

2014 Follow up survey with former Tús participants and projects in Dublin 15

Blanchardstown Area Partnership

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1. 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

Tús Blanchardstown was established in May 2011 when two team leaders were recruited to develop the programme in Dublin 15. Since 2011, 215 people have been placed in a wide variety of roles across Dublin 15, 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 pg 9). In 2014, Blanchardstown Area Partnership (BAP) administered a survey of individuals who received labour market supports from the Tús programme in Dublin 15.

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

2. Introduction

Methodology

A survey questionnaire was posted out to all former Tús participants and existing projects along with a stamped return envelope to encourage everyone to participate. The questionnaire was designed by the Partnership's in house research and evaluation officer in consultation with the Tús team². The construction of it was also informed in part by a survey distributed to JobBridge participants as part of a national evaluation (Indecon 2013) and a survey of Tús projects in Kildare. The sample frame consisted of 57 projects located across Dublin 15 and 136 former Tús participants. 31 projects posted back a completed questionnaire which equates to a response rate of 54% and 34 individuals did likewise, which transpires to a response rate of 26% once incorrect/change of address factors are omitted.

The objectives of the survey were as follows:

- To provide former Tús participants with an opportunity to provide feedback, regarding the quality of the supports they received while on the programme
- To meet Blanchardstown Area Partnership's obligations to consult periodically with its target groups
- To identify the most recent labour market activity of clients who finished Tús
- To provide projects with an opportunity to provide feedback, regarding the quality of the supports they received from Team Leaders
- To identify suggested changes to the Tús programme from the perspective of projects and participants
- To draw out any lessons of relevance for the development and implementation of policy at local or national level

A series of charts visually illustrate a more detailed breakdown of respondents' feedback to each question. The main findings are presented thematically although not necessarily in sequence with the design of either questionnaire. The report will begin by examining responses from the beneficiary organisations and thereafter participants.

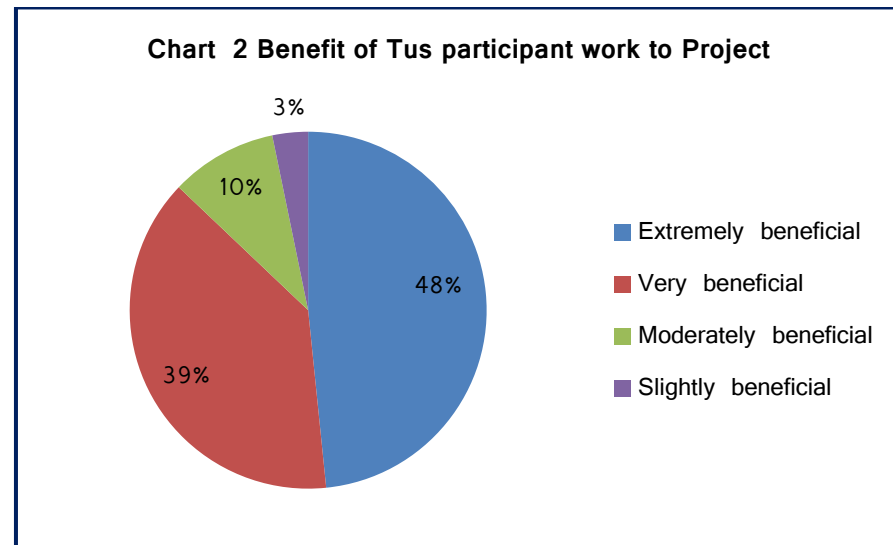
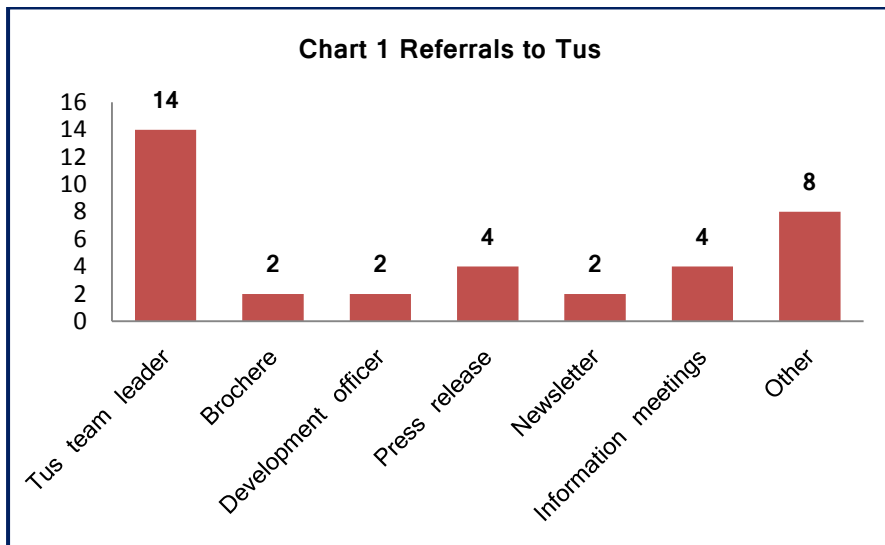
² The need to follow up and contact former participants was identified by a team leader. Following internal discussion it was decided to also include projects in which participants had been placed in order to source more rounded feedback

Section A: Project responses

2.1 Findings

Referrals to Tús and its impact

The most recurrent way projects came to learn about Tús was through a Team Leader followed by ‘other’ along with ‘information meetings’ and ‘press releases’ (Chart 1). There are 6 team leaders who have responsibility for engaging with projects across Dublin 15. With respect to the benefits of Tús to actual projects directly, 48% of projects indicated the Tús participants contribution to the organisation during their one year internship had been ‘extremely beneficial’ and 39% ‘very beneficial’ (Chart 2). None of the 31 projects who responded stated that the internship had not at all been beneficial. In some instances the addition of a Tús worker has enabled particular organisations improve front line service delivery or provided an opportunity for more experienced Management/ staff to generate additional income and resources. The qualitative quotes overleaf capture the impacts of the Tús programme to their organisation and local community in their own words.



Qualitative comments

“Tús participants enable us to keep our door open for many hours longer than we would with just Centre staff”

“As ...of house reception role we were able to provide additional person centred response to address social need of people accessing services”

“Our Tús worker works with the community drugs team participants setting them to express themselves through art therefore assisted and supported them in their recovery from drug abuse”

“Provided cover and reception to allow us to conduct one to one work with young people”

“We are now able to offer full time childcare service-which is affordable and accessible enabling local parents’ access to work”

“Tús participant has had an extremely beneficial impact on our community service, as we are reliant on community employment to run our service”

“Having a Tús worker here helps with filling a staff shortage”

“It is an important part of framework which allows for the maximum participation of volunteers-which would not be possible with this framework”

“Contributed to the smooth running of administration office”

“Cohesion of different services already offered by our organisation”

“Excellent in our school”

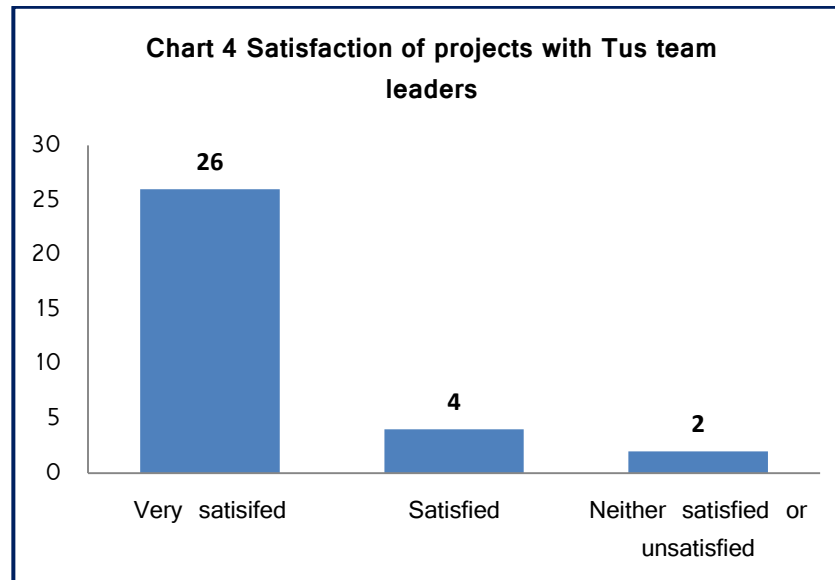
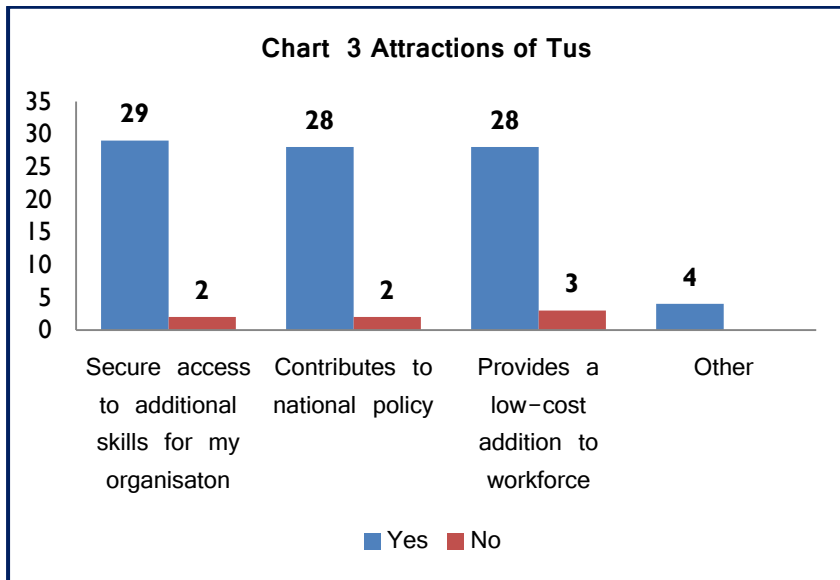
“Support we greatly need as a start up school”

