2014

The Wheel Sector Skills Programme 2011 -2013

External Review

This report summarises the key developments under The Wheel Sector Skills Programme 2011 - 2013 including the Training Links Programme, Leadership Development and web-based and other training supports.

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The Wheel Sector Skills Programme 2011 – 2013

Introduction

The Sector Skills programme was developed, as a result of research commissioned by The Wheel in 2005 and captured in "Training Solutions for the Community and Voluntary Sector in Ireland" (NICVA, June 2005). The report clearly identified a range of training and development needs in three broad areas; leadership, networking and access to training opportunities. The Sector Skills programme was designed to meet these needs and was successfully piloted in 2005-2007 and further developed in a second cycle 2008 – 2010.

The programme is funded with support from the Department of Education and Skills under the National Training Fund. *The fund provides for expenditure on training for those seeking employment, training for persons in employment, literacy and numeracy, training for those in the community and voluntary sector and also provides funding for the identification of existing and future skills need for the economy*. (*Department of Education & Skills website 2014).*

The programme has evolved, grown and matured over the period since its initial design phase and completed its third cycle between 2011 and 2013 which is the period under consideration in this report.

The objectives established for the period were:

A. To develop, implement and evaluate an extended Training Links network-led training programme for between 20 and 25 networks, each with a minimum of 10 organisations per network;

B. To conduct a large-scale national research project which will revisit the initial research report on which the *Sector Skills* programme is based, to explore the current state of training and need for skills building in the sector. It will also pick up on the exploration of the in-depth support needs required by CEOs in particular so that the Leadership Development offering can be further developed;

C. To continue to provide leadership training and support for CEOs and senior managers and explore how the Leadership Development Programme can be further developed – with the potential for accrediting it;

D. To further develop and promote the Learningpoint service as a one-stop-shop information resource for training;

E. To develop and promote training resources for newly identified needs across the whole sector, in response to the forthcoming charities regulation and the increasingly scarce financial resources coming from the state for the provision of services;

These objectives were developed into the three year programme, highlighting annual priorities and targets and translated into a suite of programmes:

- National research report of the community & voluntary sector
- Training Links programme – a network-led training programme for organisations

- Leadership Programme – offering a variety of development opportunities to strengthen leadership in the sector
- Web-based and other training supports

This report aims to capture key developments and progress against the objectives established for the period. The report is based on summative evaluations completed for each strand of the Sector Skills initiative, interviews with key informants including key staff at The Wheel, Sector Skills contractors and an on-line survey with a selection of participants who benefited from the programme. The report is structured against the objectives and programmes established for the period, with each section of the report summarising objectives established, actions implemented and results achieved.

Section One examines the National research report of the community & voluntary sector; Section Two addresses progress within the Training Links programme – a network-led training programme for organisations; The Leadership Programme offering a variety of development opportunities to strengthen leadership in the sector is the focus of Section Three and is followed in Section Four by a consideration of the web-based and other training supports put in place. Finally some conclusions regarding the Sector Skills Programme 2011 – 2013 are presented in Section Five.

Section One: A Portrait of Ireland's Non-profit Sector: National research report of the community & voluntary sector

Objective:

The first of the five high level objectives of the Sector Skills programme was to:

Conduct a large-scale national research project which will revisit the initial research report on which the Sector Skills programme is based, to explore the current state of training and need for skills building in the sector. It will also pick up on the exploration of the in-depth support needs required by CEOs in particular so that the Leadership Development offering can be further developed.

The dearth of detailed and current data on the nature of activity in the non-profit sector and the challenges faced by organisations in sustaining their missions in the economic downturn, has long been a challenge for individual organisations and policy-makers. The aim of the research was to address this need.

Description:

After an open tender process in 2011, The Wheel commissioned RSM McClure Watters in association with NICVA and Whitebarn Consulting to undertake research into the nature and extent of community and voluntary activity in Ireland and the challenges faced by people who lead and manage non-profit organisations. The research was conducted between October 2011 and March 2012. 4,500 independent non-profit organisations (drawn from The Wheel's database of over 10,000 organisations) were targeted. Over five hundred completed surveys were received, representing a response rate of over 11%.

The key strands of the research included three complimentary work streams:

- <u>An Online survey of non-profit organisations</u>: Organisations that are both independently governed and not-for-profit were eligible to take part in the survey. A comprehensive questionnaire was designed by RSM McClure Watters in conjunction with The Wheel, including piloting with a focus group of community and voluntary sector organisations. The total number of completed surveys which were analysed was 506.

- <u>Interviews with Stakeholders</u>: A stakeholder consultation map was developed in conjunction with The Wheel. This included key government departments, umbrella bodies, funders, professional associations and others. Stakeholders' views presented in the report are concerned with key challenges at three levels - societal, sectoral and organisational.

- <u>Desk Research</u>: The survey design was underpinned by desk review of relevant policy and strategic context information. The report also draws some comparisons between this research and previous research into the sector in Ireland as well as comparisons with studies in other jurisdictions.

The Wheel published two reports based on the research: *A Portrait of Ireland's Non-Profit Sector* (October 2012) provided an overview of the key findings and *Ireland's Non-Profit Sector: The Big Picture* provided a more comprehensive overview and access to key data.

The research highlights the impact of the economic downturn on income of community and voluntary organisations (down for 57% of respondents) and on demand for services (up for 64.5% of respondents) indicating the increased strain on human resources and employment. The continued challenge of governance and leadership is also highlighted, a challenge that was put under renewed scrutiny in the latter half of 2013 by both the state and the public. The report confirms the need, recognised at the design stage of this Sector Skills Programme by the Wheel and the non-profit enterprises, to support leadership and governance as a priority.

Half of Irish non-profits note an absence of formal training needs assessment and only 40% report having a written training and development plan. Interestingly this contrasts with co-ordinators under training links reporting that some, most or all of the non-profits in their network complete needs assessment (73%) and have training and development plans (63%).

