure funders that it has the skills to deliver public services:

> "*Many of our member organisations are involved in providing large scale public services but they do not have the management and organisational structures in place to deal with the large sums of money and staff involved. Their structures and policies are antiquated and do not meet accepted minimum standards*."

This research also posed the question of how training should be co-ordinated and developed. We asked organisations to give their preferences (from a list of three options) as to how future training provision for the sector should be structured and co-ordinated. Figure 8 shows how respondents ranked the three preferences.

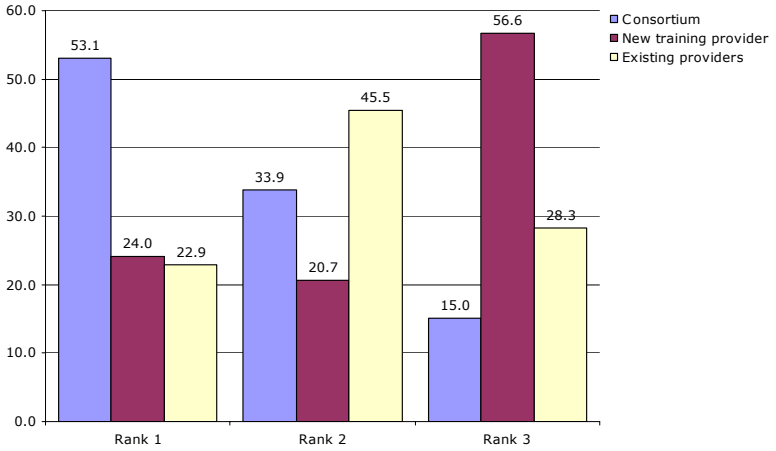


Figure 8: Preferred option for organisation of future training

Base 335 (all responses): missing 140, 182, 189 respectively

Just over one out of two respondents ranked a consortium of existing training providers as their first preference as to how training provision in the sector may develop.[3] Other possible models for training provision suggested by respondents include:

- *"A database of approved community and voluntary sector trainers."*
- *"Adequate training budgets should be built into every programme we implement."*
- *"An existing state training agency should be able to make future provisions."*
- *"An existing training provider with greater resources but with an umbrella group to oversee their standards."*
- *"Funding allotted for training directly to NGO groups."*
- *"National accreditation body/council for sector."*
- *"One stop information on training for the sector with a calendar of training events."*
- *"Use existing universities/colleges for outreach training."*

Some interview comments add depth to the reasons why one particular preference is more amenable than another. For example, a new training organisation that would 'impose' itself upon the sector and indeed the notion of a single lead body engendered some strong responses.

> *"There would be a very strong reaction against a single organisation doing this [providing training] as it would be seen as a controlling mechanism and one that mediated between groups and the sector."*
>
> *"I would not like to see training in the sector that would be dependent on one provider. A consortium also has the potential benefit of sharing resources and also, possibly, bringing in more resources."*
>
> *"Practically I would say there is room for a national training organisation, but politically I do not think it would work."*
>
> *"I feel that a network-based response to training needs was the only way to deal with the funding from the Department but I am not all*

[3] Respondents were given no indication as to what may be entailed in a consortium or for that matter any of the other options. Therefore respondents were free to interpret for themselves what they believed each of the three structures would look like.

that confident that the main groups concerned would be able to work in an effective partnership even if you could get agreement from them to do so."

"It would also be great if there was a resource they could access that would enable them to benefit from the advice of sector-friendly professionals in the field of accountancy, audit, fundraising, company law and HR issues."

"*Partnership is a good model for dealing with all the issues involved in dealing with training provision in the sector but I don't know how the sector could ever arrive at a real or productive model given the lack of success in the past."*

Discussion

This analysis indicates that future skills needs cover a broad range of areas. While some are job specific, there are many generic needs that cut across both functional and sub-sectoral boundaries. Fundraising and financial management cover myriad different skills and areas and clearly further research would be needed to explore fully how organisations interpret any of the listed needs. For example, is this result purely a reaction to current challenges facing the sector or is it more closely tied to developing services and future sustainability?