“Our Tús worker has become indispensable and we are currently looking at creating a position where he can be employed at the end of his Tús employment”

“Positive impact on generating income and funding”

“We found that 1st year was a very short time for participants. We also found that people needed upskilling yet there was no real allowance for that with the placements. I understand that the programme was established for that purpose yet I find it a flaw. Also the possible duplication with Community Employment is a challenge”

Projects were separately asked to what extent they either agreed or disagreed with a sequence of statements as displayed in Chart 3. The responses clearly illustrate that Tús has helped almost all organisations secure access to additional skills and act as a low-cost addition to their workforce while facilitating participants get employment in the social economy from the projects perspective. The Community and Voluntary sector has experienced a significant reduction in funding and employment levels since 2008 as reflected in the Irish Congress of Trade Union publication (Harvey, B 2012). Elsewhere 26 of the Projects stated that they were ‘very satisfied’ with the Tús team leaders appointed to the organisation and a further 4 were ‘satisfied’ with their supports during the trainee’s 12 month placement (Chart 4).



Qualitative comments

- “The Tús team leader was always available for consultation when needed”*
- “Always approachable and willing to help”*
- “Fantastic support always”*
- “The Team Leader listened to my concerns and was able to transfer the man to a more suitable placement”*
- “Staff were very knowledgeable and totally supportive”*
- “Always approachable and willing to help”*

“Our Tús leader is very good and accommodating. We hope Tús staff can become confident to talk to us (...at any time)”

“Excellent support from team leader”

“They matched up the right people for the service and kept in constant touch with both participant and sponsor”

“Always found leaders more than helpful very good matching for job”

“The Tús team leader worked really well with our service and addressed any issue that needed to be addressed”

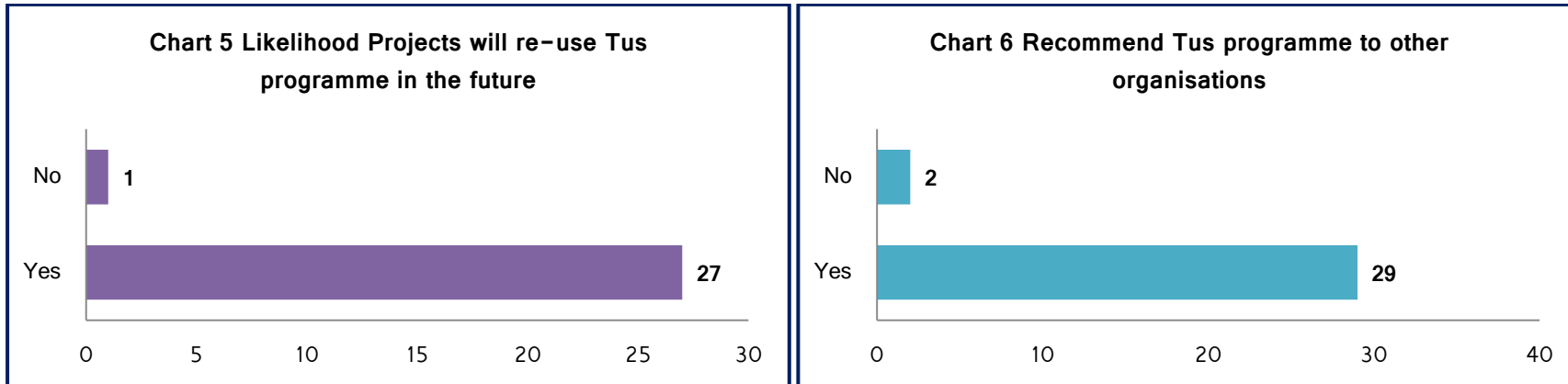
“I have full support from my Tús team leader”

“She was good but supports weren’t great–Because leaders worked to deadlines with numbers placed– greater concentration given to organisation with no specific requirements from candidates”

“Would have welcomed regular ‘check-ins; or contact”

Sustainability of Tús

Whether Tús becomes a more permanent labour market activation programme is ultimately a decision that will be taken by the Department of Social Protection. The sustainability and future success of Tús as a community labour market placement programme cannot be guaranteed without projects that are willing to recruit Tús employees. Two specific questions attempted to capture data around this. What transpired is that 96% (27) of the projects stated that they will in all likelihood re-apply under the Tús programme to address future staffing needs and 94% (29 of the 31) indicated that they would recommend the programme to other organisations. Overall levels of satisfaction with Tús were exceptionally positive. 30 or 94% of all Projects were satisfied with Tús with just one organisation expressing its dissatisfaction (Chart5).



Qualitative comments

“I had one participant who didn’t complete the course with us as the job I was offering didn’t suit him at all. –the sense he was more prepared to do outdoor physical work”

“We believe the programme is very valuable to both the community and voluntary sector and the people placed”

“Delighted to have another person on the team”

“We believe the programme is very valuable to both the community and voluntary sector and the people placed”

“Satisfied with the employee–she was a great asset. Unfortunately the programme is only 1 year– and as our work involved interacting with families– building relationships–one year is not sufficient for our requirements. Because we got the participant for an additional year though C.E. it was very satisfactory”

“With candidates who stayed– 2 others left in short time”

“The people we had on board were great

“It is a great partnership and we have had some wonderful people”

The only problem was that it was 1 year

“I found it gave people an opportunity yet it didn’t really offer them long term prospects. Both participants returned to the Live Register despite both being very eager and proactive regarding the search for employment”

“Tús employees are a great assist to our organisation. Great involvement and training given to our staff”

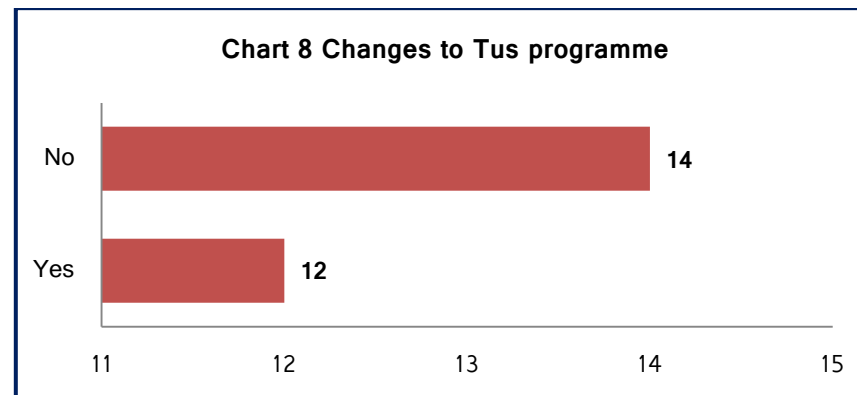
“Just wish there was a way for them to access funding towards further training”

“Participants do not get long enough time to complete training we have sourced for them and with completion of the training; they can not work in the workforce”

“Participants on the programme vary hugely from totally disinterested and unreliable to completely interested and 100% reliable. Such is the nature of the programme”

Recommended changes to Tús

12 or 46% of the projects suggested specific explanations in what way Tús could be changed in order to improve how it functions operationally. Firstly several projects suggested that the 1 year work placement should be extended for an additional year. The other main observation centred on the requirement for additional flexibility and resources to be allocated to the training of Tús participants. Opportunities to improve linkages to Community Employment or further education choices for individuals were also suggested. Finally the obligatory element of the Tús programme whereby a jobseeker in effect is compelled to participate on the programme or risk sanction was objected to by a project, which was of the opinion that it dis-incentivised the community work placement for the individual from the outset.