Results:

The research provides an in-depth picture of the scope and operations of the non-profit sector, highlighting valuable insights that informed the final year of this phase of the Sector Skills Programme (2011-2013) and has informed the design and roll-out of the next period 2014 – 2016. The report provides quality information and analysis on the current scope and operations of the non-profit sector. It builds on the work of *INKEx   (INKEx was a non-profit company whose mission was to transform the visibility, transparency and accountability of civil society organisations in Ireland: philanthropies, charities, NGOs, the 'community & voluntary sector'. Having completed its project to build a 40,000-page website with live regulatory and voluntary disclosures about most of the economically significant non-profits in Ireland, INKEx was wound up in 2012, when it became clear that government funding for the next phase of the project would not be available. INKEx produced a website to document the project, and provide ongoing access to its publications (INKEx website April 2014)* and will be an important reference point to inform future strategies pertaining to employability, leadership and training and development within the Sector.

The research has informed The Wheel strategic planning, particularly in the areas on training and advocacy work. For example, the data has been used in relation to the sector's development needs, governance and the economic impact of the recession. The findings and data have also been made available to The Wheel's members and the wider non-profit sector via website, publications and other channels.

This extensive national research into the nature and extent of non-profit activity in Ireland, resulted in a document with key facts on which supportive policy can be developed to enable the non-profit sector to maximise its contribution to national well-being and social and economic recovery.

Section Two: Training Links Programme

Objective:

The second strand of the Sector Skills Programme 2011 – 2013 aims:

To develop, implement and evaluate an extended Training Links network-led training programme for between 20 and 25 networks, each with a minimum of 10 organisations per network.

Training Links fosters and supports a networked and partnership approach to training and upskilling in non-profit organisations in the community and voluntary sector. This maximises the power of all the different parts and processes by working together, to enhance learning and upskilling, to encourage and grow jobs and employment, whilst addressing the needs of the organisations, their members and their clients.

Specifically the objectives established for the programme aimed to:

- Promote increased participation in training and up-skilling activities in order to build skills and to improve adaptability and long-term employability of those currently working and those hoping to work in the sector.
- Promote and support a cohesive and organisational-led approach to training and learning especially within small and medium organisations, enabling increased awareness of, access to, training options through the establishment of Training Networks across the sector.
- Promote and encourage collaboration within and between networks of members so that ideas, initiatives and best practice in training and development can be identified and shared, resulting in cost-effective and/or innovative solutions to joint training needs.
- Facilitate the provision of quality customised training by supporting the development of new, innovative or flexible training methodologies, in order to deliver more relevant, effective, efficient and user-friendly training solutions.

The programme objectives are based around the networking of non-profit organisations that come together to work as a group in order to undertake training that individual members of the group would not be able to undertake as successfully if acting alone.

Description:

Twenty three networks were approved, thirteen of which were new and the remaining ten had operated under the previous Training Links Programme 2007-2011. The number of networks approved increased by 22% on the last period.

A transparent and rigorous selection process was carried out by an independent selection committee (See Appendix One). All proposals deemed eligible were assessed in terms of strategic focus and potential to positively impact individuals, organisations and the social and economic issues for which the organisations were established in the first instance. The capacity for innovation and its dissemination were also considered.

Training Links Networks 2011 - 2013

Network Name	Sector Description	Network
Ability West	Health and Social Service	New
AONTAS	Adult Education	Existing
Bedford Row	Imprisonment Affected Family Support	New
CLAR ICH	Household Management	New
Community Radio	Media	New
Cork Community Music Network	Children	Existing
CRAOL	Media	Existing
Crosscare	Social Care Agency	Existing
DDTV Community Television Training Network	Media	Existing
Dublin Cycling Network	Sport and Health	New
Irish Heart Foundation	Health	New
Kerry Community Forum	Community & Voluntary	Existing
Meath Training Links	Community & Voluntary	Existing
National Sports Partnership	Sport and Recreation	New
Plain English Network PEN	Social Service	New
Raheen – South East Forum	Social Care	New
Rape Crisis Network	Sexual Violence	Existing
Safe Ireland	Domestic Violence	New
Senior Help Line Network	Older People	Existing
SHEP	Community Development	Existing
Sligo Family Support	Childcare and Family Support	New
SOS Kilkenny – Ordinary Lives	Disability	New
Suicide or Survive	Mental Health	New

Results:

The twenty three networks involved 393 non-profit organisations that directly trained 4,562 participants across 363 programmes and totalled 8,766 training days (See Appendix Two).

The verified secondary/indirect engagement involved a further 64,294 individuals who benefited from input, support and/or training from the 4,562 participants who directly participated. These baseline statistics suggests a significant return on the investment and also indicates a commitment to measuring the impact and reach of the programme albeit that all involved acknowledged the challenge of such measurement.

Feedback from participating organisations (captured through progress reports, network evaluations and a survey with co-ordinators completed as part of this review) give a flavour of the breadth and depth of results and impact the networks have had and continue to have. Key findings of note are summarised below.

- As a significant catalyst for improving the performance within the non-profit sector, it is important that the networks reflect the diversity within the sector and this was achieved. The range of types of organisations involved reflects the varied nature within the non-profit sector in Ireland, including health, transport/environment; energy housing; family supports; disability; literacy; community development; mental health and sports.
- Feedback highlights the programme was an important support for the non-profit organisations to address key challenges in their operating environments. The breadth of activities addressed (See Appendix Two) is impressive and reflects the varied business challenges facing sustaining employability in the community and voluntary sector. These challenges and innovative responses are akin to those faced by for-profit companies and indeed the public sector namely: governance; leadership; management development; customer/client satisfaction; quality, product and service design; managing human resources; health & safety; and communications.
- The strategies adopted by the networks were based on needs analysis and consequent training and development plans. The majority of co-ordinators expect such assessments and strategies to continue into the future.
- Many networks addressed the challenge of governance for non-profit enterprises. One network reported *"We were structurally unsound around Governance. The Community Education Network of Crosscare (CENC) network presented me with the information I needed to address this……The value of network has been great. I needed more legal information with regard to Trustees and a member was able to support me in this."* Another stated *"An innovative governance training package including a pod cast, an audio version and written documentation was produced to address the difficulties surrounding suitable times and places for board members to meet and collaborate. This has proven to be very popular and somewhat of a breakthrough as it has the ability to penetrate further to clientele. 4 other NGOs have requested the package".*
- Bringing small and medium sized non-profit organisations together forced them to address their needs collectively, reducing duplication and costs associated with training. Consistent feedback highlights the networked approach as very cost efficient and effective. *'It would*

not have been possible for the training to be delivered through an alternative approach in the current environment of scarce resources.' (Ability West Network).

