

2015

TUS

Steering
Group

Conor Ryan

[TYPE THE DOCUMENT TITLE]

[Type the abstract of the document here. The abstract is typically a short summary of the contents of the document. Type the abstract of the document here. The abstract is typically a short summary of the contents of the document.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS



SECTION ONE

	Page
1.1 Background	3

SECTION TWO

2.1 Establishing the Course	4
2.2 Funding of the Course	7
2.3 Course Outline	7

SECTION THREE

3.1 Methodology	
-----------------	--

SECTION FOUR Tus Participants Feedback

4.1 Findings	8-9
--------------	-----

SECTION FOUR CONCLUSIONS

RECOMMENTATIONS

SECTION ONE

Background

Tús is a community work placement scheme providing short-term working opportunities for unemployed people and was originally announced by Minister Eamon O’Cuiv in December 2010. The aims and objectives of Tús according to the Department of Social Protection’s website are that it is:

- An activation initiative for those who are unemployed and on the Live Register. It will support the work readiness of those who participate.
- The initiative will provide short-term quality and suitable working opportunities for people who are unemployed while at the same time carrying out beneficial work within communities, and
- It will contribute to the management of the Live Register and act as a deterrent to those not eligible for welfare benefits

The work opportunities are to benefit the community and are provided by community and voluntary organisations in both urban and rural areas¹. Persons who participate on the programme are identified in advance by the Department of Social Protection through the National Employment Action Plan process provided they meet particular conditions:

- A person who has been continuously unemployed for at least 12 months and signing on the Live Register on a full-time basis, and
- In receipt of a jobseekers payment from the Department of Social Protection for at least 1 year, and
- Currently in receipt of Jobseeker’s Allowance

Tus began to be rolled out nationally across Ireland in 2011 by Local Development Companies (LDCs)². Since then, thousands of people have been placed in a wide variety of roles across Ireland, including administration, art therapy, caretaking, caring, catering, childcare, cleaning, driving, development work, grounds keeping, maintenance, media and journalism, reception, sports coaching, youth work and IT (2014 pg9). Local Development Companies have also recruited team leaders to co-ordinate activities within their catchment areas. Tus team leaders report into internal structures within their employer organisation and each have a slightly different job description.

¹ Department of Social Protection [23/07/2014]

² www.ildn.ie

Establishing the Course and Course Objectives

Several Dublin based LDCs began to meet periodically to discuss the roll out of Tus since 2011. These meetings enable organisations network and share learning that helps with the overall delivery of Tus. A Tus Steering Group began to explore the possibility of the National College of Ireland and National University of Ireland Maynooth delivering training prior for Tus Team Leaders in 2012. The Department of Social Protection, which each LDC reports into however, considered the indicative costs of €18,800 per participant to be prohibitive.

Towards end of 2013, a suggestion came from former CEO of Southside Partnership Marie Carroll, who saw the potential for the upskilling of Tus Team Leaders but also as a way of facilitating the Institute for Managers of Community and Voluntary Organisations³ (IMCV) become more sustainable by developing a bespoke training course for Tus Team Leaders. The IMCV approached the Tus Steering Group to open discussions around how a new course based on a Professional Management Award could provide a mechanism to train Tus Team Leaders in the future. The original inspiration was that the IMCV could pilot a bespoke course in Dublin with 20 people in Dublin LDCs and potentially expand on it for up to 350 Tus Team Leaders nationwide or on a regional basis.

Marie Carrol rang all the 5 LDCs Southside, Southside Partnership, Canals, Northside and Blanchardstown Area Partnership. CEOs agreed in principle that Tus Team Leaders needed a professional development award and that instead of each company independently sourcing a company to deliver bespoke training it would be better to pool resources. After that a discussion began with Michelle Ryan the then Director of the IMCV. The 5 CEOs went back to Tus Team Leaders to discuss it at in-house meetings and then Michelle met the Team Leaders independently. Michelle brought along the syllabus of the professional management award and sold it to the team on the basis of *'we can customise this course to your companies needs'* at the exploratory meetings. Each LDC paid a fee per participant (€525) on the basis of 20 participants attending, which was far better ..

³ Established in 2011, the Institute for Managers of Community and Voluntary Organisations in Ireland Ltd. (IMCV) is the only professional body for management practitioners working in the non-profit sector in Ireland. Our members are responsible for the management and administration of systems, people and processes within community and voluntary organisations. Their roles are vital in enabling those organisations achieve sustainability. [4/3/2015]

The IMCV training course was delivered over 12 weeks by several different tutors contracted to the IMCV from Ballybrack Community Centre. Detailed handouts were circulated to all course participants within an arch lever folder covering a unique unit descriptor and PowerPoint presentations. An overview of all modules and units of learning is presented below. Each unit is awarded a credit that totalled 72 points.

MODULE	Occupational Standard / Unit of Learning		Inputs
SELF MANAGEMENT	A1	Manage your own resources and professional development	5 days
	D2	Develop productive working relationships with colleagues and stakeholders <i>and other organisations</i>	
	E10	Communicate information and knowledge	
STRATEGY MANAGEMENT	B7	Ensure compliance with legal, regulatory, ethical and social requirements	2 days
	D3	Recruit, select and keep colleagues	7 days
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	D7	Hep team members address problems affecting their performance	
	D8	Build and manage teams	
	D9	Reduce and manage conflict in your team	
	D12	Support individuals and help maintain their performance <i>as it applies to Tus participants</i>	14 days

Unfortunately within a matter of a few weeks Tus Team Leaders began to report negative comments about the nature of the content and delivery of the course to their line managers. This resulted in a mid-term review of the course having to be undertaken by the course Director Michelle Ryan. On the basis of that review and comments from Tus Team Leaders the focus of the bespoke course changed thereafter.