Qualitative comments

“Yes the term need to be extended. This would be beneficial for the Tús participant and the placement organisation”

“Make it longer for participants”

“One year is very short and a second year could be beneficial”

“Extend the 1 year time period”

“Long time to complete training”

“The possibility of a second year for participants doing well”

“Participants to work with families within the community would need at least 2 years”

“Training budget—for person career qualifications”

“Training opportunities or more linkage with Community Employment”

“Give them longer or more training relevant to the job they are doing”

“More training cost available to participate on training when on placement”

“That it be optional so people are highly motivated–progression routes for candidates–more training opportunities–options to get back to education”

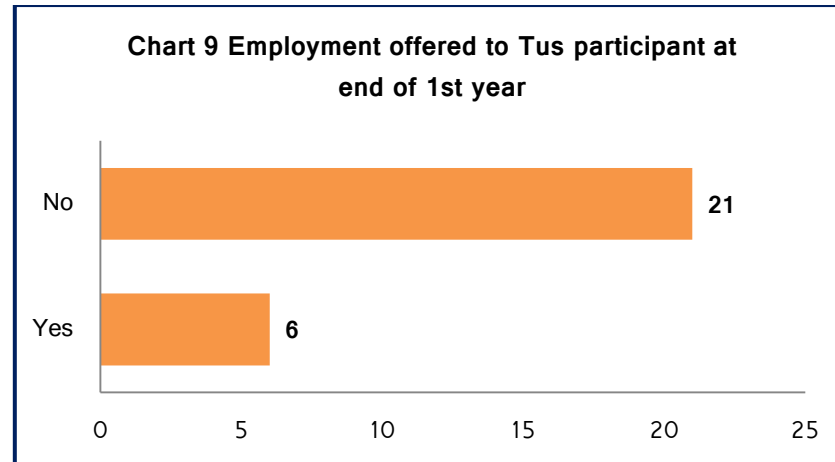
“Screening for special work placements”

“The participants should be able to choose whether they are able to take part, not to be made to feel they must take part in the scheme”

“No incentive for participants resulting in difficult finding people”

Job Creation

Importantly the survey results identified whether the projects had hired any Tús personnel either on a part of full time during or after their placement finished. Based on the data gathered 6 or 22% of the 27 projects have recruited individuals who transferred onto the Tús programme in Dublin 15. The constrained budgets of community projects would appear to have prevented more participants from being recruited by the host organisation plus some of the participants were placed in voluntary sector organisations where open employment is not a feasible option. 17 or 63% of the projects stated that there were no employment opportunities within the organisation and another 4 because Tús participants were not deemed to have been of a high enough calibre. The qualitative quotes overleaf provide additional insight around all of these factors.



Qualitative comments

“This is not possible as we are a voluntary organisation”

“We have so far not been able to, but are very eager to help place the people in the Station in paid positions where possible”

“But will be advertising positions in the future due to expansion of services”

“We would have but we have no source of funding to do so”

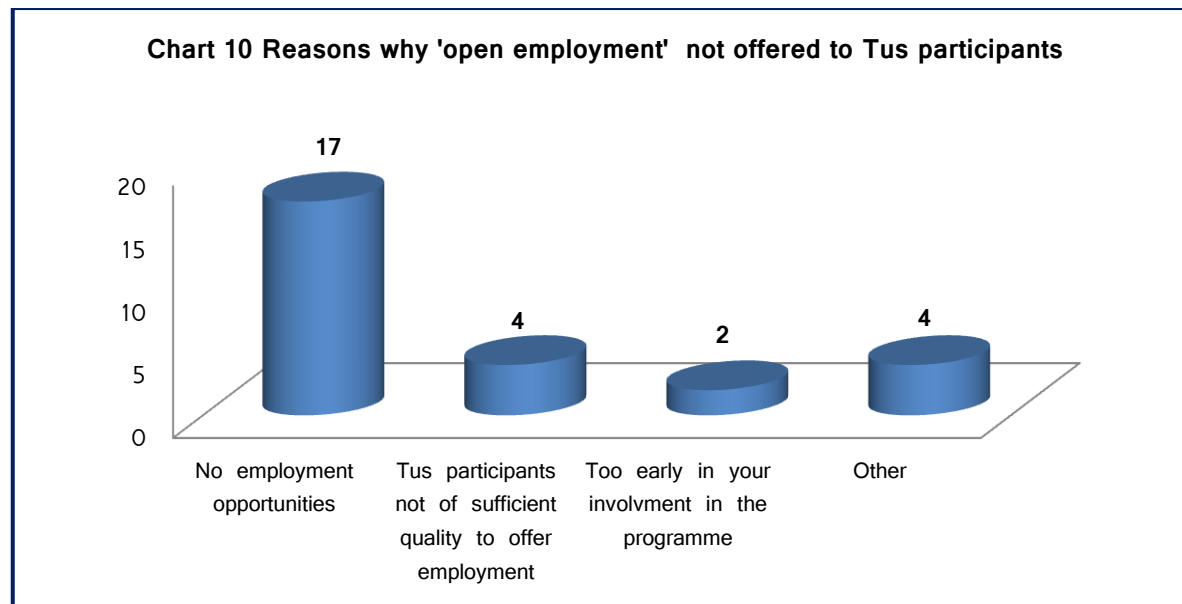
“On completion of a special care course following Tús one person has got employment as a career in organisation”

“If we had a budget we would have been interested in 3 of the participants”

“Part time ten hours work placement in community foodbank”

“Due to lack of funding”

“Not yet but we are considering it”



“I am glad to have the opportunity to feedback re Tús programme. While I found participants and supervisors very willing in engaging, I am ambivalent regarding the value of the programme”

“It works very well but the time is too short. The participant is only settling into how employment works, their confidence is only building and they are gone”

“There is not enough time in a year to give them all the training they need and to understand the running of an organisation”

“Still trying to secure the necessary funding”

“Unable to afford any paid jobs to participants”

“Until we build up the businesses funds are not available”

“No employment opportunities because we have insufficient funding to support what we already do”

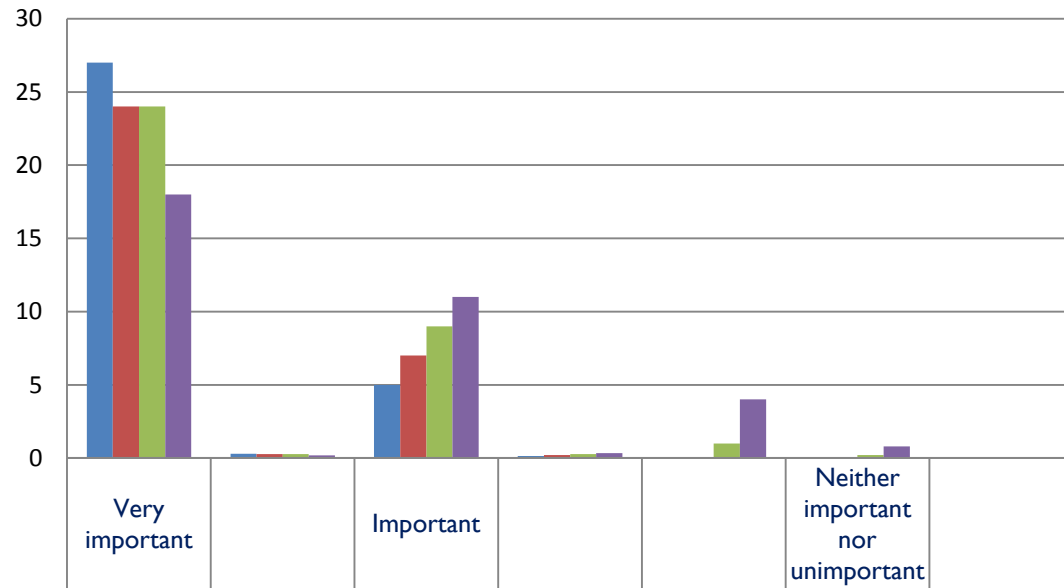
“Still trying to secure the necessary funding”

Core competencies or soft outcomes

BAP's survey gathered data around core competencies or soft outcomes from the project perspective who managed a participant for a period of up to one year. Soft outcomes may be characterised as intangible, subjective and intermediate but nevertheless there is much evidence to demonstrate their importance³. Charts 11/ 12 and 13 synthesise the feedback collated from the perspective of the project along with qualitative quotes following after.

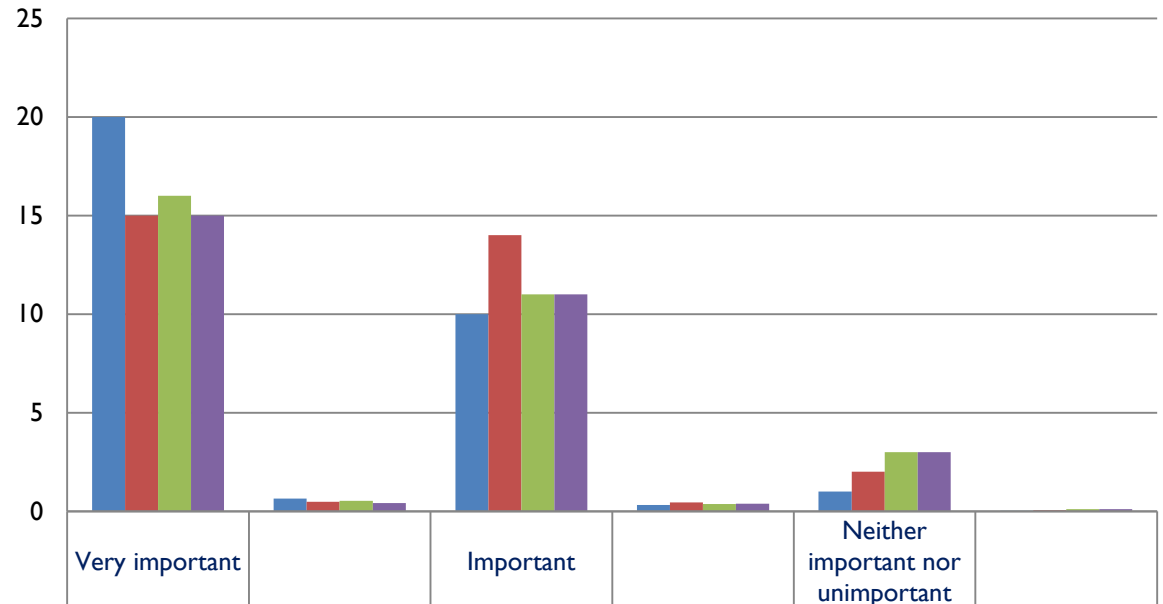
³ The Institute for Employment Studies in the UK in 2000 released a guide for organisations on measuring soft outcomes and distance travelled. They point out that core outcomes can be grouped in many different ways and that some core indicators and outcomes are applicable to most target groups. They may be classified as key work skills, attitudinal skills, personal skills and practical skills. There is no one fixed way to measure and capture soft outcomes and distance travelled despite the obvious attraction (Douglass et al 2012). Westell notes (2005, p3/4) that 'researchers are challenged by the difficulty of isolating variables in adult learning and showing casual relationships between education programs and non-academic progress... life is complex with many different self-evolving systems interacting'. Schuller et al also looked at this in their report Modelling and Measuring The Wider Benefits of Learning: An Initial Synthesis.