- Training was deemed to be flexible, innovative, timely and enterprise-led. Evidence suggests networks were skilled at negotiating with providers to innovate and adapt solutions to the specific circumstances of the network members in a cost effective manner. Feedback from the networks received as part of this review also indicates a strong (82%) sense that the networks had achieved what they set out to do.

- The organisations in the networks are working with some of the more marginalised, those at the sharp edge of the economic down-turn and those in need of significant support in advance of any re-entry to employment (lone parents; long-term unemployed; migrants; people with disabilities). The evaluations and reports suggest the effect on these groups in terms of positive impacts (social, education and training) towards employability are positive. Funding is helping to tackle disadvantage by delivering locally tailored learning solutions in a flexible and local organisation driven means. This is truly empowering organisations, network members and learners, and is helping to increase the number of people able to engage in organisational and employment opportunities.

- The sustainability of the investment is likely as 64% of the co-ordinators report that the networks hope to continue in 2014, with the remaining 36% are unsure.

- Previous evaluations of the programme reference the importance of accrediting training and development programmes. Co-ordinators reported that more than half (55%) of the training was accredited. Further consideration and support might need to be given to this in line with government commitments to the National Jobs Strategy and to individual progression on the National Qualifications Framework.

- Best practice was identified and shared across the twenty three networks evidenced in sharing evaluation models, trainers and methodologies.

Challenges were identified including the time required to co-ordinate organisations in networks was underestimated and engaging in this new model took time. However, many of the challenges highlighted in previous evaluations have been successfully addressed.

Section Three: Leadership Development Programme

Objective:

Promoting and supporting excellence in leadership in non-profit enterprises was the focus of the third strand of the Sector Skills Programme which aimed to:

Continue to provide leadership training and support for CEOs and senior managers and to explore how the Stronger Leaders programme can be further developed – with the potential for accrediting it.

The Leadership Programme was delivered through three elements that collectively comprise the Leadership Development Programme of the Sector Skills programme. The suite of programmes aim to ensure that existing leaders in the community and voluntary sector are supported and that a new generation of leaders can be attracted to and developed within the sector. The three elements include

1. Investment in Excellence Programme
2. Accredited Leadership Development Programmes
3. Other Leadership Events
    - Regional Leadership Conferences
    - Leadership Breakfast Briefings
    - CEO2CEO Fora
    - Leadership Network Events

1. Investment in Excellence Programme (IIE) -

Description:

Professional and personal development is at the core of this programme which provided evidence based insights into how leaders thinking works and how to change it. Providing tools, information and understanding on how to support and lead change and success within organisation featured throughout. The programme also aimed to establish strong peer support for leaders as they shared their experiences on and following the programme.

Seven 4.5 day Investment in Excellence programmes were delivered to 108 participants between Feb 2011 and June 2013. The programme was split in two phases with the first phase focusing on the psychological theory, personal skills and understanding how individuals think and the second phase looking at the application of this learning in phase one to groups, teams, organisation, leadership and culture. It was a significant investment of leaders' time over a relatively short period of time (two months). All participants were offered refresher days on a six monthly basis.

Results:

Feedback from participants on the Investment in Excellence Programme confirms overwhelming support and enthusiasm for the programme and for the positive impacts it continues to have on those who attended.

- The areas of impact reported include goal setting (65%); communication skills (50%); leadership and/or management skills (50%); positively influence change (40%); being solution focused (50%); problem solving (30%); visualising outcomes (50%); directing

governance (10%); planning effectively (20%); improving accountability and responsibility (10%). It provides quality personal and professional development that people enjoy, value and apply in a meaningful way. This is evident in both formal and informal feedback and through the level of recommendations which drove ongoing demand for the programme over three years. Key success factors for this include a combination of quality content, a skilled facilitator with both content expertise and sector knowledge, and an excellent venue which was very conducive to creating an effective and safe learning environment.

- Participants appreciated the level of research, science and psychology that underpinned the concepts. They also appreciated that this was delivered in balance with illustrative exercises and activities that made the content widely accessible.

- The trainers questioned whether enough transferable content on leadership and organisation development was being imparted. It was thought more was needed and following suggestions from participants, the model evolved and incorporated the half day application workshop. This also informed the content of the refresher days.

- Informal feedback and discussions throughout the programmes made it clear that participants greatly valued the opportunity for learning with peers who were often experiencing very similar challenges. People commented on the comfort of realizing they were not alone and also the reassurance of knowing certain difficulties are endemic within the sector. There were also many occasions when participants got tips, examples and suggestions for practical solutions from their peers.

- In terms of capitalising on the group and remaining in contact, there has been a mixed experience. Some groups remain in contact (55% of those surveyed as part of this review remain in contact by email; 15% by phone) and 30% stating no contact is now in place.

- The programme is hugely impactful on the individuals and their organisations. 100% of those who participated have recommended it to others. In relation to accreditation, 70% of those surveyed would have liked the programme accredited, with 30% unsure if this was of value.

'I found the training to be excellent. It far exceeded my expectations in its usefulness to my work and I've used it in a number of ways to great benefit.' IIE participant 2013

2. Accredited Leadership Development Programmes

Description:

Feedback from the previous Sector Skills programme indicated a need for accredited leadership training for leaders within the sector. The Wheel responded to the feedback and organised the development of two bespoke leadership programmes. Developed to help Irish non-profit leaders excel in the most challenging of times, the aim of both programmes is to foster excellent leadership by strengthening and developing the capacity of leaders. Both programmes commenced in 2013. During an open tender process, thirteen organisations from the private, public and nonprofit sectors submitted proposals to deliver the accredited programme. The selection panel included Deirdre Garvey, The Wheel, Elizabeth Bolger, The Wheel and Des McLaughlin, DCU Ryan Academy for Entrepreneurship.
The two programmes are:

Leadership for Equality: this 6-month programme, delivered by Community Action Network (CAN), aims to strengthen and develop the personal capacity of leaders and offers an expanded

model of leadership and skills-set that will address the daily complex challenges for self, organisation and society. This programme is accredited at Level 7 by NUI Maynooth.

There are four modules.

Module One: Personal Leadership Model Building focuses on enhancing effective leadership through a combination of personal and shared reflection, as well as practical skills development, theoretical inputs and group practice.