The following report is intended to help CEOs of Dublin LDCs pin-point where oversights may have occurred along the way but more importantly to identify what aspects of the IMCV course delivered might still be relevant to a future bespoke course. In doing the Research and Evaluation deemed it necessary to provide an opportunity for all stakeholders namely Tus Team Leaders, IMCV tutors and CEOs of LDCs to input with the review process. Following on is a brief overview of the methodological approach adopted.

SECTION THREE

Methodology

Blanchardstown Area Partnership's Research and Evaluation Officer met with the CEOs and staff from several LDC along with a tutor who helped deliver the course in Ballybrack Community Centre. A combination of different approaches to collate feedback was proposed from the different stakeholders i.e. tutors, CEO and staff at this initial meeting and subsequently applied.

An *online survey questionnaire* was sent to all 18 Tús participants in August 2014 on two separate occasions. The questionnaire was designed in consultation with some of the Tús team in Blanchardstown Area Partnership and a couple of CEO's and Tus Leader. The Tus Co-ordinators in each of the five LDCs were also contacted team leaders separately to inform them in advance that a questionnaire was going to be circulated to their colleagues. This action was also undertaken to request Co-ordinators to encourage colleagues to participate in the course feedback evaluation.

The objectives of the online survey were as follows:

- To provide Tús Team Leaders with an opportunity to provide feedback, regarding the overall content of the IMCV course, quality of handouts and the supports they received while on the programme
- To draw out any lessons of relevance for the development and implementation of a future Tus Team Leader course

A series of charts to visually illustrate more detailed breakdown of respondents' feedback to each question is presented. The main findings are presented thematically although not necessarily in sequence with the design of the questionnaire.

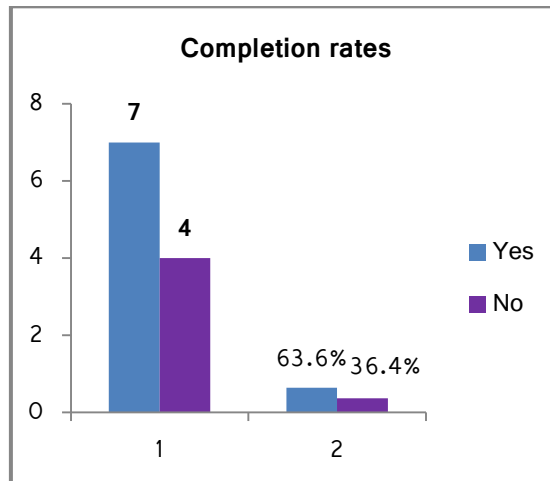
Two *focus groups* were also organised in Ballybrack Community Centre and Blanchardstown Area Partnership that staff from four LDCs attended as a follow on exercise to the online questionnaire. This gave for Tus Team Leaders to provide some additional comments and provide points of clarification. Eleven of the eighteen individuals who started the course responded and another person in input who attended a focus group that was held. As result two thirds of course participants input on the overall course feedback process.

Elsewhere two of the tutors who delivered aspects of the IMCV course were briefly *interviewed over the telephone*. Both also provided detailed written feedback by completing a questionnaire that was emailed to them that provides rich data. Finally a separate focus group was also facilitated with two CEOs in February 2015. The report's findings will begin by examining responses from participants and thereafter the tutors.

SECTION FOUR

Survey and focus group findings

As previously outlined under the methodology section twelve of the eighteen participants who started the IMCV participated with the online survey or focus groups. This relatively small number of respondents, which was inadvertent, appears to have had a bearing on the feedback gathered to particular questions, where opinions were sometimes divided.



Just under two thirds of course participants that responded to the survey who started out on the bespoke course actually completed it. Some persons evidently decided that the course was not relevant to their job role within their LDC or couldn't continue attending after starting due to personal circumstances. This was captured via the questionnaire as reflected below in the qualitative quotes.

“Gave up half way through and after the rejig missed last session due to holidays”

“Missed the final session”

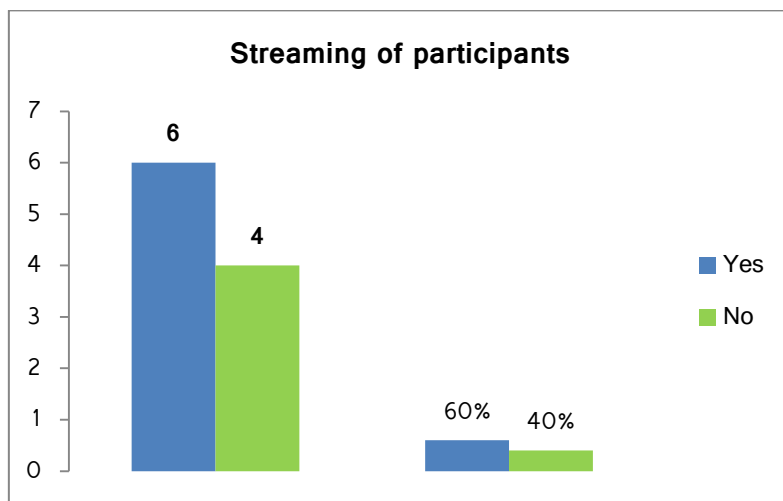
“I did not feel it was relevant to my job as team leader”

“Car Accident”

Information gathered from the focus groups allowed for a rounder discussion on factors that influenced people's decisions that will be displayed further on.