Chart II Soft Outcomes I



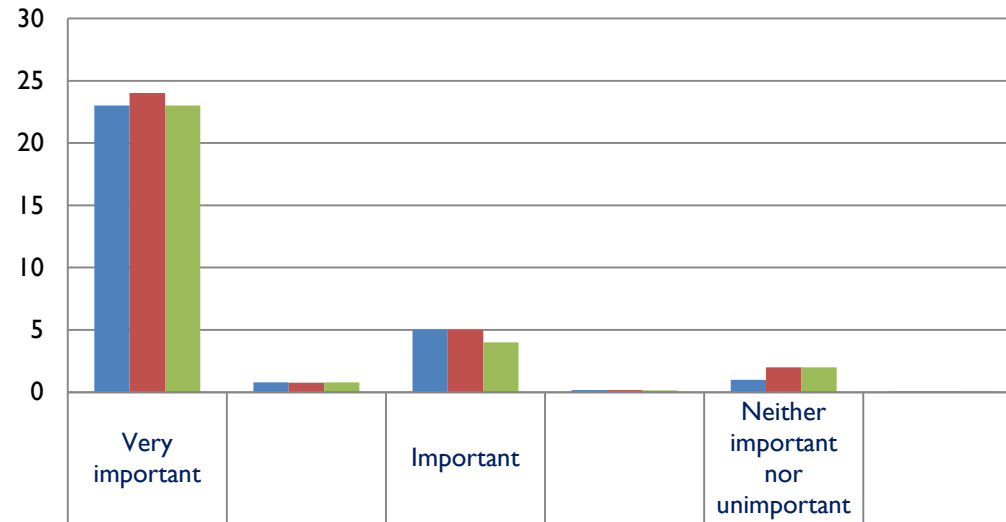
■ Improved motivation & confidence levels	27	29%	5	15%			
■ Improved communication & presentation skills	24	26%	7	21%			
■ Helped participants establish new contacts	24	26%	9	27%	1	20%	
■ Improved English language skills	18	19%	11	33%	4	80%	

Chart 12 Soft outcomes 2



■ Improved C.V.	20	65%	10	32%	1	3%
■ Improved job search skills	15	48%	14	45%	2	6%
■ Improved interview skills	16	53%	11	37%	3	10%
■ Improved numerical & I.T. skills	15	42%	11	38%	3	10%

Chart 13 Soft outcomes 3



	Very important		Important		Neither important nor unimportant	
■ Provided opportunity to gain quality work experience	23	79%	5	17%	1	7%
■ Encouraged participants to move closer to the jobs market	24	77%	5	16%	2	6%
■ Increased participants chances of gaining open employment	23	79%	4	14%	2	7%

Additional feedback

The project survey questionnaire concluded by offering organisations an opportunity to provide additional comments on matters that might not have been factored into its design. No additional issues emerged but were simply a reiteration of comments previously made, namely the programme being very positive, that additional resources should be allocated to up skill participants and for the programme to be extended.

Anything further to add

“Thank you. A very positive experience for candidate and organisation. Candidate has huge potential and would benefit from further employment support-encouragement to develop educational / vocational opportunities. She demonstrated a natural ability for social care and would recommend study in this area”

“An invaluable programme, well run. Pleasure to give...people an opportunity to be part of workforce. Great help to us.”

“Tús is a fantastic scheme, especially for small companies. To have that qualified person for a year, gave back confidence to the worker and enable the extension of services. Thank you.”

“This is a VIP resource to the community and voluntary sector”

“We are very happy with Tús in our organisation and look forward to continued success with this programme”
Very happy with Tús programme at present”

“Some of our Tús workers need specific qualification that they sometimes don’t have to go for interview.”

“It would be great that training is offered by the Department to Tús workers to up skill their qualification along with the practical experience they will get on placement”

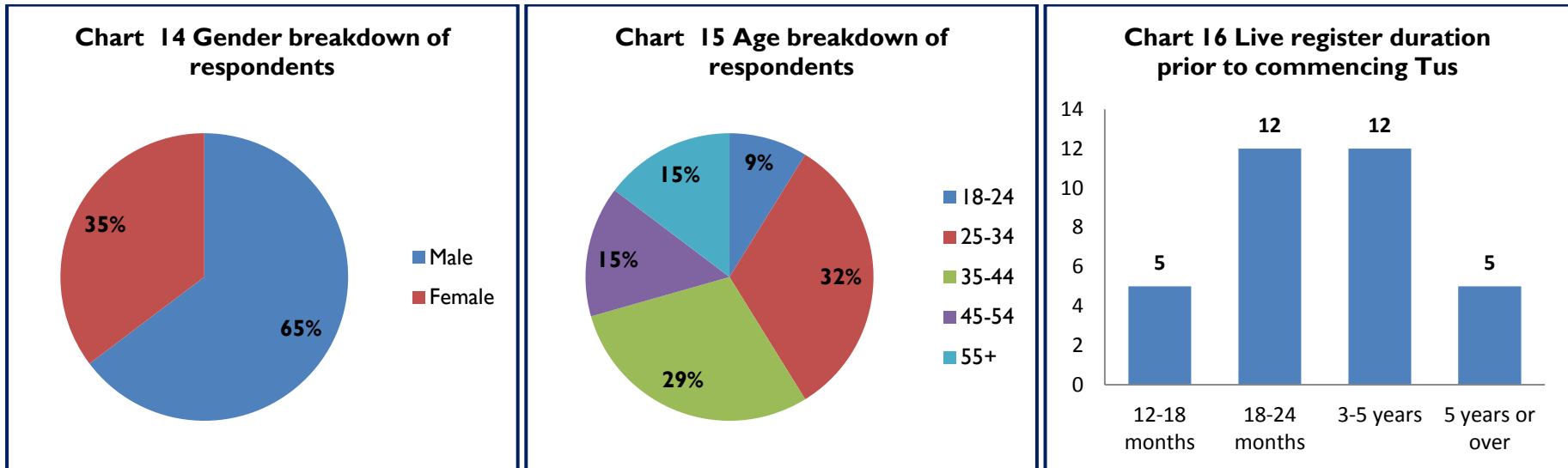
“12 months is not long enough to develop participants fully”

Section B of the report overleaf will examine feedback gathered from Tús participants.

Section B Participant responses

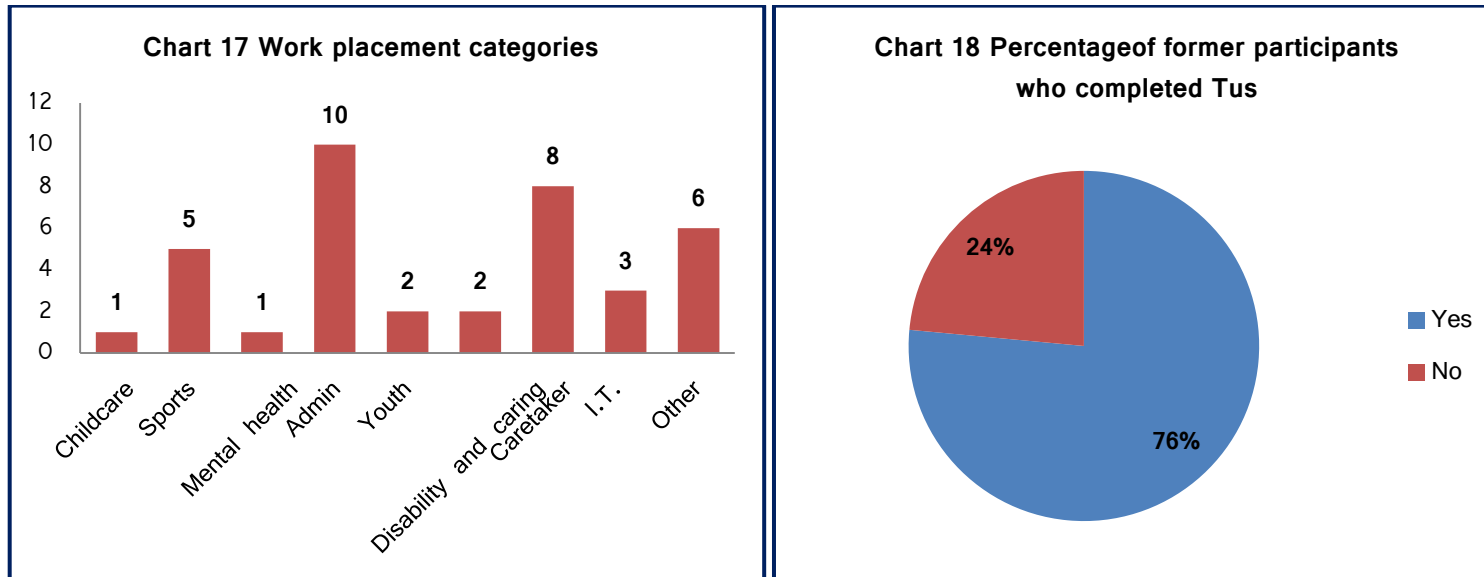
Profile of survey respondents by gender, age, and prior employment status