Module Two: Understanding and Leading Change examines the complexities of advocating and leading change, including internal communications, fostering leadership in others and working with frameworks for change to develop a personal vision for leadership.

Module Three: Systems Change - Working Creatively with Diversity provides a model for understanding organisational culture and how it relates to leadership, working creatively with conflict and diversity, exploring complexity theory and its relevance to leading systemic change.

Module Four: Building Strategic Alliances widens the learning to include skills development in collaborative working, lobbying, policy and power mapping, as well developing a personal leadership plan and network for the future.

Leaders for Change: this 6-month programme, delivered by All Hallows College and Quality Matters, using creative, evidence based approaches and psychometric assessments, aims to equip participants with the practical skills and theory required for effective leadership and management. This programme is accredited at Level 9 by Dublin City University.

The programme includes four modules:

Module One: Leadership Practices looks at current theories, action planning, group reflection models, behavioural action planning, and leadership panel inputs.

Module Two: Getting the Basics Right provides a practical inventory of leadership, including: people management, trust and credibility, governance, policy and practice, managing change with teams, managing conflict and workplace culture, and personal action planning.

Module Three: Advocating for Change / Sectoral Challenges focuses on effective advocacy, including: the theory and practice of leading change within the sector, measuring social impact, practical management systems, and influencing the state.

Module Four: Coaching and Developing Future Leaders deals with the nurturing of future leaders through the deployment of coaching tools and best practice skills.

Results:

While it is early days in the implementation of this programme, the process to date indicates high standards in term of the learning content and processes. There were 71 registrants for four programmes by the end of 2013. Further results will be available for future Sector Skills evaluation reports.

Investment from the National Training Fund through Sector Skills supported significant cost savings for participations attending both programmes. Without such financial support this level of financial investment in the professional development of leaders would not be option for the organisations and/or individuals involved.

3. Other Leadership Events

Description:
A suite of other Leadership Events were also delivered
- o Regional Leadership Conferences
- o Leadership Breakfast Briefings
- o CEO2CEO Fora
- o Leadership Network Events

Regional Leadership Conferences were run in Waterford, Cork, Limerick, Sligo and Tullamore. The topics under consideration included: Making governance easier; Governance and the delivery of the governance code; Collaborative working; Employment law; Fundraising; and Communication.

The Leadership Breakfast Briefings have proven to be excellent networking opportunities for leaders in the sector and during the period continued to engage attendees with discussions of the most cutting edge thinkers and key topics facing the Irish community and voluntary sector today. The format includes an inspirational speaker (or speakers) to give an input on a topic that inspire and motivate people and their organisations.

CEO2cCEO Fora provided unique opportunities for the CEOs of community and voluntary organisations to network with peer and discuss issues of relevance in a confidential environment. The events were free for the CEOs participating and benefit from support from Ulster Bank who hosted the Dublin based events. These meetings have covered topics of priority to the CEOs attending and included governance; relationship between the CEO and the board of directors; funding diversification; leadership in changing and fluid environments; delivering public services in more effective ways; strategy; and measuring outcomes.

The Leadership Network Events were in response to demand from the sector for leadership networking opportunities and reflected The Wheel's commitment to fostering excellent leadership in the sector. There was an openness to tailor the precise design of any programme or suite of offers to the preferences of the members, for example short development events, breakfast sessions, e-learning events and/or e-based discussion groups.

Results:
1,400 people attended these events during the period of this report

This series of practical forums, seminars and events for leaders and key decision makers with the community & voluntary sector helped leaders to:
- Connect with peers
- Generate ideas
- Uncover solutions
- Seek and receive training & assistance

- Keep up to date with issues affecting the sector

Feedback from CEOs about the CEO2CEO Fora indicates that they found them 'practical'; 'stimulating' and 'focused'. Feedback also indicated an appetite for more. Specifically, CEOs indicated a need to look at social enterprise and for more input on governance. This feedback informed the focus in late 2013 and plans for 2014. There are challenges in CEOs allowing themselves time out to attend and this is reflected in poorer participation at these events when compared with the leadership forum (see below). Attendance at times was patchy and drawn from quite a diverse and disparate group. The Wheel is aware of these challenges and, following a review of the current formats, plan to provide a comprehensive offering in 2014. Innovative solutions are being looked at including webinars and other on-line options (LinkedIn Groups etc.).

Feedback on the Leadership Network Briefings is a response to real needs and add value to individual leaders and organisations in a time and cost efficient way. The opportunity to expand participation by developing on-line webinars is being pursued. Up to 80 people attended each of the four events Leadership Network Events in 2013.

Section Four: Web-Based and other Training Supports

Objective:
The fourth strand of the Sector Skills Programme aimed to:
Further develop and promote the Learningpoint service as a one-stop-shop information resource for training and to develop and promote training resources for newly identified needs across the whole sector in response to the forthcoming charities regulation and the increasingly scarce financial resources coming from the state for the provision of services.

Description:
A range of web-based and other training supports for leaders were put in place and included:

- **Learningpoint**, a free online database featuring hundreds of training courses from many different training providers located across the country, with 1,977 training courses and 622 trainers registered on the site
- With over 100,000 people employed and a further 560,000 volunteers in the sector, the **Employer Resources Bureau** www.erb.ie specifically aimed to provide information for employers on employment law, policies, practices and procedures. The Employer Resource Bureau is free and accessible, providing practical templates and briefings. It is a collaborative initiative between the Community Sector Employers' Forum, the Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups, The Wheel and Adare Human Resource Management. The site provides up-to-date information on employment legislation, leave entitlements, industrial relations, disciplinary and grievance procedures, equality, bullying and harassment, recruitment and selection, employee appraisals, managing diversity, work-life balance, health and safety, salary scales and redundancy, with monthly newsletters sent to subscribers.
- **The Social Policy Monitor www.oireachtasbrief.ie**, an on-line information service, is of interest to social justice non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and voluntary sector activists interested in issues of poverty and social exclusion.
- **Best Practice Guides** are published resources on priority development areas for non-profit organisations.
- **Guidance in the adoption of the Code of Good Governance for the Community and Voluntary Sector.** The Code was published in March 2012 following collaboration and input from key community, voluntary and charitable sector organisations, Corporate Governance Association of Ireland, Arthur Cox and Sheila Cahill Consulting. The Wheel, under the Sector Skills programme, supported dissemination and training in relation to the operation of the Code across the non-profit sector.
- **Be the Change** is a quarterly magazine published by The Wheel in partnership with IFP Media. The aim of the publication is to reflect the full range of activity and the diversity of opinion in Ireland's non-profit sector.