Streaming of course participants

Reflecting on their experiences with respect to the IMCV course, there was a preference overall for participants being streamed based on their educational attainment and previous work experience. Some persons expressed strong views on the matter as highlighted in the qualitative quotes below and felt that the course fell short of their expectations. The fact that some Tus Team Leaders were new to their post on registering for the course whereas others had been in situ for two years appears not to have been well received by a few individuals. It should be pointed out however, that 40% suggested they were opposed to streaming so those individuals did appear to achieve more from mixing and learning from more experienced Team Leaders.



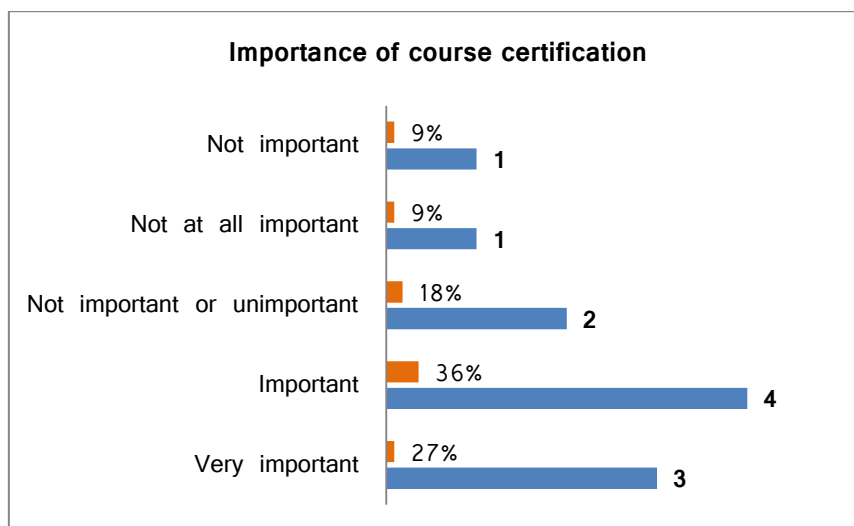
“I did feel there was two big a mix in the room. Some team leaders had been working on Tú’s from the beginning and others had just started as a team leader. Plus some people had third level education while others had none”

“Absolutely! Some of us have degrees or other management qualifications. There is no one-suits-all solution here in my opinion. It felt patronising to be put on such a basic course”

“Some people would have sat a course of similar topics previously whereas a new Team Leader with limited management experience would benefit more from this type of training their work experience”

“The training should be tailored to the job which we are all doing”

7 of the 11 respondents or 63% stated that the awarding of an *accreditation was a 'very important or important'* consideration for them in choosing to take up the course in the first instance. By the same token there was significant confusion among some Tus Team Leaders regarding what precise qualification they were ever going to receive or whether the credits they might attain would help contribute towards attaining a European accredited qualification on completion.



“It was unclear and confusing from the outset as to whether or not there was accreditation or points towards other courses if team leader wanted to further develop their training. if team leaders are to be trained in future then accreditation must be directly linked to this course otherwise what’s the point!”

“If the training was of a high standard I’d be happy to take on the learning and apply it to my job”

“Now that IMCV seems to be closing down, there is a question about the relevance of the IMCV accreditation in the first place. Another course (mapped on the official framework of qualifications) at the minimum level of 7 should be offered”

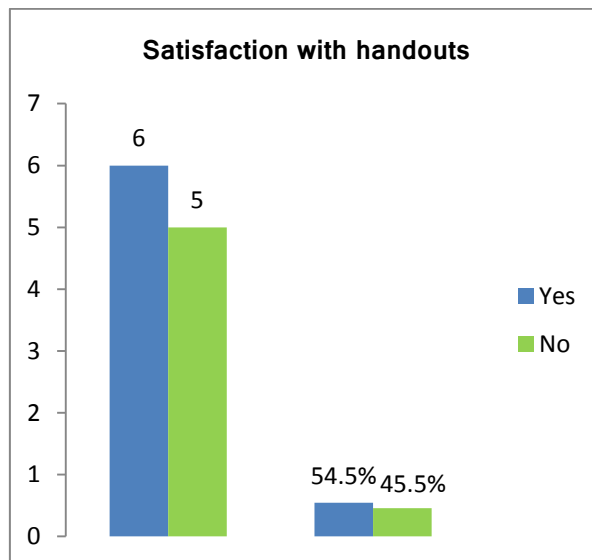
“Spending so much time out of the office attending training should be justified with an accreditation”

“Could be beneficial if quality targeted module were designed”

The most positive finding from the survey was the overwhelming endorsement for the *location of Ballybrack Community Centre* as the choice from where to have delivered the training from. With respect to the *length and timing* of the IMCV training course over 12 weeks, opinions were almost evenly divided with 55% indicating that they were satisfied with the 12 week schedule while 45% were not satisfied.