There is also an argument to be made about support roles (administrators, finance, etc). These are often vital to the successful delivery of services despite the fact they may go unseen. Organisations and funders need to recognise this and ensure that training to develop skills for support staff is not overlooked to the detriment of those actually delivering the services. The increasing levels of ICT training available to the sector means that IT skills are not seen as a major future priority. This is not the case in other sector skills surveys where ICT was still seen to be a major concern for organisations (Voluntary Sector National Training Organisation, 2003).

An issue that emerged in the interviews is the development of a technical support service. This could provide specialist advice and support on the wide range of issues arising from the requirement for formation as companies limited by guarantee. These needs are also emerging as a result of increased professionalism in the sector and the

requirements of employee legislation, equality law and other policies and procedures affecting community and voluntary organisations as employers.

The analysis indicates that organisations anticipate future skills needs across a broad range of areas. This in part reflects the 'gearing up' of the sector's involvement in service delivery as well as the recognition that the operating environment is increasingly uncertain and complex.

During the research it became clear there is duplication and a lack of co-ordination in the training offered to the sector, and concerns expressed by accrediting organisations such as FETAC about the lack of accepted training standards are pertinent. This is true even at third level, as new courses are continually being developed that are not standardised or accredited by any of the universities or with any links to well-established courses like those offered by Maynooth University. There is one exception to this in the youth work sector where an all-Ireland framework of endorsement and validation for third level training has recently been agreed. This will involve all the main stakeholders (voluntary and statutory organisations, youth workers themselves and training institutions) and is sanctioned by the Departments of Education in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Recently a cross-border grouping of training providers and stakeholders has started meeting to develop common standards in training community workers. FETAC is also attempting to develop accredited courses in community development with well-established providers such as Community Action Network (CAN). However, these are early stages in this process which still leaves a vacuum within the sector in accepted qualifications and standards of training. Several organisations were keen to see the development of nationally standardised training courses in community development that could be offered in a modular format. This would mean that staff in organisations could work towards qualifications at their own pace and take into account the demands of their daily working lives.

Those opposed to widespread accreditation in training point forcefully to the fact that it will completely turn off a wide group of people currently involved. These may be people with special needs, literacy and numeracy difficulties, or others who have little or no education. The very idea of having to be assessed or passing exams or tests is enough to prevent these people from even participating in training. They also state, correctly, that many employees in the sector and many on management committees have neither the time nor inclination to devote to a highly structured and standardised training course.

What they require is practical skills and support to undertake their current responsibilities. Some of these people may already be highly qualified and are looking for 'hands-on' training that applies specifically to their immediate needs.

There is validity in the views of both sides. However, as in most arguments, these views are not mutually exclusive. They all refer to a continuum of training provision. This stretches from individuals requiring introductory personal development in a small group setting so as to make the first steps into local voluntary and community action, to those who want to make a career as a professional up to the level of a Master's degree. The principal difficulty in visualising this is that the sector is at such an early stage in training and professional development. At the 'higher' end no nationally accepted framework for professional training has yet emerged, and there is no agreement as to who the main providers should be and what organisation should accredit it.

Below the level of professional third-level qualifications, the same factors are at play in relation to the absence of a clear infrastructure and the differences in need between community and voluntary organisations. Many small community and voluntary organisations baulk at the thought that courses they want to do might have to be accredited by an organisation such as FETAC with all the work that requires. Some organisations, such as those working with women and Travellers, have tried to meet the requirements of FETAC accreditation but have found that it changes their training so much and was so unsuited to their clients that they eventually gave up trying. This is not a criticism of FETAC as they are trying to adapt their requirements to such a wide variety of audiences and subject matter that in many instances it is impossible.

