TrustIE

Final Report and Evaluation

Olive Tree Consulting

Final Report and Evaluation of the TrustIE Pilot Project that was undertaken in 2018

An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development

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Executive Summary

TrustIE in numbers

- **75%** of volunteers polled prior to participating in TrustIE were interested in learning more about being a trustee and **82%** had never sat on a board

- **59%** of organisations polled prior to participating in TrustIE expressed a need for support in recruiting and retaining trustees

- **49** organisations and **79** volunteers took part in Training Events

- **41** organisations and **67** volunteers took part in the Matching Events

- **66** trustee roles were created

- **177** applications for trustee roles[1]

- **10** matches completed[2]

- **28** matches in progress[3]

- **61%** of participating organisations registered a change in attitude about involving new trustees in the organisation

- **96%** of participating organisations wished to continue the recruitment process with the Volunteer Centres

- **560%** increase in the number of 'Board Related' volunteer opportunities registered with the 6 participating Volunteer Centres compared to the same period last year

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[1] As of late January 2019, there were 222 applications for the trustee roles.
[2] As of late January 2019, 20 matches were complete.
[3] As of late January 2019, 38 matches were in progress.

Overview and Context

TrustIE is a collaborative project run by the Cork, Dublin City, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, Fingal, Galway and South Dublin County Volunteer Centres. It aims to support community organisations in recruiting trustees, as well as supporting volunteers to find trustee opportunities. The pilot arose out of the needs, identified by Volunteer Centres, of small community organisations to better recruit and support board members as well as the needs of volunteers for better information and awareness about becoming trustees. Small to medium community organisations were not typically registering trustee opportunities with Volunteer Centres (or elsewhere for that matter), and as a result volunteers were not being offered the opportunity to become trustees. TrustIE sought to address to this lack of opportunity, as well as the misinformation about the responsibilities of the trustees and governance generally.

In February 2018, a proposal was put to the Department of Rural and Community Development for capacity building training for organisations and volunteers culminating in a matching event – with a speed-dating format. The pilot was launched in March 2018 and training began in June 2018. The training was designed and delivered in collaboration with The Wheel across the Volunteer Centre catchment areas.

The evaluators used the Kirkpatrick Training Evaluation Model to examine the reaction, learning, behaviour and results of the training. Surveys were used to gather information from participants and interviews were held with TrustIE coordinators.

Highlights and Strengths of TrustIE

- In Ireland there are several organisations working to support good governance in the community and voluntary sector generally. Boardmatch, the Carmichael Centre, Volunteer Ireland and The Wheel all provide training in governance or volunteer management, **but the network of Volunteer Centres is uniquely placed at local level**, nationally.
- Significantly, the TrustIE training facilitated by the Volunteer Centres was **local and free for participating organisations**, and as such it provided an opportunity to

reach organisations that are often put off by the price point and travel expense of typical governance training.

- **There is a real need to educate the public, not just organisations, about governance**. Even individuals registered with the Volunteer Centres, who have identified themselves as being interested in the community sector and willing to volunteer, were quite poorly informed about governance and how the sector operates generally.

- After the training **volunteers reported a 74% increase in their knowledge regarding trusteeships**. As well volunteers emphasised how much they learned about the way that charities are structured and the community sector in general.

- After the training, **9 out of 10 volunteers felt motivated and better able to become trustees in the future**.

- Both volunteers and organisations **rated the training highly** and noted its pertinence to their needs.

- When the organisations were asked what they liked most about the training the overwhelming response was the **networking and learning** that came from the diverse groups that participated.

- At the Matching Events both organisations and volunteers who had attended the training events **were better equipped for the recruitment process**. These organisations now had **clearly defined roles** and an understanding of the skills needed while the volunteers understood the **expectations** for the role and responsibilities required. Both parties knew the right questions to ask. All together this increases the likelihood of a quality match.

Recommendations

- **Only participants who have undergone the training should attend the matching event.** While some volunteers and organisations were invited to the matching event despite having not participated in the training events, the evidence demonstrates that this is not effective and has a negative impact on the success of the event. It undermines the confidence that the parties have with each other.

- **Add a second workshop for organisations**. A separate workshop to write up the role description might mitigate against the need for Volunteer Centres to continuously follow-up and encourage organisations to get this done. Many small

community organisations lack resources and time. Getting the volunteer-involving organisations to the point where they had prepared their trustee opportunities was difficult and a certain amount of handholding was required.