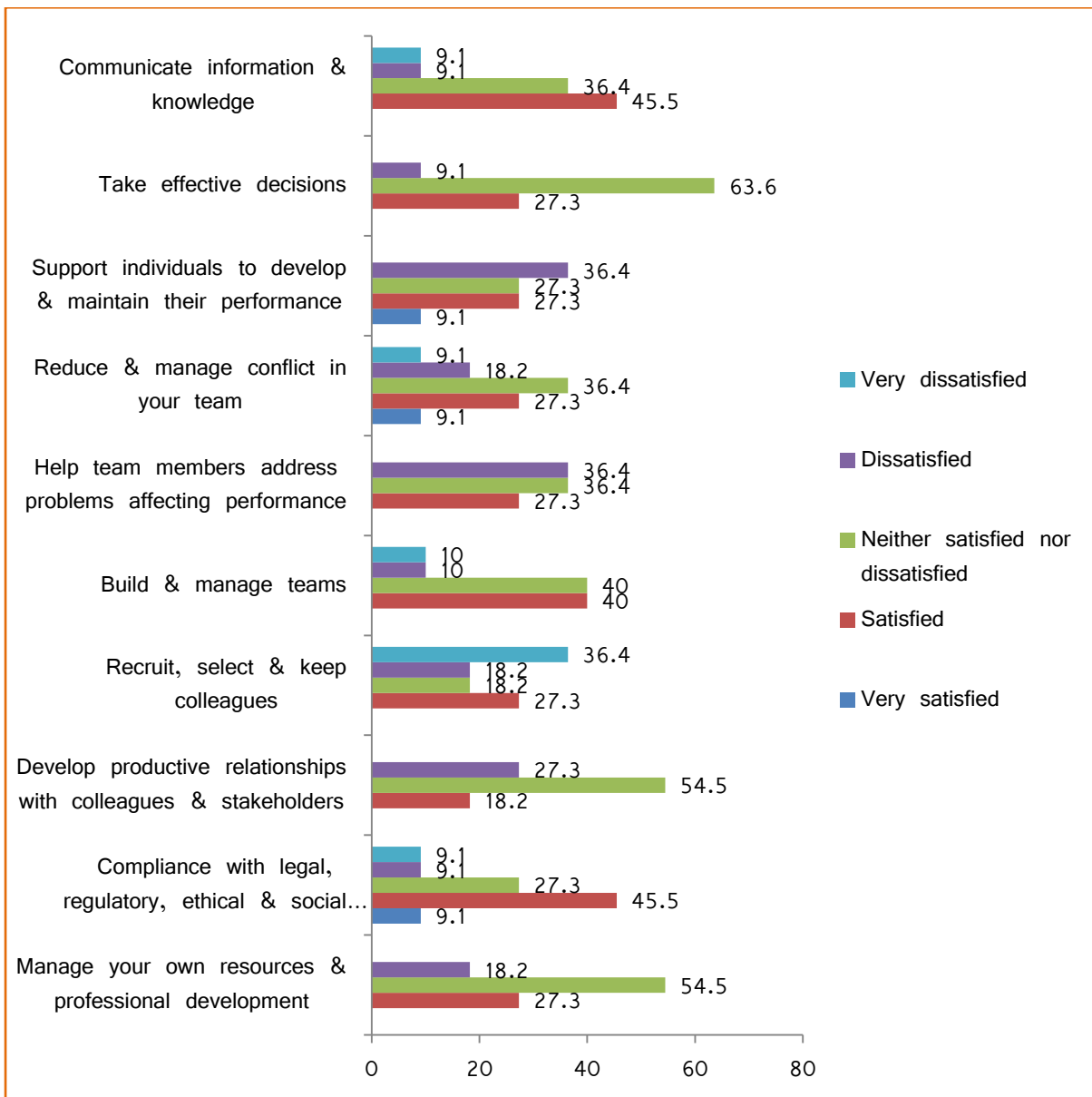
55% of respondents similarly indicated that they were satisfied with the *quality of the handouts* circulated to course participants while 45% specified that they were not. Several persons noted that the handouts were not actually bespoke but drawn instead from another course delivered by the IMCV. Focus group...



Modules and units of learning

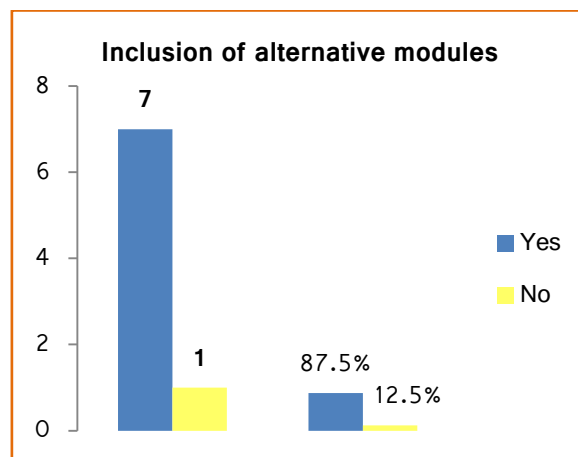
The online questionnaire provided everyone with an opportunity to reflect and pinpoint, which modules and units of learning they considered satisfactory or not along a scale. What this exercise identified was that ‘*Compliance with legal regulatory, ethical and social requirements*’ was ranked the highest among the 10 modules delivered by the IMCV. ‘*Communication, information and knowledge*’ was next followed in turn by ‘*build and manage teams*’.

At the opposite end of the spectrum ‘*recruit, select and keep colleagues*’ was ranked the least favourite model of all followed by ‘*support individuals to develop and maintain their performance*’. The finding with respect to the two final modules is unsurprising given that these are not really elements of the job description of many of the Tus members who attended the course as identified through the focus groups.