Further development of the training infrastructure is sorely needed as it will force a resolution to the issues of professional qualifications and the huge range of training needs at different levels. At the moment it does appear somewhat like trying to force square pegs into round holes largely because there is no organisation, such as the Open Training College (OCN) in Northern Ireland, that takes a flexible and adaptable approach to accreditation and certification. In the Republic such an organisation would sit between the non-accredited certificates offered by many training providers and the higher level accreditation procedures required by FETAC. This need could also be met through courses in modular format that take into account prior learning through experience, that FETAC (or another agency) would accredit in a flexible and participative manner.

Finally, the issue of a preferred option for future training provision generated some interesting debate. This research was not designed to offer a preference for one particular

option over another; rather, this section of the report looks at some of the issues that in our opinion are associated with each of the options.

On providing existing training providers with additional resources, it could be argued that those training providers who are currently meeting needs in the sector can consolidate their positions and develop and enhance their services. Better resourced training providers could potentially negate some of the negative aspects of an environment where funding is short-term and insecure. Equally, training providers would be able to expand the range and location of training thereby countering some of the issues of access and demand. Finally resources could be focused on those training providers who provide training that is currently seen as addressing deficits in the training of community and voluntary organisations.

As with any model or structure there are negatives as well as positives. Sourcing funding could be problematic given the general funding environment in the sector and the uncertainty about the political will to invest in it. Deciding on the training providers and areas of training to be focused on could prove problematic in terms of how the decisions are reached. A competitive tendering process might be needed to ensure efficiency. Nevertheless the resourcing of a number of training providers could allow them develop an existing infrastructure that is fairly comprehensive at a local level (such as the Comhairle network of offices) to provide signposting and information access. Finally, this model develops upon existing strengths and relationships and would provide continuity.

There are also advantages and disadvantages to the option of creating a single national training organisation. This would create a key strategic organisation to promote, enhance and develop skills and competencies for the sector. A single organisation supporting the entire sector would theoretically be able to develop a programme to meet the needs of organisations at different stages of development. This model would also provide a focal point or a one-stop-shop on training and skills development. A single organisation could also co-ordinate support and training providers at local, regional and national levels. It could develop a specialist role in technical support and advice on legislation and company law.

Of the three options presented to organisations, the development of a new training organisation is the most resource dependent. It would require significant funding to meet all the key needs within the sector.

The option of establishing a consortium of existing training providers also has positive and negative features. A consortium would bring together expertise that currently exists in the sector, as well as use existing resources and infrastructure. The consortium could also develop around key thematic areas that would be represented by a number of training providers (community and voluntary sector, academia and the private sector) and key community and voluntary organisations. Such areas could include governance (committee board skills, legal issues), community development, volunteer management, strategic/leadership development, fundraising and organisational development.

Key to any consortium approach would be a secretariat function. Its role would be to co-ordinate the running of the consortium and to provide the promotional and signposting aspects of training. Ideally such a role would be fulfilled by a non-training provider (to reduce conflict of interest issues) and by an organisation with an umbrella or cross-sectoral role. It would facilitate a shared strategy between the community and voluntary sectors that takes account of all the issues of diversity, size and organisational need.

One of the advantages to this option and the option of single training provider would be that it provides the sector with a single, coherent voice with which to negotiate with government and funders on developing training strategies. The consortium would provide a forum through which training providers could network. In turn this could lead to greater communication and sharing to address issues of duplication and lack of co-ordination. Unlike the other two options the consortium approach need not be particularly resource intensive. The bulk of resources are required to provide the signposting materials and information and to do future research in skills gaps and shortages.

Despite these advantages and the support expressed through this research, there is little evidence that this approach within the community and voluntary sector has been successful before.

To take any one of these options in isolation would be imprudent, as components of each option meet the overall needs expressed by the sector throughout this research. Our list of preferences is not meant to be definitive but to illustrate what structures and models could be employed, either individually or collectively, to provide a basis for addressing the training needs of organisations.

What has become evident throughout this research is that there is no "one size fits all" solution to training for a diverse and growing sector. Nevertheless our analysis in this final section does highlight various components in each of the different approaches that could be combined or developed individually.