A higher percentage of the participant respondents were male than female (65%/35%) and almost two thirds were Irish nationals. With regard to the prior labour market status of respondents before they started on Tús, 34% had been signing on for 18 months to two years, a further 34% for between three to five years and 15% indicated that they had been 'signing on longer than five years'. As such the profile of those who actually responded is very similar to the caseload of individuals tracked under the Tús performance monitoring system—Oneview.



Work placement categories and completion rates for Tús

76% (26) of those who responded suggested that they completed the 1 year Tús placement. From the remainder 6 persons did not finish the scheme because they took up ‘open employment’⁴ which is a very positive finding. One person unfortunately had to finish early because of a medical condition. With regard to the categories of work placements that participants took up the highest percentage did so in ‘administration’ and the next highest was in the ‘caretaker’ category followed by ‘other’.



“Found a job”
“I got full time work”
“Secured full time employment after 4 months on programme”
“Hired by company”
“After 4 months I was told my Tús placement was finished”

“Failte Isteach helping people improve their English”
“I got full time employment”
“Secured employment as a Tús leader”
“Finished 2 months early due to medical condition”

⁴ There are four types of employment: sheltered (intellectual disabilities), supported (Community employment, Tús, Full time jobs initiative), self employment and open employment

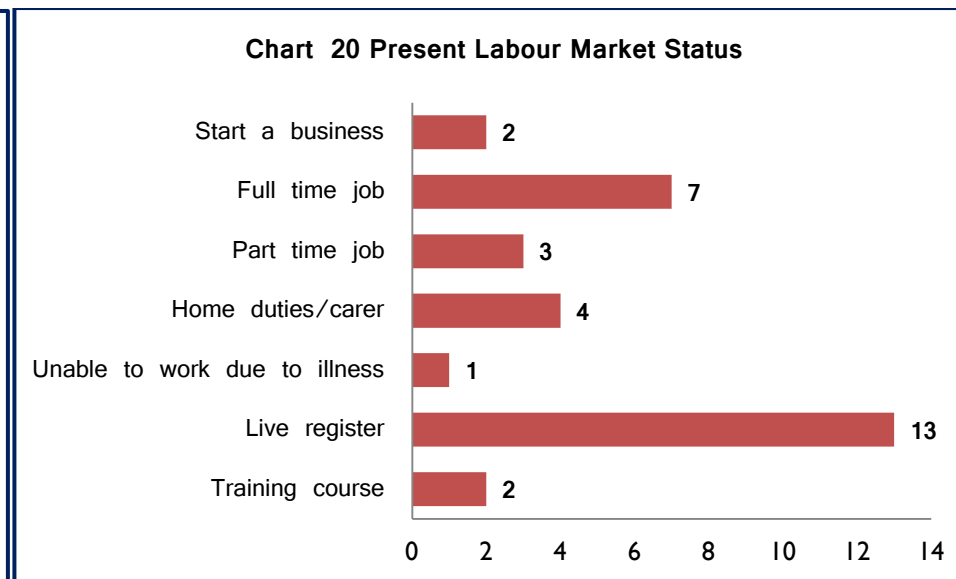
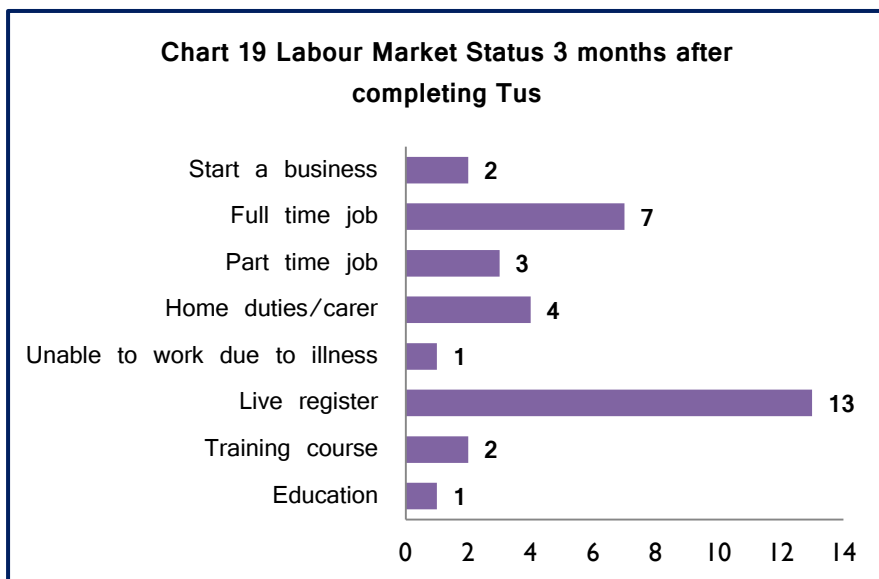
Progression pathways

BAP's 2014 Tús survey attempted to capture progression outcomes ranging from course retention and certification, plus factors such as personal confidence, quality of life issues and labour market status. According to the Area Development Management Limited Ltd Insight Publication (2000, p9/11) '*progression is an underlying principle of the Local Development Programme but it is an elusive and difficult concept to measure or define*' and that '*in education, progression is often perceived as movement into a course of study, completion of a number of linked modules or elements leading to recognised achievement, certification or movement onto further study*'⁵. The former Irish Evaluation Unit commissioned a similar report to specifically examine progression within the context of the European Social Fund⁶. No consensus as to what was understood to be progression could be ascertained among all the managers, delivery agencies, supervisors, trainers, and front line staff interviewed.

With respect to BAP's survey it was established that, 39% (13) of former participants signed back onto the Live Register and another 12% (4) were responsible for home duties or acting as carers within 3 months of the completion of their Tús placement. 36% (12) had re-entered the labour market either by taking up full time (7) part-time employment (3) or by starting up a business (2) of their own. 9% (3) progressed onto further education or registered for a training course via the Local Employment Service/ JOBLINK. 1 person is unable to work due to illness. The more recent status of persons appears to be very similar so those individuals who found employment are still in work while those who signed back shortly after completing Tús on are still doing so. 62% (8) who responded to a specific question stated that their overall income was higher now than before they started Tús whereas the remainder 28% said that it was the same (5). 67% (6) indicated that their take home pay was between €401-500 per week, one between €501-600 and one other person on more than €600 a week.

⁵ Area Development Management Limited (ADM) engaged with ten Area Based Partnership Companies to carry out in-depth case studies to explore the concept of progression in different contexts including: Movement to and within education and training opportunities, Developing skills and labour market capacity through Community Employment, Increasing one's access to the labour market through the Local Employment Service

⁶ Report defines progression as (1999,i) '*facilitating access to a higher level of training or education for those who meet an agreed standard and the level of labour market integration achieved as a result of participation in ESF supported programmes*'.