Alternative modules

87.5% of respondents offered the opinion that alternative modules should be included on a future bespoke course for Tus Team Leaders. Although people didn't indicate which precisely on the questionnaire they spoke in general around aspects of their roles they face on a daily basis and



IMCV tutors and Application of New Skills to current Tus Role

Tus Team Leaders were also asked to indicate their satisfaction levels on a sliding scale with the quality of the tutorage delivered by the five tutors for the IMCV course. Based on responses provided, Brendan Collins emerged as the tutor that 95% of TL were most satisfied with, closely followed by Roisin Deery. In contrast Ethna McGovern was least favoured tutor from among the four⁴. The grading of the various tutors needs to be placed into some context. If a particular unit or module wasn't relevant to the persons attending it, whether it would have made a substantial difference if a different tutor had delivered it. It does appear however, that one tutor was marked lower than the other three as reflected in the matrix below and through the qualitative quotes inserted.

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Brendan Collins	6 (54.5%)	4 (40%)	1 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Roisin Deery	5 (50%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Ray Lynch	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)
Ethna McGovern	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)	3 (30%)
Other	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

“Brendan was enthusiastic despite the fact that he was being told over and over again that much of what he was saying would not be of use to us”

⁴ There were four and not five tutors. Mistake made on questionnaire.

“Roisin was good and had an understanding of our job. Ray did one day with us, the content was fine but his delivery was forced. Ethna had a lot of material but seemed unprepared and had no understanding of Tús”

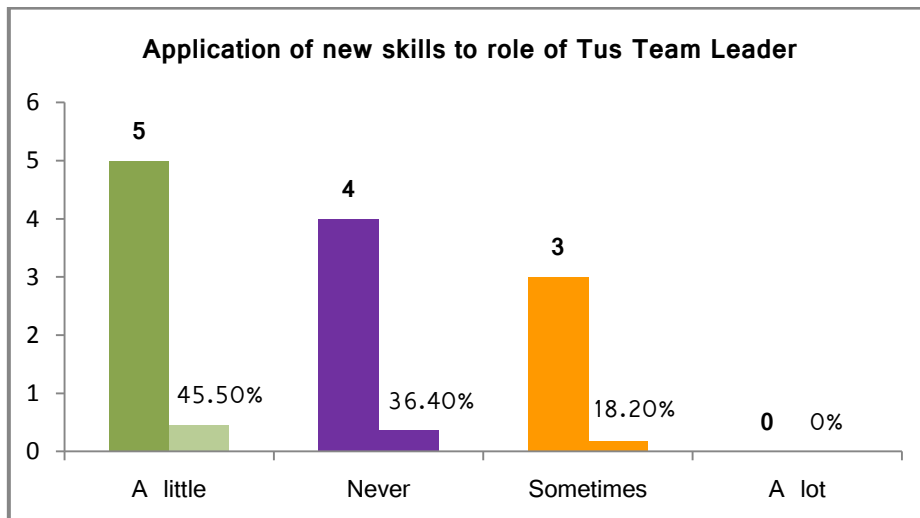
“All four tutors were excellent in their delivery and ability. The main problem was the construct and content for the course which was not put together satisfactorily by IMCV. A lot of time was wasted and spent explaining our actual job description and pointing out evident sections of the course content that did not apply / not relevant to our day to day duties”

“Tus trainers Ethna/ Ray / Brenda were out of touch V Roisin who knew about Tus”

“Ethna seemed to have no knowledge of the Tús programme”

“Ethna didn’t like student feedback”

Elsewhere one of the questions put what to what extent Tus Team Leaders had been applying the skills and knowledge to their current role within the programme. As reflected in the diagram below the transferability of new skills to their role is minimal. Of concern was the finding that only 18.2% sometimes thought so and 36.4% never apply new skills in their current role as Tus Team Leader.

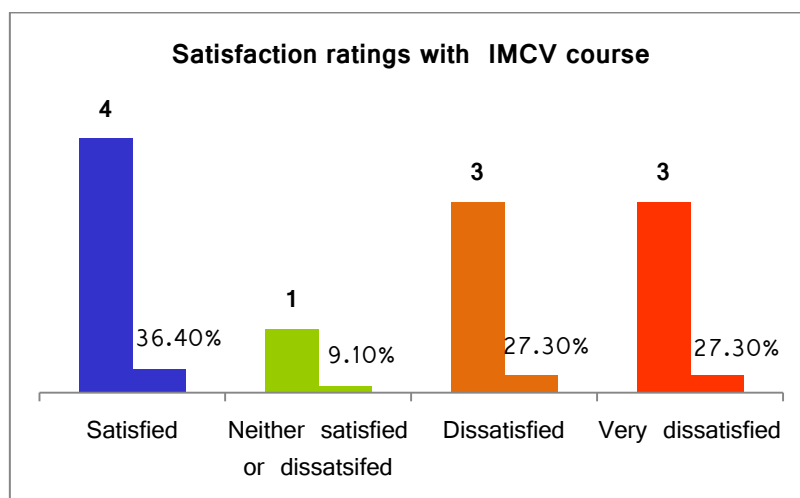


“Again it was mostly generic management jargon that did not specifically deal with the on the ground reality of our jobs”

“I don’t feel I gained any new skills from the training”

Satisfaction with IMCV training course overall

Tus Team leaders were asked their overall opinions of the course in order to gain a holistic overview of their perceptions. What emerges is that 55% were that there were 'very dissatisfied or dissatisfied' with the IMCV course and 36.4% were 'satisfied'. Just one person was neutral in their opinion. There was recognition that there was a real and substantial effort made by the tutors to make the later half of the course more relevant to the needs of Tus Team leaders. The participants who attended the final four weeks of the course achieved an overall return that those who choose to stop attending for whatever reason.