3. Recommendations

3. Recommendations

As shown throughout this report there is a robust debate on how best the community and voluntary sector may be served in relation to training needs. To crystallise some of the outcomes, this section draws upon the research findings to list a number of core elements that should form the basis of any approach to addressing training needs.

The list is not in order of preference but simply reflects the issues articulated by respondents during this research.

- Any training strategy should take account of the diversity of the sector's training needs and skills, and the varying needs of organisations at different stages in their lifecycle, always respecting the preference of each organisation to have the greatest possible control over their own needs;

- Given the high recognition of training as a strategic priority, a key priority should be to signpost training provision, to provide good practice guides targeted at the local, regional and national levels and using existing resources, and to collate, analyse and disseminate information about training;

- Using existing infrastructure and methodologies wherever possible, structures should be developed for greater networking and communication between, and links with, national training providers (possibly including regionally-based training resource centres) so as to better co-ordinate training and to reduce duplication;

- Resources should be provided to organisations to invest in the skills of their own workforce or to provide training and development for the wider community and voluntary workforce. In consultation with users, funders should invest in a shared strategy to enhance skills and learning activities;

- There is a need to develop standards for trainers and to set out the core competencies required of trainers;

- Organisations with limited resources could form local partnerships to deliver support and training;

- 'Technical supports' (such as fundraising, legal advice, strategic development, governance, human resources and equality issues) should be a priority;

- Accreditation should be explored further with the interests and authorities involved;
- A research strategy should be developed to examine future skills needs.

This is clearly a far reaching agenda but throughout this research these issues kept coming back to dominate the discussions. The framework for an agenda of change has emerged.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample Distribution

	Sample	Returns	Response Rate
Region 1	558	128	38%
Region 2	369	34	10%
Region 3	369	32	10%
Region 4	352	28	8%
Region 5	352	26	8%
n/a		87	26%
Total	**2,000**	**335**	**17%**

Appendix 2: List of interviewees

- Age Action Ireland
- An Cosán
- AONTAS
- Area Development Management (ADM)
- Blue Drum Specialist Support Agency
- Brian Harvey
- Carmichael Centre
- Clondalkin Partnership
- Combat Poverty Agency
- Comhairle
- Community Action Network (CAN)
- Community Work Education and Training Network
- CORI Justice Commission
- Disability Federation Ireland
- Donegal Community Workers Co-operative
- Donegal County Council
- Dublin South Supported Employment
- Dundalk Employment Partnership
- Dundalk Institute
- European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)
- Exchange House: Traveller Women's Group
- Family Resource Centre National Forum (FRCNF)
- FETAC
- Galway City Partnership
- Galway Rural Development
- Institute of Non-profit Management
- Irish Advocacy Network
- Irish Council for Social Housing
- Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed
- Irish Rural Link
- Maurice Devlin
- Meitheal
- National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)
- National Association of Mentally Handicapped In Ireland
- National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI)
- National Youth Federation
- Nexus Research
- Paul Partnership Limerick
- Pavee Point
- People with Disabilities in Ireland (PWDI)
- PLANET
- Protestant Aid
- Ringsend Action Project
- Social Economy Solutions
- The Wheel
- Triskele Community Training and Development Ltd
- VEC City of Dublin
- Volunteering Ireland
- Women's Aid

Appendix 3: Profile of respondent organisations

Table 1: Income

	Count	%
Less than €10,000	49	15.7
€10,000-€50,000	47	15.1
€50,000-€100,000	31	9.9
€100,000-€250,000	47	15.1
€250,000-€500,000	45	14.4
€500,000-€1 million	37	11.9
More than €1 million	48	15.4
Don't know	8	2.6
Total	**312**	**100**

Base: 335 responses (12 missing)