- **Restructure the matching event.** Although the participants were generally very happy with the matching event it is difficult to meet the needs of two separate target groups. A slight tweaking of the event should meet the needs of both parties.

- **The same evaluation method should be used for all workshops and all Volunteer Centres.** It is important that the evaluation process be built in and agreed between Volunteer Centres before the next stage of TrustIE.

- **Agree on the way in which the training and programme activities are to be delivered to ensure consistency.** The Volunteer Centres should agree which parts of the programme are consistent and which parts are more flexible or worth adapting locally.

- **Evaluate the quality not just the quantity of the matches.** To truly evaluate the impact of TrustIE it is necessary to revisit the matches in six to nine months' time to understand the difference to recruitment and retention.

- **Plan and book dates for the entire programme at the start.** The timeframe of the programme could be tightened and the programme would benefit from being scheduled at the start so that all participants were aware of and committed to the programme

1. Overview of the Project and Context

TrustIE was a collaborative project run by the Cork, Dublin City, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, Fingal, Galway and South Dublin Volunteer Centres. It aimed to support community organisations in recruiting trustees, as well as supporting volunteers to find trustee opportunities. The pilot was a response by these Volunteer Centres to try and meet the needs of small community organisations to better recruit and support board members, as well as the needs of volunteers for better information and awareness about becoming trustees.

Volunteer Centres, already in the business of connecting volunteers and volunteer involving organisations for a myriad of volunteer roles, are well placed to support small community organisations to improve their trustee involvement. Volunteer Centres, through their dedicated database of active volunteers (iVol) have access to several thousand volunteers, many of whom would make excellent trustees once they have accurate information and training. The six Volunteer Centres involved in TrustIE had observed the demand of small community organisations who were having difficulty recruiting board members and on the other hand the supply of people who were actively looking for opportunities to volunteer.
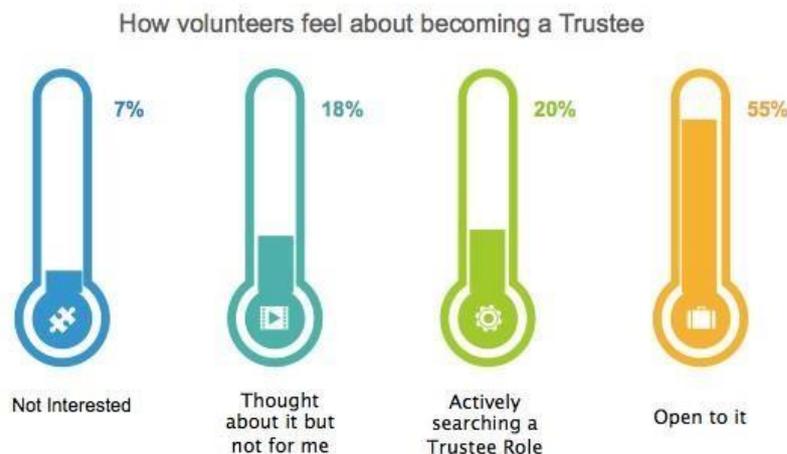
In Ireland there are several organisations working to support good governance in the community and voluntary sector generally. Boardmatch, the Carmichael Centre, Volunteer Ireland and The Wheel all provide training in governance or volunteer management, but the network of Volunteer Centres is uniquely placed at local level, nationally.

As well as working with local community organisations, Volunteer Centres engage with individuals who are actively looking to volunteer. The network of Volunteer Centres is distinct in the sector in that it has both a wide reach with the public looking to volunteer *and* on the ground contact with voluntary organisations.

Having recognised how small and medium voluntary groups would struggle to meet increased compliance and governance regulations required by the Charities Regulator, the Dublin Volunteer Centres approached the Department for Rural and Community Development to discuss ways to support local community organisations.

In January 2018, the Volunteer Centres participating in the TrustIE pilot surveyed their active volunteers to gauge their interest in becoming a trustee. 82% of polled volunteers had never been a trustee. 11% had previously sat on Boards and 7% of volunteers were trustees at the time. Although most volunteers had never been a trustee before, the interest in trusteeships was high.

Figure 1.1 Testing the Temperature.

How volunteers feel about becoming a Trustee

7% Not Interested
18% Thought about it but not for me
20% Actively searching a Trustee Role
55% Open to it

While 7% of volunteers were not interested at all and a further 18% had thought about it, but decided it wasn't for them, 75% of the volunteers were interested with (55%) open to it and (20%) actively searching a Trusteeship role.