“Before the breakdown, the course was not in any way helpful to me. It was meant to make me a better team leader but the reverse was happening as it was taking a day out of my week and not giving me anything useful in return”

“I was not happy with the first 8 Weeks but the remaining 4 were very good This question does not allow for the final weeks where some improvement was made so this result reflects the overall experience”

“In my opinion the course was extremely ad hoc and the fact that it had to be postponed mid way to re evaluate testifies to this”

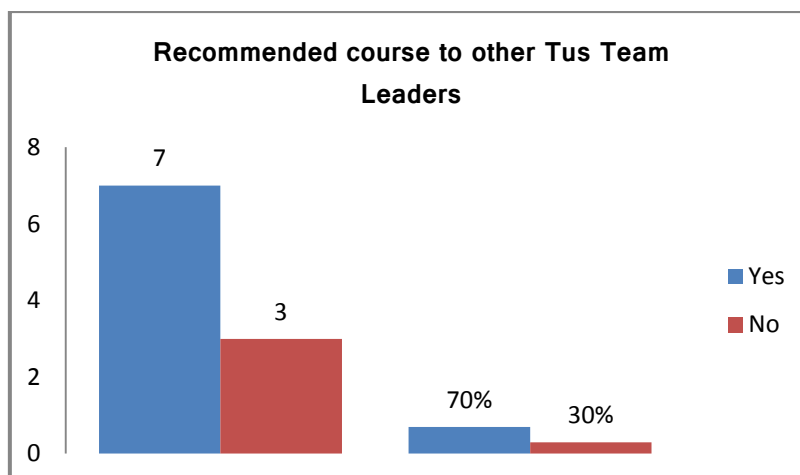
“Poorly constructed with little reference to the day to day reality of the Team Leader role. it would appear that the content was a cut and paste exercise from another course and the term Tús specific does not apply at all. It was akin to a general manager’s course that could be applied industry wide to any role”

“Deliverance was repetitive and stretched out”

“We were told that this would be an applied management award, but this was not applied. It was only theoretical”

Recommending the IMCV training course to other Tus Team Leaders

Finally despite the reservations and negative comments made by some respondents' to some of the questions, a large majority did clearly articulate they would recommend a course to other Tus Team Leaders. This finding is possibly influenced by the changes made to the course in the final four weeks but also the minority of participants who were deriving some benefit from the course as they attended it.



“To be fair, after the breakdown a significant effort was made by the organizers to put together sessions that would be of use to us. The three that I was present for were of a decent standard but over all I'd have to say this was a failure due to poor planning and a severe lack of understanding from the people at IMCV”

“I do not think that the course is valuable in its current form”

“It would benefit team leaders who have never had management training or are new to the role”

“This result is based on the IMCV training which we had and not on any planned training in the future”

“The course content was very poorly constructed with large parts of it not related to the Tús Team Leader role. The delivery was excellent but the background info from IMCV on the Team Leader role would appear to be very poorly passed onto OTC in relation to course content”

FEEDBACK FROM TUTORS

Obtaining feedback from the course tutors was essential in order to gain an insight into factors from their perspective to ensure a more rounded feedback. Both tutors who participated in the evaluation process outlined how they developed a very good positive working relationship with the Group of Tus team leaders along with some members of the Tus Steering Group.

“The group overall were very pleasant to work with, at all times courteous and engaging”

“The input by the participants into the course (i.e. group work & discussion) was always very positive and many were eager to share their thoughts and evaluations on concepts discussed”

According to Brendan who was asked by Michelle of the IMCV to help design the bespoke course, it was mapped on the basis of an English course with distinct learning objectives. Further to this, the *course was apparently built around the job description* of a Tus Team Leader. [However, as was identified through the consultation with Tus Leaders not all their job descriptions are identical but more importantly their day to day work functions and case load of clients].

“Yes the type and diversity of work that Team Leaders typically do was explained in detail. It was from here that the Tús Bespoke Managers Award was developed and delivered”

It soon became apparent two weeks into the delivery of the course that the Tus team leaders were looking for learning objectives that didn't coincide with the learning objectives of the course designed by the IMCV.

“However, on delivery of this management training programme it became clear that the participants would have preferred other Modules/training as opposed to the management specific training that was offered”.

“Yes as said above it did become apparent that the theory was not meeting the expectations of the group. While the group were at all times very courteous, they were vocal about this”

“While the Professional Managers Award is an excellent management course – it became clear that the Tús Team Leaders did not want management specific training. While this training was bespoke (using a Tús Team Leaders job description) there seemed to be a ‘disconnect’ between their Job Description and what Team Leaders actually do at ground level.

As a response to these circumstances a mini-evaluation of the course was carried out during the 3rd session and a more *‘Person Centred Management style course was identified as what was needed and what was delivered in the second half of the course’*. As such the IMCV were flexible in that they did try to reformat the course to respond to the needs of the participants. As has been identified elsewhere this relates more so to the final four weeks of the course. Unfortunately by that stage some several Tus Team Leaders had disengaged and stopped attending the course.

“College responded to this once it became apparent that the training was not as specific to the role of a Team leader as expected. (Changed content etc – which seemed to be received very positively)”

“The College responded to this and provided training that was requested by the student group. It would have been helpful (as said above) if a training needs analysis was conducted with the group first in order to ensure agreed explicit learning outcomes. It appeared while the participants knew they were partaking in a management training programme, they would have preferred different management theory”

One feature that did surprise both IMCV tutors based on their work experience was that Team Leaders apparently did not relate to the training possibly as much as other groups they have delivered training too in the past. As suggested by Tus Team Leaders it was more practical orientated tasks that they preferably wanted to derive from the course as opposed to theoretical content.