Table 2: Income by full-time and part-time employees

Paid employees	Full-time n	Full-time %	Part-time n	Part-time %	Total
Less than €10,000	5	13.2	33	86.8	38
€10,000-€50,000	247	82.1	54	17.9	301
€50,000-€100,000	48	46.6	55	53.4	103
€100,000-€250,000	131	35.1	242	64.9	373
€250,000-€500,000	277	41.7	387	58.3	664
€500,000-€1 million	377	58.9	263	41.1	640
More than €1 million	3,623	66.6	1,821	33.4	5,444
Don't know	12	48.0	13	52.0	25
Total	**4720**	**62.2**	**2,868**	**37.8**	**7,588**

Base: 335 responses (12 missing)

Table 3: Income by full-time and part-time volunteers

Volunteers	Full-time n	Full-time %	Part-time n	Part-time %	Total
Less than €10,000	72	5.1	1,341	94.9	**1,413**
€10,000-€50,000	62	2.3	2,648	97.7	**2,710**
€50,000-€100,000	49	6.6	696	93.4	**745**
€100,000-€250,000	57	4.1	1328	95.9	**1,385**
€250,000-€500,000	138	0.9	15,986	99.1	**16,124**
€500,000-€1 million	256	23.7	822	76.3	**1,078**
More than €1 million	791	8.9	8,115	91.1	**8,906**
Don't know	21	48.8	22	51.2	**43**
Total	1446	4.5	30,958	95.5	**32,404**

Base: 335 responses (12 missing**)**

Table 4: Organisation type

	Count	%
Voluntary organisation	166	52.0
Community group	80	25.1
Other	54	16.9
Network/Forum	16	5.0
Co-operative	3	0.9
Trade union	0	0.0
Total	**319**	**100.0**

Base: 335 responses (16 missing)

Table 5: Income by full-time and part-time employees

Paid employees	Full-time n	Full-time %	Part-time n	Part-time %	Total
Community	477	50.5	467	49.5	944
Voluntary	3,040	61.3	1,922	38.7	4,962
Other	998	66.9	493	33.1	1,491
Total	**4,515**	**61.0**	**2,882**	**39.0**	**7,397**

A total of 239 organisations (71.3% of respondents) stated they had a total of 1,461 managerial staff. This equates to one out of every five employees represented in this sample who have a managerial role of some description.

Table 6: Income by full-time and part-time volunteers

Volunteers	Full-time n	Full-time %	Part-time n	Part-time %	Total
Community	116	7.9	1,357	92.1	1,473
Voluntary	1,242	4.5	26,256	95.5	27,498
Other	134	3.5	3,717	96.5	3,851
Total	**1,492**	**4.5**	**31,330**	**95.5**	**32,822**

Table 7: Organisational remit

	Count	%
Stand alone organisation/group	202	61.6
Local/branch office of an Ireland wide organisation	44	13.4
Head office of an organisation with branches Ireland-wide	33	10.1
Other	36	11.0
Irish branch of an international charity	7	2.1
Irish head office of an international charity	6	1.8
Total	**328**	**100.0**

Base: 335 responses (7 missing)

Table 8: Geographic remit

	Count	%
Local	192	58.4
National	43	13.1
Sub regional	80	24.3
International	13	4.0
Total	**329**	**100.0**

Base: 335 responses (6 missing)

Table 9: Area in which the organisation operates

	Count	%
Both urban and rural	225	69.2
Urban	56	13.5
Rural	44	17.2
Total	**325**	**100.0**

Base: 335 responses (10 missing)

Appendix 4: Mapping the community and voluntary sector infrastructure

It was not possible within the scope of the research to map in a comprehensive way the existing training infrastructure used by community and voluntary organisations. What is clear is that training is available to the sector from a variety of sources:

- Within the community and voluntary sector:
    - from specialist training organisations like The Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups
    - from umbrellas, federations and networks which provide various types of issue-based or organisational-based training to members and in many cases also to non-members
    - from individual trainers who work exclusively with the CV sector

- From a variety of statutory sources:
    - Area Development Management (ADM)
    - Combat Poverty Agency
    - Comhairle
    - FÁS - Training and Employment Authority