Qualitative comments

“Leaders from the community centre gave me the push to go back to education and I am trying to find work in this field”

“I registered with LES and they started looking for courses for me that I was interested in”

“I was recommended by the Hospice for my current position”

“I got a casual job in a different company”

“I really liked my job and wished I could have stayed longer”

“The host organisation offered me a job in a different part of their company”

“Did not complete Tús programme as I found full time employment before completion”

“I started work before my placement work date”

“No progress”

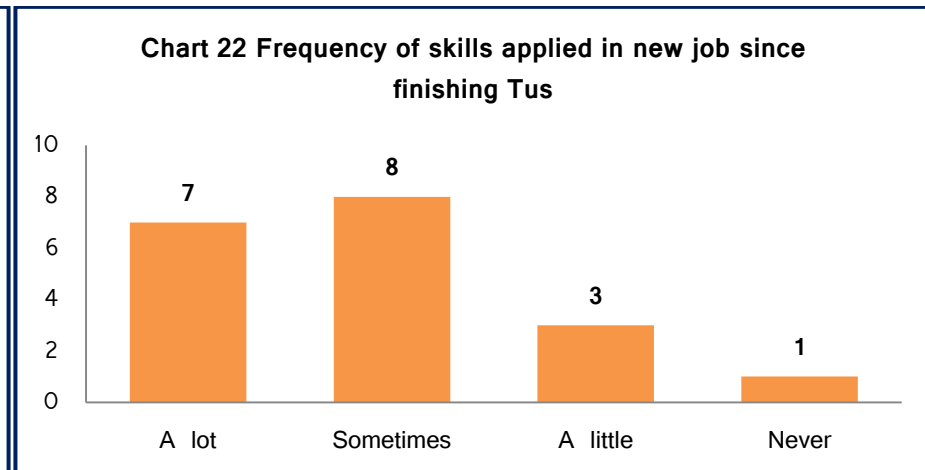
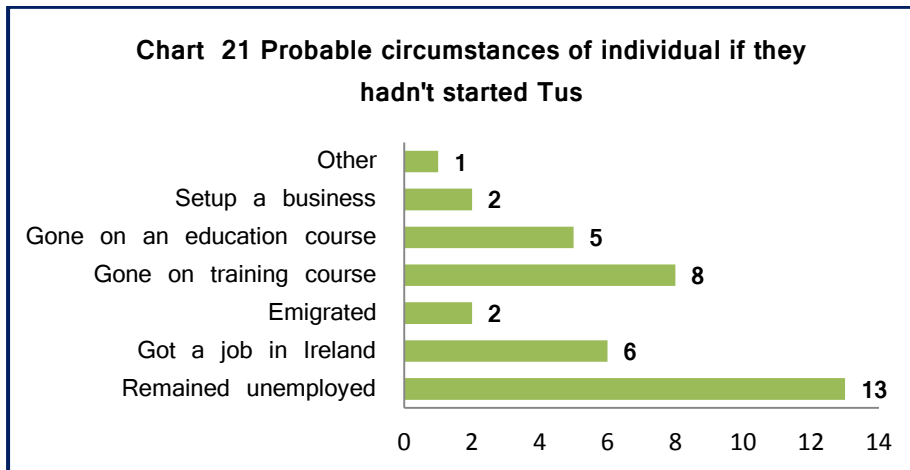
“Also looking after home, looking for employment as cleaner, and signed for English language course”

“Casual worker”

“Doing a JobClub with LES”

Transfer of skills to new employer

With respect to the transfer of new skills acquired while on the Tús programme with their new employer 37% (7) indicated that they do so ‘a lot’ and 42% (8) ‘sometimes’. Just one person indicated that they never do so. Regarding what the probable circumstances of persons would be if they had not gone onto Tús, 13 volunteered to state that they would have remained unemployed, 5 suggested that would have gone onto an education and 8 a training course. 2 persons indicated they would have emigrated whereas 6 believed they would have got a job in Ireland. On the basis of this data one could conclude that in the absence of Tús many individuals would still have been pro-active and taken steps to re-enter the labour market themselves.



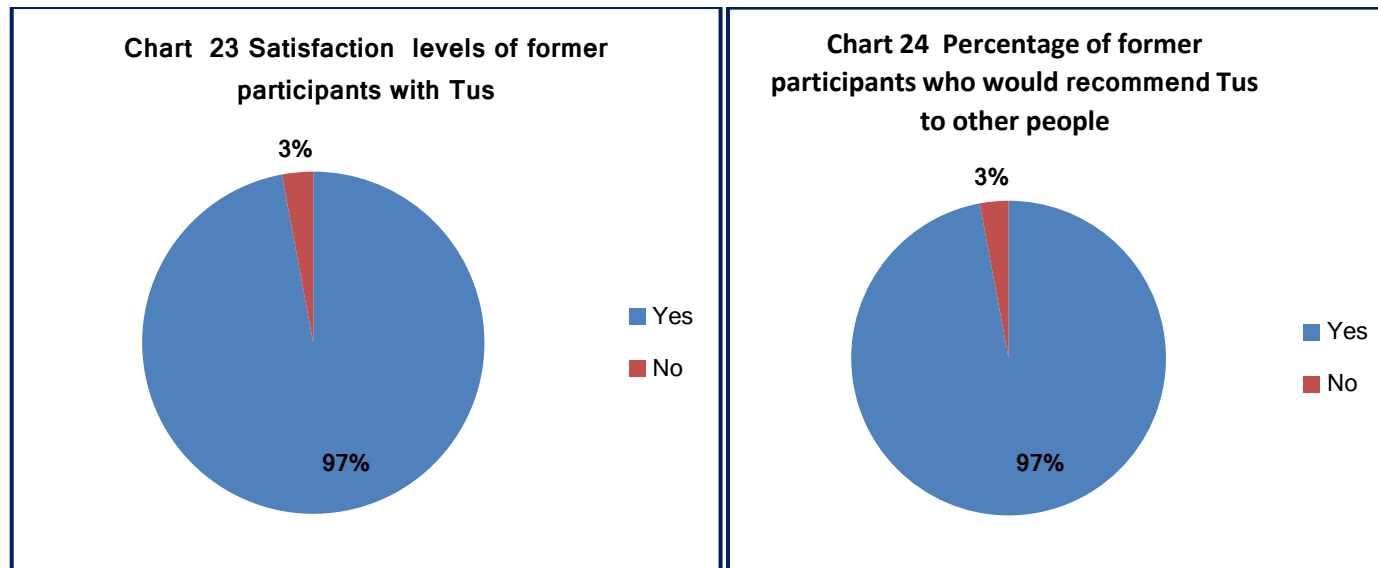
Qualitative comments

“I would like to think that I would have secured a job at this point”
“Education training or work”

“The exact same as now”
“Was seriously considering leaving the country”

Satisfaction ratings with Tús

There was almost unanimous endorsement of Tús as a community work initiative from the perspective of former participants who responded. 97% (36) stated that they were satisfied with their placement overall and an equal percentage responded that they would recommend Tús to other persons. A more detailed breakdown of satisfaction levels with all aspects of the Tús programme is captured across Charts 23–24 from page 28 onwards. These demonstrate what features of Tús are working very well or well and which could be improved on from the perspective of the participant.



Qualitative Quotes

[Satisfaction with Tús?]

“Thoroughly enjoyed placement”

“Everyone I worked with was very positive and I had excellent support from my Team Leader”

“Yes it was a pleasure to work with Foroige guys in Blanchardstown”

“After 16 months unemployed, structure to your day was very important to me as it turned out. The job I secured was as a direct result of the placement”

“Would have liked a longer placement because of Tús programme I seemed to get more interviews for jobs

“I loved my work placement and still keep in contact with the people I worked with”

“It was a good experience and got me back to work”

“Not really what I wanted to do but got me out of the house and I learned something new”

“It provided me the opportunity of working and making new friends”

“Loved the year with Tús, not nice having to sign back on the labour after the year was up”

“The group in Phibblestown Community Centre were very easy to work with and helped with any issues that came up”

“Could have done with a job at the end of it. Back to square one.”

[Recommend Tús to other persons?]

“Keeps you meeting people, keeps you active. It’s something to get up in the morning for. Feel useful give something back to the community”

“The extra money is a help and getting out working and meeting new people”

“I got to put myself to use and secured full time employment because I participated”

“It gave me an opportunity to overcome my fear of not having confidence to work on my own initiative”

“Helped me with my confidence”

“Although it’s not for everyone, I believe that it will probably benefit those who engage”

“It is a great training opportunity for anyone who is unemployed and seeking employment”

“It gave me back some confidence as I was contributing in the workplace”

“It’s good to get people going”

“I would. It’s a good way to get real work place experience”

“I think Tús programme is good for unemployed people”

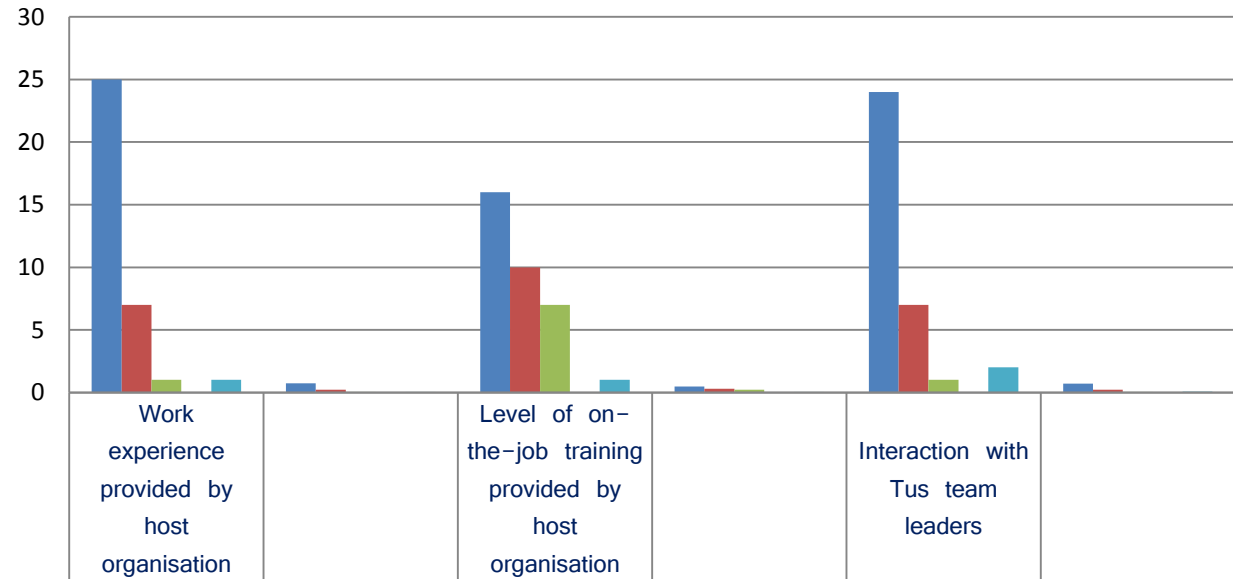
“It is very convenient and a good possibility”