“Although a lot of the training was ‘built’ around the job description of a Tús Team Leader a lot of the group did not/could relate the training directly to their role as a leader”

“Tutors felt that students didn’t welcome materials as much as other Groups”

“From the perspective of the tutors all the materials were appropriate”

“However having looked at the Learning Outcomes and the Job Description of a Tús Team Leader I was somewhat surprised as to why Team Leaders would not think that principles of management, leadership, delegation, conflict management, communications, ethical responsibilities, motivational theory etc would not be directly relevant to their role. There seemed to be a disjoint between their job description and what they actually do at ground level”

As a trainer this was interesting as general management concepts such as planning, leading, review, reflection, conflict management etc. usually apply to most workers roles (regardless of position, scope of authority). However all trainers picked up on this as the course progressed and after feedback from the group the course was tailored around what the students expected and what they wanted. For example the training on Person Centred Management seemed to be very well received.

Question marks were also raised from the tutor’s side as to how ready some of the Tus Team Leaders were to actually actively engage and participate on the course. [If this is actually true it might partially explain why 12 of the 18 course participants responded to the online survey or the focus groups they were invited to participant in].

“From the very onset of the training a number of participants informed us that they had been sent on the course. It was hard to gauge whether such participants were ‘ready’ to undertake a course of this length (time commitment is considerable). If they were not course ready – it is possible that they did not fully value the training or want to be there. This may be especially true if they felt the

Learning Outcomes were not applicable to their everyday practice and if their workload is significant”

“As said above it was surprising that many participants felt everyday management skills were not applicable to their role. However once this was identified the College adopted to a student-centred system where the relevant Learning Outcomes (as identified by the students) were incorporated into the programme and delivered”

Both tutors outlined that from their standpoint that accreditation isn't necessarily essential unless that have prior management qualifications at level 7/8. If they don't hold such a qualification, a course at level 6 QQI Certificate in Applied Management – former VETAC instead would be sufficient as this provide students with something to build on Year 1 of a 3 year course. Tutors suggested that the option to study online and do assignments after each workshop could also reinforce learning as the course progresses.

“It's very important that people should only be doing a course unless it leads to a qualification especially in today's work environment”

“I think the option of having the work accredited is important, but it should only be an option. This means the Learner has autonomy as to whether or not they put their work forward for validation and accreditation. However this system would also need to take into account the requirements of the funders and all other relevant stakeholders”

*“Other students do an assignment after each module to help ‘bring to life’
“Study online and do workshops”*

Four functions of Management –decide on an aspect of their workplace to apply the learning too e.g. Fundraising event–students have to display how they would go about doing it

Brendan suggested that participants did not necessarily need to be streamed based on previous work experience or management training.

“I have worked on management training courses in the past where participants range from senior management to some just starting their management career. Some of these participants also have had no previous third level education, some with PhD's and every other qualification in between. So there is little streaming happening here.

This is why I mentioned the concept of ‘course ready’ above. From the onset we work with students in assisting them to develop ‘reflective’ practice. This is crucial in any management/leadership training. It helps to focus the student, as they reflect on why they are in the training room, what they can do with the training etc (Both personal and professional development). It is important (especially in times of change) that workers are flexible, adaptable, open to change, reflect on practice etc so as they can be the best in their place of work.

With respect to what structures or supports Brendan and Ray did ideally like to have in place to secure a smoother delivery or better learning outcomes in the future

Yes – I think it would be important to identify the exact training needs and expectations of the Team Leaders and build a course around those needs. This information would need to come from the Team Leaders and agreed with management (and indeed where appropriate other stakeholders – e.g. funders) so as the Learning Outcomes match exactly what has been requested and what is expected. There was also a lot of attendance days required – I feel with the right support not as many days of attendance would be needed – in turn it would not be as taxing on the students.

A training needs analysis prior to any agreement on the delivery of the training would have identified exactly what training the Leaders wanted and in turn influenced the Learning Outcomes of the course. (Meeting their expectations)

Both tutors were keen to stress that a lot of energy went into the planning of the course and ‘*despite difficulties things were never personalised– got on well with Linda and Deirdre*’. They wished all the participants the very best for the future and would be open to working alongside the Tus Steering Group in the future again to

“As said (many times) above, the group were at all times very pleasant and courteous to work with. It was an enjoyable and rewarding experience. I think what is most important for me is to reiterate the need for agreement with all stakeholders on the Learning Outcomes prior to the training being delivered.

“I wish all the participants the very best for their future endeavours and please inform them that all in the Open Training College enjoyed working with them and facilitating their learning”

CONCLUSIONS

In general there appears to have been an element of oversell with regard to the bespoke IMCV course that was delivered. It was communicated to potential course participants as an applied qualification, which subsequently transpired from the perspective of Team Leaders to have been theoretical and drawn from a ready made generic handbook.

Aligning the course content of a bespoke training course to recognise the diversity of job descriptions was not an easy endeavour. The deliverance of the course however, was repetitive, verbatim and too stretched out for several persons and a few participants' felt patronised. As a consequence some Tus Team Leaders expressed serious reservations and question marks around the value of the course.

There was recognition by Tus Team Leaders however, that there was a real and substantial effort made by the tutors to make the later half of the course more relevant to their training needs. Likewise the opportunity to network with their peers from other LDCs was looked upon favourably by Team Leaders.