Results:
Learningpoint results show that incremental increases in the volume of visitors continued in the period 2011 – 2013.

- In the period 2005 – 2007, Learningpoint averaged between 1,200 and 1,900 visitors per month, 1,105 active training courses and a total number of 15,241 unique visitors from October 2006 to August 2007
- By the end of the period 2008 – 2010, there were 1,808 active training courses, with 517 registered trainers on the site covering over 20 different subject ranges and representing every county in Ireland
- In the period 2011 – 2013, by July 2013 the following is the case:
  - Number of Training Courses listed in Learningpoint database: 1,884
  - Number of Trainers listed in Learningpoint database: 613
  - Overall page views of all of Learningpoint: 367,950
  - Unique page views for Learningpoint: 278,580
  - Number of training course searches: 197,705

The need for the **Employer Resource Bureau** was further confirmed through the other strands of the Sector Skills Programme 2011 -2013. Challenges pertaining to human resource management were referenced continuously in focus groups informing the Leadership Programme and in needs analysis completed under Training Links as key concerns for CEOs and boards of non-profit organisations. Over 16% of those who participated in the Portrait of Ireland Non-profit Sector recognise the need for HR management training. The service had 6,306 unique visitors and newsletter monthly circulation of over 1,450 that is increasing steadily.

The Social Policy Monitor www.oireachtasbrief.ie had 4,146 unique visitors and 1,020 subscribers during the period under review. The website provides up-to-date, comprehensive commentary and analysis.

Best Practice Guides were researched and published in the following areas

- **Solid Foundations** a guide providing factual information and practical advice on how to manage organisations in line with good practice standards. It covers structure, governance, direction, accountability, resources and equality (2nd edition).
- **Getting to Grips with Governance** a guide to support the governing boards of community & voluntary organisations and to strengthen their understanding of their responsibilities.
- **Reducing the Risk** a guide to support organisations to properly manage risks so that they can fulfil their potential and the negative effects of hazards can be reduced.
- **Workplaces that Work** a guide for managing human resources (HR) in a community and voluntary organisation. Implementing the guidance in this publication is one tangible step towards a workplace that truly works, in every sense of the word (2nd edition).
- **Knowing and Showing Your Outcomes and Impacts** a guide to help community and voluntary organisations to cultivate an outcomes-focused and impact-led approach to their work.
- **Collaborate to Innovate** a guide on different forms of collaboration and practical tools to help organisations move forward.

Over 2,000 best practice guides for non-profit organisations were distributed.

Be the Change is a quarterly magazine published by The Wheel in partnership with IFP Media. The aim of the publication is to reflect the full range of activity and the diversity of opinion in Ireland's non-profit sector. The publication provides an open forum for the exploration of pragmatic, innovative solutions for the non-profit sector. The first issue was published in December 2012. A further four issues has since been distributed free of charge to 2,500 stakeholders, including the leaders of non-profit organisations, civil society leaders, funders and policy-makers.

Guidance in the adoption of the Code of Good Governance for the community & voluntary sector. Governance refers to how an organisation is run, directed and controlled. Good governance means an organisation will design and put in place policies and procedures that will make sure the organisation runs effectively.

All community & voluntary organisations have a responsibility to provide and follow a code of good practice when it comes to how their organisations are run. It is the responsibility of the people who run the organisation, usually called the board or management committee - to make sure this happens.

The Code of Good Governance for the community & voluntary sector sets out clear guidelines to help people on the boards of such organisations to run their organisations and provides well run community & voluntary organisations access to a tool which allows them to demonstrate their high standards of governance to their stakeholders

Over 15,000 guides to the corporate governance Code of Good Governance for non-profit organisations distributed. There are currently 296 community & voluntary organisations on the journey of adopting the Code and 73 organisations have full adopted it.

It is planned to continue and further develop this good governance support and guidance for community & voluntary organisations with future Sector Skills programmes.

Section Five: Conclusions

The Sector Skills Programme 2011 – 2013 had five objectives:

- To develop, implement and evaluate an extended Training Links network-led training programme for between 20 and 25 networks, each with a minimum of 10 organisations per network;

- To conduct a large-scale national research project which will revisit the initial research report on which the *Sector Skills* programme is based, to explore the current state of training and need for skills building in the sector. It will also pick up on the exploration of the in-depth support needs required by CEOs in particular so that the Leadership Development offering can be further developed;

- To continue to provide leadership training and support for CEOs and senior managers and explore how the Leadership Development Programme can be further developed – with the potential for accrediting it;

- To further develop and promote the Learningpoint service as a one-stop-shop information resource for training;

- To develop and promote training resources for newly identified needs across the whole sector, in response to the forthcoming charities regulation and the increasingly scarce financial resources coming from the state for the provision of services;

The significant advances made in progressing each of the objectives are outlined in each of the sections of the report. Conclusions emerging are listed below:

- The State of the Non-Profit Sector Research (2011 – 2012) will help ensure that the training strategies, aimed at addressing the learning, development and employment needs of the sector, are based on sound analysis of the sector's broader role, core purpose, contribution, opportunities and challenges. *A Portrait of Ireland's Non-profit Sector* provides quality information and analysis on the current scope and operations of the non-profit sector. It builds on the work of INEKx and is an important reference point to inform future strategies pertaining to employability, leadership and training and development within the Sector.
- In the period 2011-3013, the Training Links programme continued to be successfully implemented nationally and within each individual network, benefiting from the insights gained under the previous cycles. The enterprise-led, partnership based approach is again confirmed as an effective and efficient way to sustain and grow the quality of services and products being delivered by the organisations involved and improving employability of those in and entering work in this sector. The scale of activity engaging is impressive: 393 organisations across the twenty three network; supporting 4,562 participants across 258 programmes while also indirectly impacting 64,294 others.
- Feedback on the relevance and quality of the various and varied elements of the Leadership Development offer under the Sector Skills Programme is hugely positive. The mix from short seminars through to Level 9 accredited programmes is comprehensive. Feedback about the

programme in its entirety is consistently positive. While the launch of the accredited programmes in late 2013 is welcomed, feedback from participants in the other non-accredited events confirms the continued need for shorter, intensive training like the Investment in Excellence Programme and the shorter briefings/seminars and conferences.