Additional feedback on elements of the Tús programme from participants

- 94% of former Tús participants were either ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with the *work experience* provided by the host organisation
- 94% were either ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with the *interaction with the Tús team leaders* assigned to them
- 47% were either ‘very satisfied’ with the level of *on the job training* although 21% were ‘undecided’
- With respect to the *length of Tús* itself 32% were ‘very satisfied’ and ‘satisfied’ whereas 24% were ‘dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’
- 91% were ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with the *convenience of Tús hours* with just 6% noting any dissatisfaction
- 35% were ‘satisfied’ with the *extra level of training provided by Tús Team Leaders* and 29% ‘very satisfied’. 18% were neutral in their opinion while 12% were ‘dissatisfied’

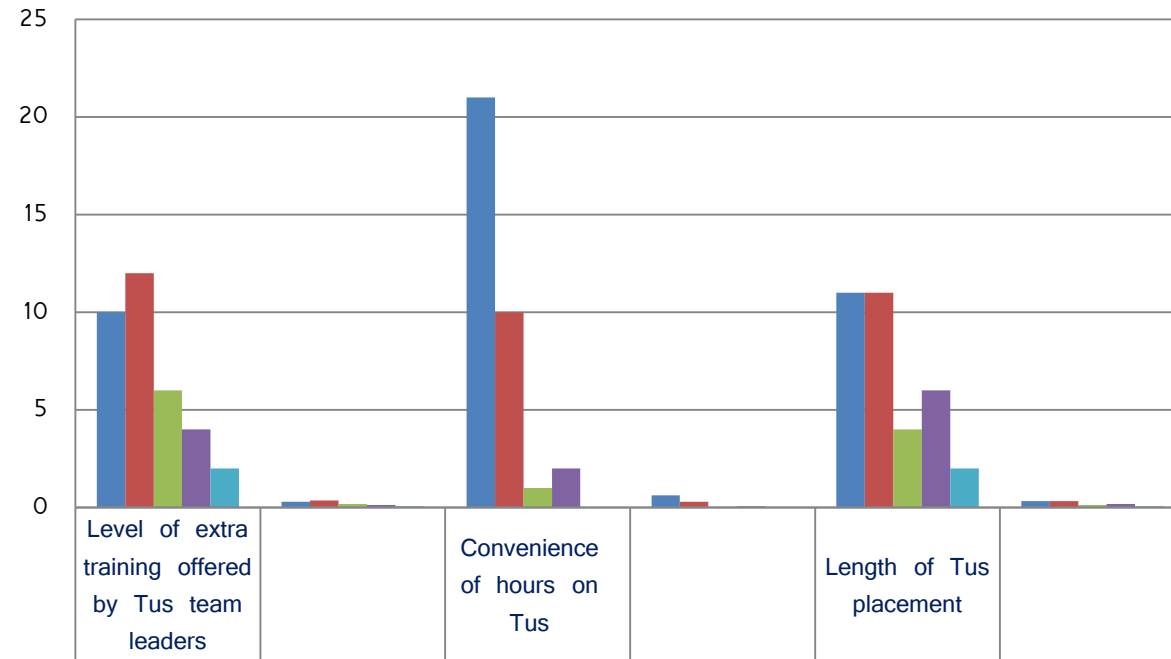
See charts 25 and 26 overleaf

Chart 25 Satisfaction with elements of Tus



■ Very satisfied	25	74%	16	47%	24	71%
■ Satisfied	7	21%	10	29%	7	21%
■ Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	1	3%	7	21%	1	3%
■ Dissatisfied						
■ Very satisfied	1	3%	1	3%	2	6%

Chart 26 Satisfaction with elements of Tus



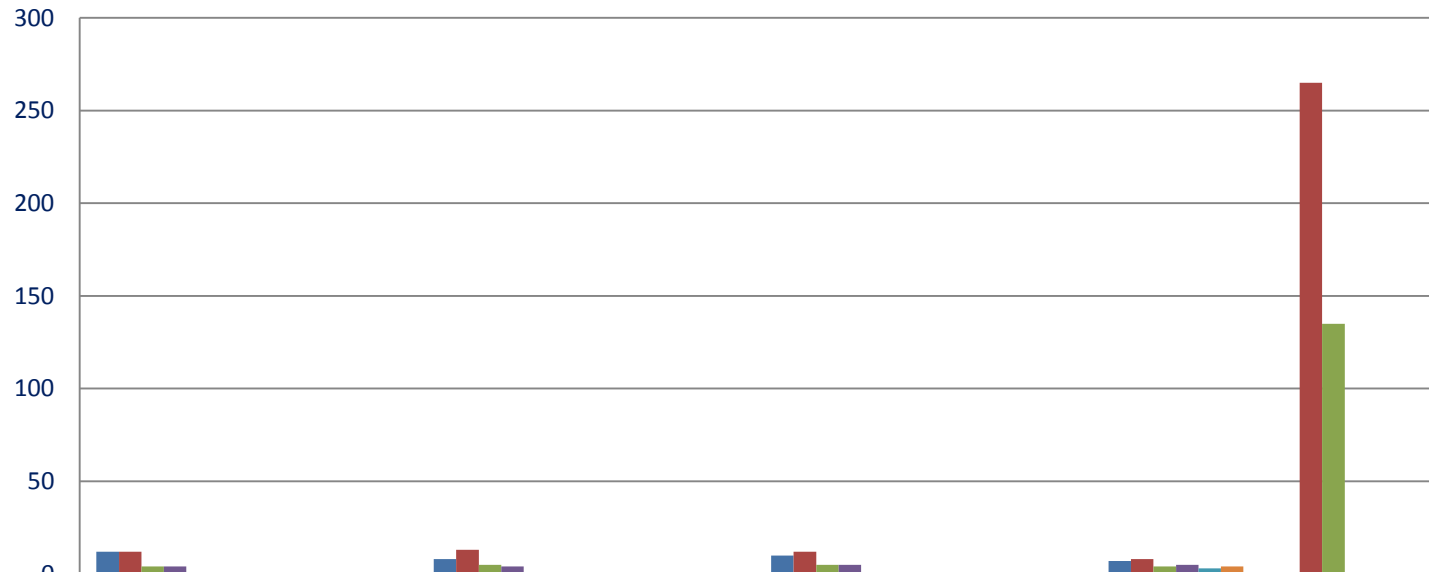
Very satisfied	10	29%	21	62%	11	32%
Satisfied	12	35%	10	29%	11	32%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	6	18%	1	3%	4	12%
Dissatisfied	4	12%	2	6%	6	18%
Very satisfied	2	6%			2	6%

Soft skills

BAP's survey gathered data around core competencies and soft outcomes from the participant's perspective. Charts 25 and 26 synthesise the feedback collated from the perspective of the project along with qualitative quotes following after. In summary