- From 'standard' education and training sources:
    - Universities/Colleges: Dublin/Cork/Galway/Maynooth, Trinity College Dublin Business School (Centre for non-profit management), National College of Ireland
    - Institutes of Technology and VECs
    - Institute of Public Administration (IPA)
    - Irish Management Institute (IMI)
    - IBEC / ICTU

Appendix 5:

Questionnaire

The Wheel

Community and voluntary sector training needs assessment

ID: 971

	Organisation
	Contact
	Position
	Address
	Tel
	Email

Please return in the FREEPOST envelope provided by **Tuesday 15 March 2005**

Please confirm the address and contact details above.

Your Organisation/Group

1. Approximately what is annual income of your organisation/group?

Less than €10,000	
€10,000-€50,000	
€50,000-€100,000	
€100,000-€250,000	
€250,000-€500,000	
€500,000-€1 million	
More than €1 million	
Don't know	

2 Please indicate the number of paid staff your organisation currently employs.

Full-time	
Part-time	

3. Please indicate the number of employees in your organisation/group who have a significant managerial role *(eg with responsibility for staff, resources or service provision).*

4. Please indicate the number of volunteers your organisation has *(please include members of board/management committee)***.**

Full-time	
Part-time	

5. Does your organisation have a Charity (CHY) number from the Revenue Commissioners?

Yes		No	

6. Which of the following best describes your organisation? *Please tick one only.*

Community group	
Voluntary organisation	
Network/Forum	
Co-operative	
Trade union	
Other (please specify) ►	

7. Which of the following applies to your organisation/group? *Please tick one only.*

Stand alone organisation/group	
Local/branch office of an Ireland wide organisation	
Head office of an organisation with branches Ireland-wide	
Irish branch of an international charity	
Irish head office of an international charity	
Other (please specify) ►	

8. Which of the following best describes the geographic remit of your organisation?

Local = neighbourhood/defined community or at county level	
Sub regional = across more than one county	
National = Ireland-wide	
International	

9. Please indicate which of the following best describes the area within which your organisation operates?

Urban areas only	
Rural areas only	
Both urban and rural areas	

10. Over the next twelve months what do you believe the three major challenges facing your organisation will be?

1.
2.
3.

Training provision

11. Has your organisation/group got an internal training policy for the development of staff?

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

12. If your organisation/group has an annual training budget could you please estimate its approximate size?

Less than €1,000		€5,000 - €15,000	
€1,000 - €2,000		€15,000 - €40,000	
€2,000 - €3,000		€40,000 - €75,000	
€3,000 - €5,000		Over €75,000	
No specific training budget			

13. Please indicate below the different ways in which your organisation supports training *(more than one may apply)*?

Day release	
Residential	
On-line learning	
Distance learning	
Study leave	
Provide in-house accredited training	
Provide in-house non-accredited training	
None of the above	
Other (please specify) ►	

14. Has your organisation arranged training for your staff over the past twelve months?

Yes (go to Q16) ►	
No (go to Q15) ►	

15. If it hasn't, what are the reasons why training for your staff has not been arranged over the past twelve months? *(Please rank with 1 being the most relevant).*

Lack of funds	
No appropriate training available	
Staff not keen to participate	
Accessibility to training providers	
High staff turnover	
Lack of time for training	
Lack of cover for training	
Training is not a priority	
No training necessary	
Don't know of any training providers	
We don't know what our training needs are	
Other (please specify) ►	

16. Which of the following types of training has your organisation/group funded or arranged over the past twelve months? *(Please tick all that apply)*

Fundraising	
Planning	
Financial management	
Strategic development	
Staff recruitment and management	
Volunteer recruitment and management	
Campaigning/lobbying	
Monitoring/evaluation/research	
IT skills	
Committee/board skills	
Language skills	
Diversity/equal opportunities training	
Community development	
Public relations	
Service user/consumer training	
Negotiation skills	
Other (please specify) ►	