- Supporting quality professional development was further enhanced by the comprehensive range of web-based and other training supports.
- Learningpoint is clearly being accessed by those seeking the same sorts of training courses and subjects as are mentioned in the Portrait of Ireland Non-Profit Sector Report thereby demonstrating the veracity of the Report's data and of Learningpoint's marketing and web visibility.

The Sector Skills programme 2011 – 2013 has had credible impact in developing and providing training interventions and solutions that are helping to create pathways for workers entering and within the sector. The investment both financial and in time in releasing workers shows a growing recognition across this sector of the importance of training and of the importance of addressing the employability needs of those within and those entering work.

The rationale for investing part of the national Training Fund in the Sector Skills Programme has long been established. This review finds that, given the scale of the sector, its role economically and more importantly socially, further investment is needed and ought to be on a par with other sectors. The scale of return to the sector vis-à-vis its contribution has not changed in the period. This needs to be reviewed in light of the successes and impact of the programme.

Governance featured strongly across all strands of the Sector Skills initiative and The Wheel had a multi-pronged approach in how best to disseminate good practice across the diverse types of community and voluntary organisations. This approach included direct training, seminars, good practice guides and guidance in the adoption of governance codes. Governance will remain a priority for the next period as further support is needed to continue to develop good governance practice across the sector.

As the support and representative body for non-profit, community, voluntary and charitable organisations in Ireland, The Wheel has deep knowledge, understanding and leading edge expertise of community and voluntary organisations. The period under review witnessed The Wheel complete a comprehensive strategic review of its role, contribution and unique place. This was published in 'Being the Change – The Wheel Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016'. This was preceded with an extensive listening exercise with the sector across 2011. It is clear that the priorities implemented under Sector Skills programme is of strategic importance to The Wheel and its almost 1,000 members.

The Wheel was responsible for designing, delivering and evaluating all strands of activity funded under the Sector Skills Programme. Now in its fourth cycle, it is clear that many of the operational recommendations from previous evaluations have been implemented and it is clear that The Wheel is well placed and competent in managing the programme. Feedback received as part of this review from Training Links co-ordinators and from participants in the Investment in Excellence Programmes in relation to how The Wheel administered and managed the programme was very positive.

Principles of transparency and accountability in how Sector Skills and each individual strand operated are evident witnessed in how selection panels were formed and operated and in how tendering procedures were instituted. Rigorous financial controls and management were in place. There is evidence in the desk research completed as part of this review that The Wheel has ensured participation in the Sector Skills programme includes all community and voluntary organisations, regardless of membership of The Wheel.

Appendix One: Training Links Selection Process

The selection of successful Training Links networks was done by an independent committee of 3 members:

Bridie Corrigan Matthews, Training Consultant

Sheila Cahill, Training Consultant

Mairin Kenny, Training Consultant

All applications were reviewed by the selection committee and, following assessment against agreed criteria, 13 successful new networks were selected. A report was compiled by the selection committee.

All Training Links networks from previous Training Links programmes were given the opportunity to take part in the 2011 – 2013 programme, 10 of which submitted an application and were accepted.

Appendix Two: Anticipated and Actual Outputs for Training Links Programme

Network Name	Member Organisations In Each Network		Total Participants		No of Training Events Organised
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	
Ability West	10	14	244	401	12
AONTAS	18	18	32	80	15
Bedford Row	10	11	15	32	13
CLAR ICH	12	15	26	222	21
Community Radio	10	10	71	90	18
Cork Community Music	10	15	32	118	12
CRAOL	10	10	44	104	14
Crosscare	24	24	102	132	14
DDTV Community Television	11	14	20	40	16
Dublin Cycling	11	11	50	385	13
Irish Heart Foundation	10	10	200	346	15
Kerry Community Forum	20	20	130	200	22
Meath Training Links	12	29	160	199	17
National Sports Partnership	13	10	26	26	15
Plain English Network PEN	13	13	48	61	12
Raheen – South East Forum	9	7	70	90	23
Rape Crisis Network	40	38	85	506	12
Safe Ireland	15	17	30	352	15
Senior Help Line Network	19	19	82	131	14
SHEP	12	27	135	305	15
Sligo Family Support	10	16	200	217	20
SOS Kilkenny – Ordinary Lives	32	32	414	465	20
Suicide or Survive	11	13	48	60	15
Total of 23 Networks	**342**	**393**	**2,264**	**4,562**	**363**

Appendix Three: Training Networks Overview of Programme Outputs

The networks delivered learning activities and training programmes in a number of key areas as follows:

Network Name	Network Focus and Areas of Training Delivered
Ability West	➤ Senior and Middle Managers in need of supports to effectively run organisations; Management Skills ; Interviewing Skills; Managing change ➤ Location – Galway City, Longford, Westmeath, Roscommon, Mayo ➤ Success Factors: Cost effective training due to focus on location, accessibility, co-joint working of senior groups, sharing of scarce resources, helping participants to manage complex training requirements ➤ Wider Impact: Staff of senior and middle managers in each of the participating 14 organisations will be impacted by the improved organisational skills developed
AONTAS – Community Education Network	➤ Up-skilling programmes and dissemination of learning to the larger Community Education Network via national events (CEN) ➤ Addressing changing economic circumstances – funding ➤ Build advocacy and lobbying skills ➤ Understanding political process and media engagement ➤ Developed sustainable community education programmes ➤ Increased network membership from original 12 to 18 active members
Bedford Row	➤ Worked with a wide variety of agencies to support families affected by imprisonment (Limerick region) and developed mechanisms to help guide and protect children affected by parents who are in prison. Focused at providing a 'bridge' for very distressed and vulnerable people to access support in more mainstream agencies ➤ Fifteen senior participants trained in supporting families affected by imprisonment; Training in managing and handling intense emotional distress ➤ Building crisis intervention skills. ➤ Increased the number of people who will have skills to access employment opportunities in organisations that support prisoners and their families ➤ Enhance leadership skills of senior professionals in the network organisations so that innovative methods of supporting prisoners' families and ex-prisoners can be promoted
CLAR ICH	➤ CLAR ICH worked in partnership with organisations such as Mayo South West Development Company, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, Mayo County Council and the HSE to deliver community services. CLAR ICH established the South Mayo Voluntary Housing Association in 2005. ➤ The Warmer Homes Scheme was delivered in collaboration with SEAI, other CBOs and Eaga monitoring agency. CLAR ICH was involved in interagency collaboration to address unemployment in Claremorris region ➤ Focused on rurally-based members, organisations serving older people and those with disabilities ➤ Enabled housing associations to make informed decisions about sustainability measures in existing and future housing developments, allowing members to better manage resources (water, waste, energy) and to implement energy efficiency and renewable technologies ➤ Addressing fuel poverty – conservation and value for money ➤ Developing tenant education programmes to better manager fuel, heat and water
Rossess Community Radio	➤ Visits to radio stations – best practice and modelling ➤ Introduction to Community Radio ➤ Developing a programme, focusing on technical production and recording skills, voice, delivery, and mix for broadcasting on Radio ➤ Career opportunities, employment in the sector ➤ FETAC L5 Accredited training programme