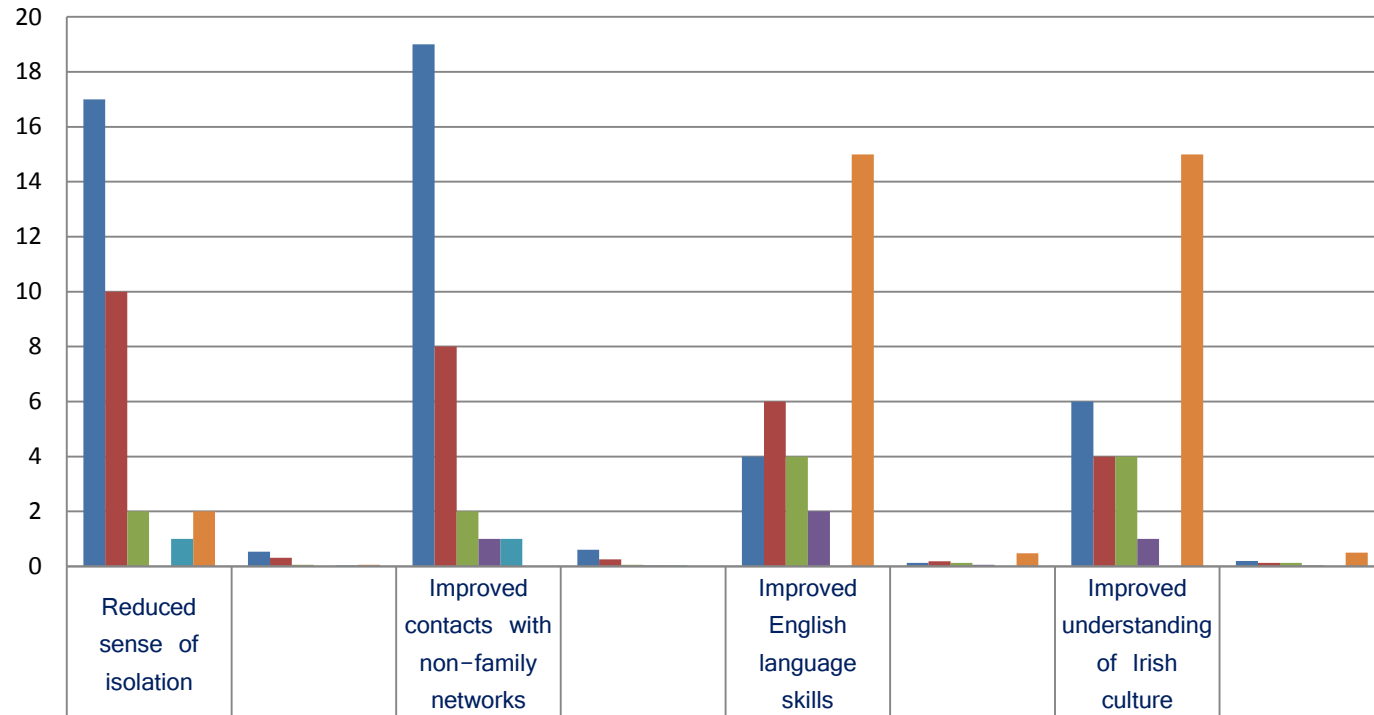
- 72% of former Tús participants indicated that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the *C.V.* they now had compared to before they started the programme. 15% stated they were dissatisfied / very dissatisfied
- 72% also indicated that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the *interview skills* they now had compared to prior to registering for Tús. 18% suggested they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied
- 68% replied that were very satisfied or satisfied with the *job searching skills* they acquired while on Tús, while 16% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied and 13% were dissatisfied
- 49% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied or satisfied with their *numerical and IT skills* they attained while on the programme. 13% said this was not applicable to them while 26% that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied about this particular aspect of Tús
- Very encouragingly 84% signified that participating on the Tús programme had helped reduce their *sense of isolation*. 6% pointed out that this did not apply to them
- An even higher percentage 87% verified that participating on the Tús programme had improved their *contacts with non-family networks* which lends additional weighting and evidence to the previous finding.
- With respect to English language skills and understanding of Irish culture half of almost respondents indicated these core competencies were not applicable to them. From the remaining respondents, 29% were either very satisfied or satisfied that their *English language skills* had improved, 13% were neutral in their views and 6% were dissatisfied. 33% were very satisfied or satisfied that their *understanding of Irish culture* had improved and once again 13% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Chart 27 Core competencies and soft skills



	Improved C.V.		Improved job searching skills		Improved interview skills		Improved numerical &IT skills	
Very satisfied	12	36%	8	26%	10	30%	7	23%
Satisfied	12	36%	13	42%	12	36%	8	265
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	4	12%	5	16%	5	15%	4	135
Dissatisfied	4	12%	4	13%	5	15%	5	16%
Very satisfied	1	3%			1	3%	3	10%
Not applicable			1	3%			4	13%

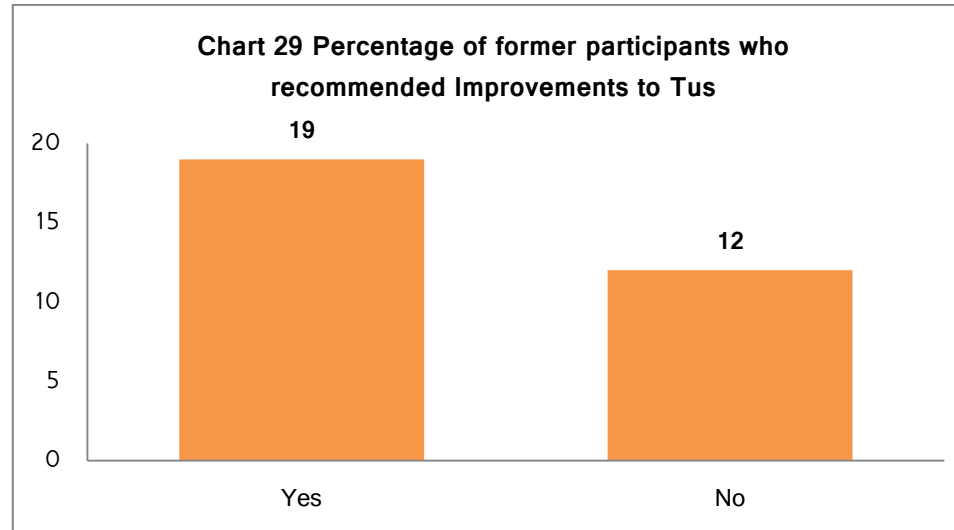
Chart 28 Core competencies and soft skills



Very satisfied	17	53%	19	61%	4	13%	6	20%
Satisfied	10	31%	8	26%	6	19%	4	13%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	2	6%	2	6%	4	13%	4	13%
Dissatisfied			1	3%	2	6%	1	3%
Very satisfied	1	3%	1	3%				
Not applicable	2	6%			15	48%	15	50%

Suggested improvements to Tús

Finally 19 or 61% of former participants outlined in detail how Tús could be improved for future participants. Perhaps not surprisingly many of the comments centred on the necessity to extend the duration of the programme from its current 12 month period and for greater flexibility in how the participant chooses to work the 20 hour week akin to Community Employment. Several also remarked about the need for funding allowances to be increased and to be able to train in settings outside their immediate work placement. Some more negative comments about the general nature of the programme itself were also included. Finally several respondents made reference to the interaction of Tús allowance with the PRSI system, which from their perspective financially penalised their participation while on the programme itself.



Qualitative quotes

“Funding allowance could be increased”

“There should be more funding for courses and youth development”

“More training programmes outside the workplace”

“Extend the time on the Tús programmes”

“Longer time to take up work makes it easier for job placement”

“Everybody should have the opportunity to extend their contract”

“It could be extended to two years because of greater involvement communication and language skills”

“You should give people the option of a contract being extended”

“Longer time to take up work makes it easier for job placement”

“I think one year is too short for the programme”

“I don’t think people should be exposed to tax when on the programme. A 20 euro increase should be a 20 euro increase”

“My experience was positive but others I worked with did not take advantage of the opportunity and I think they are allowed to coast through the year on the programme. If they are not working on it they should be taken off the programme”

“Because Tús take the time to put people in placements that are suitable”

More training to be available

1. Eliminate PRSI exposure for Tús participants

2. Increase training budget for participants

3. Possible extension of more than 1 year for certain participants

“Funding allowance could be increased”

“There should be more funding for courses and youth development”

“The hours could be set up better to cater for people with kids. You could do your 20 hours in 2 or 3 days instead of over 5 days”

“There could be better pathways to actual work at the end of it. The place I was at couldn’t take a wage on for me but the day I completed my Tús work, they took 2 Tús workers on. It is not really a solution for someone looking for a job. Papering over the cracks. Same as JobBridge / Gateway”

“I can’t think of anything that can be improved. It is a great programme as it stands”

Help with CV, interview skills and put people to do what they actually wanna do

“You are just put anywhere not to learn anything”

“I feel the Tús leaders need to interact more never seen them after I started”

Conclusions

Based on the responses gathered from BAP's 2014 survey, *Tús has been greeted positively by individuals* who participated on the programme and *projects* who decided to support their 1 year placement. With respect to participants 94% were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the work experience provided by the host organisation and the interaction with the Tús team leaders assigned to them. 91% were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the convenience of Tús hours with just 6% dissatisfied.

In terms of *core competencies and soft skills* 72% of former Tús participants indicated that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the C.V. and the interview skills that they now had compared to before they started the programme. Very encouragingly 84% signified that participating on the Tús programme had helped reduce their sense of isolation and an even higher percentage 87% verified that participating on the Tús programme had improved their contacts with non-family contacts.

In relation to the wider matter of *progression paths* towards the labour market, 39% (13) of former participants signed back onto the Live Register and another 12% (4) were responsible for home duties or acting as carers within 3 months of the completion of their Tús placement. 36% (12) had re-entered the labour market either by taking up full time (7) part-time employment (3) or by starting up a business (2) of their own. 9% (3) progressed onto further education or registered for a training course via the Local Employment Service/ JOBLINK. 37% (7) indicated that they apply new skills acquired from participating on Tús 'a lot' and 42% (8) 'sometimes'.

Turning to organisational feedback 48% of projects indicated the Tús participant's *contribution to the organisation* during their 1 year internship had been 'extremely beneficial' and 39% 'very beneficial'. In some instances the addition of a Tús worker has enabled certain organisations improve front line service delivery or provided an opportunity for more experienced Management/staff generate additional income and resources. 96% of the projects stated that they will in all likelihood re-apply under the Tús programme to address future staffing needs and 94% indicated that they would recommend the programme to other organisations.

Finally projects and participants alike outlined several recommended changes to Tús to help improve how it operates. These centred on extending the duration of the 1 year work placement, additional flexibility and resources allocation to the training of Tús participants,

improving linkages to community employment/further education plus eliminating participants from the PRSI system, which from their perspective financially penalised their participation while on the programme itself

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