Through the online survey and focus groups it was established there was confusion among some Tus Team Leaders regarding what precise qualification they were ever going to receive or whether the credits they might attain would help contribute towards attaining a European accredited qualification on completion.

The opportunities for Tus Team Leaders across the 5 LDCs to influence the format of the course appeared to have differed. Some Tus Team persons claimed they effectively had little or no input on the course content and that it was effectively mapped out in advance. Elsewhere TLs were presented with modules and asked to pick from them but some of the ones they choose didn't feature in the final course content.

Some forthright views about the course delivery were expressed by particular respondents. One person saw IMCV as a self-serving organisation, associated with the Institute of Public Administration and indicated that they should be '*removed from the equation*'.

Some participants believe that the Director of the IMCV, Michelle dissolved her responsibility and didn't ask for proper TL input nor does there appear to have been an attempt to understand the role of a Team Leader. It was an abject failure according to one person who input at a focus group.

What emerged very strongly from the focus groups was the level of frustration among Team Leaders as to how Tus is rolled out across different LDCs. One factor influencing their frustrations is the imbalance between Team Leaders caseload of clients who also do not necessarily have identical job descriptions.

TL's outlined how the nature of their duties differed across each TUS region and expressed irritation around certain aspects of how they function and the restrictions placed on staff and lack of support from the Department of Social Protection. There is reportedly a disownership of issues that TL face on a daily basis and what the DSP are prepared to offer.

Due to the random referral of long-term unemployed people to Tus Team Leaders they are dealing with a mix and match of individuals some of whom have significant personal development issues such as literacy, mental health and alcohol / drug addiction. Unfortunately there are not trained in as social workers. Tus Team Leaders don't appear to be offered peer support or supervision supports under their terms and conditions of employment within their LDC as LES staff generally do.

The Tus Team Leader position is a challenging role that is under appreciated by the Department of Social Protection compared to LES staff perhaps who are more established. Team Leaders cannot say goodbye or get rid of someone as that might financially hit a person but places the Tus worker under work pressure with his or employer and the Department of Social Protection. The manner in which in which the IMCV course was then delivered only compounded their irritations.

The Dublin Tus Steering Group is to be commended for trying to get an external organisation such as the IMCV to increase the skills of Tus Team Leaders who have little opportunity for career advancement within their own organisation. Realistically the IMCV were the appropriate body to do so given that the Department of Social Protection had previously ruled out NUI Maynooth on cost grounds. The IMCV were not as receptive to the changes as they could have been that were evidently required 'considering this could have been a big product for them' with potential rollout to 45 other LDCs.

Despite the negative comments expressed around some of the questions, a large majority of respondents' to the online survey did clearly articulate they would recommend a course to other Tus Team Leaders. There still appears therefore to be an appetite among Tus Team Leaders for another course to be delivered that would address the shortcomings that arose from the original pilot IMCV course.

Nevertheless the Tus Steering Group has a job of work to do in helping re-build trust with Tus Team Leaders and Co-ordinators who attended a course, which in some respects de-motivated them and was counter productive considering the time involved it took for them to travel to it and the day job was still there for them to return to. The Steering Group did not recommend that Michelle from the IMCV approach all Tus participants in advance. Had this occurred it may have lead to a greater match between learning objectives and actual learning outcomes.

In defence of the IMCV, the mix of Tus personnel with different levels of educational attainment and work experience might have made it more difficult for the IMCV to deliver a course that would satisfy everyone's training needs "*Everyone wanted something different from the course*". An overall preference for participants to be streamed onto a future bespoke Tus course factoring in these attributes was collated via the online questionnaire and focus groups.

6 of the 11 respondents or 63% stated that the awarding of an accreditation was a 'very important or important' consideration for them in choosing to take up the course in the first instance. In allocating funding to a future course the Tus Steering Group might need to factor accreditation costs into overall budget allocation. With respect to a suitable course location Ballybrack Community Centre is an appropriate place to have it delivered from.

In terms of the appropriateness of modules for a course in the future, ‘compliance with legal regulatory, ethical and social requirements’ was ranked the highest among the 10 delivered along with ‘communication, information and knowledge’ and ‘build and manage teams’.

Finally with respect to the length and timing of the IMCV training course over 12 weeks, opinions were almost evenly divided whether it was of the correct duration. It is much more important that workshops or units are applicable to the role of Tus Team leader every day roles rather than abstract and theoretical.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) The Tus Steering Group should attempt to re-run a training course for Tus Team Leaders in the Dublin region.
- 2) The Tus Steering Group needs to undertake a root and branch review of what content Tus Team Leaders would like to feature on a course in the future. In that respect, there needs to be a facilitated roundtable panel discussion with Tus Team Leaders, Co-ordinators, CEOs, tutors and around what precise topics the course should cover.
- 3) An accreditation element should be a built in feature of any new course to make it more attractive to Tus Team Leaders to commit to a course lasting 12 sessions.
- 4) Participants should be streamed for selection onto a course based on work experience and previous education levels within reason.
- 5) Practical workshops with tangible benefits that will enable Tus Team Leaders apply new skills to their current roles are most pertinent. These might cover person central management and conflict management counselling training, mental health, synthesised case studies and INOU (tax/social welfare system) in recognition of the challenging role of TUS Leaders.
- 6) The Tus Steering Group should explore the possibility of peer support or supervision supports being extended to all Team Leaders in the Dublin region.

<http://matrixstandard.com/>

7) The Tus Steering Group could perhaps greater harmonisation of job descriptions across LDCs for Tus Staff.