Cork Community Music Network	➤ Focus: Developing skills of professionals / specialist musicians ➤ Develop and support music programmes and groups within the community as part of a wider appreciation of the arts ➤ Facilitate best practice, accredited training for community members through the network organisations ➤ Working with the Department of Education and schools to develop a sustainable outreach programme in schools ➤ Develop and promote quality standards for music education ➤ Increase the involvement of young people in music ➤ Looking at employment opportunities for trained musicians ➤ Promote master-classes, workshops, exchanges, and festivals to develop and enhance the skills of tutors and teachers ➤ Promote existing and develop new contacts in the UK and Europe for exchanges and collaboration ➤ Host an inaugurate and local music festival incorporating all of the member groups ➤ Create community employment opportunities for developing musicians to teach music
CRAOL	➤ Focus: Accredited Train the Trainer FETAC 6 Skills and FETAC level 4 and 5 Community Radio ➤ Technical Radio Skills - Presenting and Production ➤ Facilitating exchange of best practice between station based trainers who have delivered the FETAC Level 4 course in Community Radio ➤ Revision/update of common training plan (methods, handouts, material) ➤ Utilize the revised training plan and associated materials to deliver FETAC Accredited Training to 62 Volunteers nationwide in line with FETAC Quality Assurance Standards
Crosscare	➤ Provision of hands-on support to coordinators of centres that provide community education and the peripheral agencies who work alongside these centres ➤ Developing and modelling innovative, high quality, capacity building programmes meeting the emerging needs of members of the CENC especially with regard to proper evaluation tools for community education ➤ Provide thematic programmes to assist providers to manage the environmental changes they are experiencing with a strong emphasis on self-care ➤ Through leadership development, to validate and affirm local leadership by developing a process of engagement with funders so that state agencies and community centres can work collaboratively
DDTV Community Television Training Network	➤ Training volunteers to become producers - TV Programme making ➤ The regional context is over the 32 counties of Ireland. ➤ Focus on growing sector of community television to target social depravation and isolation of younger groups – turn graffiti into art through TV and documentary making ➤ Build technical skills for broadcasting, organisational frameworks and management that will enable groups to establish Community TV in their area ➤ Build links between the different groups operating in this area, enabling the sharing of skills and resources, and to develop the sector in Ireland and Northern Ireland ➤ Opportunity to develop jobs for the future
Dublin Cycling Network	➤ A volunteer network of cycling enthusiasts and groups ➤ Promoting Cycling as a way to address increasing health and obesity problems, and overcoming children's' fears in cycling to school ➤ Cycle-training to 'Bikeability' standard, so that Members can train members of the public, adults or children in safe cycling techniques – UK Accreditation Standard (no Irish certification available yet) ➤ Through cycling, to provide confidence to both adults and children in taking to the roads ➤ Training in Press Relations, helping Members promote socially-just and environmentally friendly transport to the public through traditional and social media

Irish Heart Foundation	➢ Making communication access a reality for stroke support group organisers and volunteers. ➢ Awareness training about communication difficulties after stroke and the development of strategies to make support groups more accessible to all stroke survivors. ➢ The National Committee of Stroke Support groups met to discuss what would be the most appropriate training for support group organisers and members. ➢ Trainer-the-trainer one day course to pass the knowledge on to members of various support groups ➢ The training network looked at programmes developed by consultants in the UK disability charity, Connect. All of the Connect training has been developed in collaboration with people with aphasia (a common communication difficulty following a stroke) ➢ As part of the project two speech and language therapists working with stroke survivors in the Royal Hospital Donnybrook provided a one-day course. Their one-day course provides training in how to communicate with stroke survivors with communication difficulties and strategies to make support groups more accessible.
Kerry Community Forum	➢ Providing training to community and voluntary organisations throughout the existing 9 geographical area networks in the Kerry Region ➢ Building on success from the previous network funding ➢ Training programmes focused on mix of traditional workshop based training with a mentor style advisory panel discussion – evening programmes delivered in 3 rural/regional locations ➢ Pre programme analysis/audit of organisations ➢ Workshops – Lecture Style and Group Discussion ➢ Expert Panel Questions & Answers ➢ Case Studies ➢ Printed tailored financial and legal procedures documents ➢ Support on the implementation of these procedures within organisations (workshops)
Meath Training Links	➢ Comprises 20 community and voluntary groups based and operating in County Meath - to develop empowerment and capacity-building in disadvantaged and rurally isolated areas in the County ➢ Address high levels of unemployment by training potential leaders and organizers in the community to develop employment opportunities within the community and voluntary contexts ➢ Delivery of accredited training – FETAC Level 6 Train the Trainer ➢ Facilitation Skills ➢ Community Leadership ➢ Creativity and Ideas Generation ➢ Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills ➢ Positivity Through Appropriate Responses ➢ Information Provision and Effective Referrals ➢ Training Development and Delivery Skills
National Sports Partnership	➢ 32 organisations forming a national network ➢ Training for administrators and coordinators ➢ Focus on building community and environment in the theme of sport ➢ Training development and Boards on committee skills and board responsibilities ➢ Certified programmes from IACT IT training - INDESIGN training for administrators ➢ Certified FETAC Level 6 Project Management training for coordinators to improve management skills to enhance organisation ➢ Enhanced Project Management programme on the PMP examination