17. What have been the benefits to your organisation in relation to the provision of this training? *(Please rank the first 5 that apply with 1 being the most relevant).*

Greater success recruiting volunteers	
Greater success raising or generating funds	
Improvements in our community	
Better recruitment and retention of staff	
Provision of new services	
Staff more proficient at their job	
Staff are more motivated	
Organisational objectives met	
Quality standards met	
Decreased operating/running costs	
New technologies introduced	
New working practices introduced	
None of the above	
Other (please specify) ►	

18. Overall, do you feel your organisation has had any difficulties in terms of accessing training?

Yes (go to **Q19**) ►	
No (go to **Q21**) ►	

19. Please rank the following reasons why you feel our organisation has encountered difficulties accessing training *(1 being the most relevant and so on).*

Lack of funding — competing priorities plus reluctance from funders to fund training budgets.	
Pressure of work.	
Lack of support from the organisation /management committee/board in relation to staff development.	
Lack of appropriate accreditation for community and voluntary sector training	
Lack of appropriate provision — lack of training specifically tailored for the community and voluntary sector.	
Lack of training providers within an accessible distance to our organisation	

20. What developments do you believe would improve your organisation's ability to access training?

21 Does your organisation provide training for other community and voluntary organisations/groups?

Yes	
No (go to **Q22**) ►	

If yes, which areas are covered by this training? (tick all that apply)

Fundraising skills	
Planning	
Financial management	
Strategic development	
Staff recruitment and management	
Volunteer recruitment and management	
Campaigning/lobbying	
Monitoring/evaluation/research	
IT skills	
Committee/board skills	
Language skills	
Diversity/equal opportunities training	
Community development	
Public relations	
Service user/consumer training	
Negotiation skills	
Facilitation skills	
Interpersonal skills	
Other (please specify) ►	

Training delivery

Please score the following statements related to training provision.

1=strongly agree *2=agree*
3=neither agree or disagree
4=disagree *5= strongly disagree*

22. There is a well developed infrastructure for the provision of training in the community and voluntary sector.

1	2	3	4	5

23. It is easy to access information on training provision for community and voluntary sector organisations.

1	2	3	4	5

24. The Government recognises the importance of training provision in the community and voluntary sector.

1	2	3	4	5

25. There is sufficient Government support for the provision of training for the community and voluntary sector.

1	2	3	4	5

26. Training and development is a key part of our organisation/group development strategy.

1	2	3	4	5

27. Greater access to training and development opportunities contributes to the long-term sustainability of our organisation.

1	2	3	4	5

28. The provision of accredited training aimed at the community and voluntary sector is important for our organisation.

1	2	3	4	5

Please use the **FREEPOST** envelope provided and we would ask that you return the questionnaire by:

Tuesday 15 March 2005

29. My preferred option for future training provision in the sector is: *(please rank with 1 being your first preference)*

A new national training organisation for the sector	
An existing training provider with greater resources	
A consortium of existing training providers	
Other (please specify) ►	

Skills development

30. Thinking ahead, what do you think your organisation's future skills/areas needs will be? *(Please rank the first 5 that apply with 1 being the most relevant).*

Fundraising skills	
Planning skills	
Financial management skills	
Strategic development skills	
Staff recruitment and management	
Volunteer recruitment and management	
Campaigning/lobbying	
Monitoring/evaluation/research	
IT skills	
Committee/board skills	
Language skills	
Diversity/equal opportunities training	
Community development skills	
Public relations skills	
Service user/consumer skills	
Negotiation skills	
Facilitation skills	
Development skills	
Disablity awareness	
Intercultural skills/awareness	
Interpersonal skills	
Other (please specify) ►	

THANK YOU

If you have any queries about the questionnaire please do not hesitate to contact Leeann Brady on **04890 877777** or email: **leeann.brady@nicva.org.**

Responses to this questionnaire are covered by the provisions of the Data Protection Act, 1998