Plain English Network PEN	➢ Network members learn about the principles of plain English and how best to apply them in their situations to link in better with their various audiences ➢ Focus: the project is aimed at hard to reach community and voluntary groups ➢ Realising the value and potential impact of using plain English for their organisation and customers ➢ Knowledge of the basic principles of plain English and ➢ Skills to apply plain English effectively for different documents and for the web ➢ Spoken plain English guidelines (new addition to training) ➢ Web component ➢ New skills self-assessment resources for community and voluntary groups ➢ In the private sector many companies such as large pharmaceutical companies, banks, etc. are adopting the Plain English focus to documents to better reach customers and clients.
Raheen – South East Forum	➢ The Network covers Wexford, Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow, and Tipperary ➢ Focus is Family Support within rural and isolated communities (high unemployment – black zones) through various projects including, childcare provision, eldercare provision, women's groups, men's group, youth club, training and education programmes, horticulture, health and mental health issues, conflict resolution, counseling services ➢ 2 positions to each of the 13 projects that have committed to the network project to access 3rd level accredited training/education for their volunteers and staff. ➢ Level 7 Certificate in Community Development Leadership delivered by NUI Maynooth on the outreach Campus in Kilkenny. ➢ Certificate covers 4 broad topics: Introduction to Community Development Studies, Working with Groups, Social Analysis for Community Studies and Project planning for community development
Rape Crisis Network	➢ Between 50% and 60% of RCC clients are either adult survivors of sexual violence experienced as children or teenagers with more recent experiences of sexual violence. These percentages have increased, placing further demands on already stretched services ➢ 40% to 50% of RCC clients are those utilising services as a result of sexual violence experienced as adults ➢ Focus of training: increasing of the organisational skills capacity of member RCCs, enhancing their abilities to cope with the ever-changing regulatory environment, whilst continuing to offer and develop services that best meet all survivors' needs ➢ Board member engagement through the development of a reference handbook – based on best practice in Scotland ➢ Development and Production of a RCC Board Pack which includes: ➢ Governance ➢ Board responsibilities ➢ Code of Conduct ➢ Organisational Ethos ➢ Webinar training events explaining the Board Governance Pack ➢ RCC Board Member participation in the webinars
Safe Ireland	➢ National network of 40 domestic violence services across Ireland ➢ Focus of training: to address the increasing levels of violence against women, men and children resulting from the economic crisis ➢ Governance and Managing a Domestic Violence Service in the Recession ➢ Healing the Effects of Domestic Violence- A Biodynamic Approach ➢ Legal Training Workshop on Withholding of Information Act 2012 ➢ Communications Workshop – Campaign Design Part 1 ➢ Developing a National Framework for DV service provision' – Reflective Practice Seminar ➢ Increasing understanding of Empowering Practice and Empowered Outcomes – Reflective Practice Seminar

Senior Help Line Network	➢ National network to develop and improve the quality of training of Senior Help Line's 320 volunteers ➢ Support and Training workshops for volunteers working on a telephone helpline for elderly people including listening/communication & conflict skills ➢ Team Work & Team Building ➢ Strategy Vision/Sharing Vision ➢ Service Excellence ➢ Twice yearly residential training workshops for Senior Help Line volunteer co-ordinators and assistant volunteer coordinators ➢ Provide a place of listening for volunteer coordinators, and to support and respond positively to needs
SHEP	➢ 19 member groups ➢ Community and voluntary organisations based in the Republic of Ireland. ➢ Significant developments have occurred over the last 18 months regarding the governance of a large number of members of the groups, arising from a Government decision nationally, to cohese Community Development Projects with Local Development Partnerships. In Cork and Kerry, seven of the groups are part of an alternative proposal involving HSE South ➢ To increase members skills in leadership, facilitation in the context of considerable change in governance ➢ To increase members' awareness of disability issues ➢ To support an enhanced understanding of social awareness and community empowerment
Sligo Family Support	➢ Sligo Training Network is a range of community and voluntary organisations based in County Sligo/West region. All organisations have a family support role and focus ➢ Target groups of the organisations vary and include; children, women, families and ethnic minorities ➢ To provide training for individuals to enhance skills to increase confidence in current roles and increase employability in the future ➢ Up-skilling staff and to ensure awareness of changes in legislation that affect the work. ➢ Providing meaningful and focused training where learning is evident ➢ Developing facilitator skills so staff are equipped with the skills and knowledge to provide effective training locally and into the future
SOS Kilkenny – Ordinary Lives	➢ Network of organisations dealing with intellectual issues in the South East region. Traditionally service providers for people with intellectual disabilities have evolved from the medical model through to the social model and now need to move to a rights-based model ➢ Focus of training: FETAC Level 5 Training Programme (Community Inclusion) delivered to over 200 staff across 10 organisations ➢ Sectoral needs of service providers for people with intellectual disabilities who have identified a skills deficit that must be addressed if service users are to get the opportunity to lead ordinary lives ➢ To support the movement that many services in the future will be more locally based and more community focussed and inclusive
Suicide or Survive	➢ To increase mental health awareness and reduce the stigma attached to mental health difficulties in the wider community ➢ To encourage and support people who are suffering to come forward and seek help without fear of prejudice ➢ To provide a choice for those with mental health issues in terms of the services they can receive ➢ To create a change in people's mindset and in service provision so that suicide is always the option of last resort - not of first resort and that those who are contemplating suicide are provided with adequate services to meet their specific needs as and when those needs arise ➢ Raising awareness within the community that people with mental health difficulties

	can and do recover if they are provided with the most appropriate supports and services to meet their needs as and when they need them
	➢ Focus of training is to train staff/ volunteers and service users of the member organisations as "trainers" (e.g. FETAC 6 Level Train the Trainer) to run programmes and cascade learning on dealing with mental health and to build the internal capacity of network members to cascade training down throughout their own organisations
	➢ Provide a series of FETAC Level 5 modules in Mental Health Difficulties & Treatment Approaches, Recovery in Mental Health, Facilitation Skills and Advocacy in Mental Health