The Volunteer Centres also found that although a trustee is a volunteer role, organisations were not registering many trustee opportunities with the Volunteer Centres. When they looked further at where the organisations were recruiting from they found that the organisations were *not* in fact recruiting. At most, they were co-opting people from their personal circle to become trustees. Organisations were not in the most part advertising their trustee roles with the Volunteer Centres nor were they using other governance or board matching services.

The Volunteer Centres also surveyed their registered organisations to identify their governance needs. Three hundred and fifty three (353) organisations took part in the survey. The results confirmed that 59% of respondents needed support in board recruitment and retention, 26% did not need support and 14% were not sure.

In February 2018, a proposal was put to the Department for Rural and Community Development for a pilot programme to build the capacity of organisations and volunteers regarding trusteeships, culminating in a matching event to bring together volunteers who wanted to be trustees and organisations needing trustees. TrustIE was launched as a pilot programme on the 22nd of March 2018 by the Department for Rural and Community Development, who funded €20,000 towards the roll out of the programme.

In April 2018 branding and a logo for TrustIE were completed. The branding was important in giving cohesiveness to the pilot and demonstrating its shared relevance to organisations regardless of their location. As part of the Pilot, the Volunteer Centres sought to collaborate with a partner organisation that specialised in governance training. In May 2018 The Wheel was awarded the tender for delivery of the training. Combining The Wheel's expertise in delivering governance training and the Volunteer Centres' access to organisations and volunteers, the partnership was an effective, cost efficient way to deliver the programme. Furthermore, as the training facilitated by the Volunteer Centres was local and free for participating organisations, it provided an opportunity to reach organisations that are often put off by the price point and travel expense of typical governance training.[1]

Project Aims and Structure

The TrustIE pilot project set out to:

- Establish the needs of community groups with regard to board membership and board roles.
- Build the capacity of community groups with regard to governance requirements.
- Build the capacity of community groups to recruit trustees.
- Support community groups to develop good practice in managing and involving volunteers as trustees.
- Promote board roles to existing volunteers on the iVol database in defined pilot areas and support those volunteers interested through information and training to pursue the role of trustee.
- Match volunteers from the iVol database with board roles as developed by the community groups who participate in the pilot.

The planned structure was a series of events within each Volunteer Centre's local area: one training session for community groups, one training session for volunteers and a final 'matching event' to place volunteers in trustee vacancies. The original targets for the Volunteer Centres were to reach 60 organisations and 120 volunteers. The pilot was to be completed by the end of 2018. The training activities for volunteers and community groups were scheduled to take place in June with some Centres running training activities up until

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[1] Governance and Board Training can start at €55 to €190 per person and bespoke training can cost around €400 for a half day training.

October. The final matching events took place in October in Dublin and November in Cork and Galway. Olive Tree Consulting was commissioned in September 2018 to evaluate the TrustIE pilot programme.

2. The Methodology

The basic premise of this project is that governance training for volunteers and organisations builds capacity in the organisations and improves the number of trustee opportunities, the number of matches and the quality of those matches. The researchers chose the Kirkpatrick Training Evaluation model to assess whether the TrustIE Pilot met these objectives. The Kirkpatrick Training Evaluation model is a four-part framework that measures the effectiveness of training in both the short and long-term. It examines training through four different levels: Reaction, Learning, Behaviour and Results. The Kirkpatrick model fits well with TrustIE as the pilot project delivered training with the objective of informing and empowering participants (both volunteers and community groups) as well as providing opportunities for both to engage with each other, thereby aiming to encourage a change in behaviour in both volunteers and organisations.

The Kirkpatrick Training Evaluation Model
Level 1. Reaction
Level 1 explores the simplest form of feedback and gathers information about attendees' reaction to the training. It examines the trainees' experience of the topic, materials, trainer, venue and the atmosphere. Participants' reaction to the training, whether they feel welcomed, able to participate and comfortable can impact on their ability to learn or how seriously they take the training. In relation to TrustIE it will determine whether the delivery and format of the training reflect the importance of the subject matter while also allowing for engagement and participation.
Level 2. Learning
Level 2 examines learning outcomes. In this level, we look to see whether participants learned anything new and whether the learning was relevant to the participants. Has there been any change in knowledge, skills or attitude as a result of the training? Feedback at this level from the participants will measure changes in their knowledge base.

Level 3. Behaviour

Level 3 focuses on the application of the learning and on the medium to long-term effectiveness of the training. What did participants do with their new knowledge and did their behaviour change as a result of the training? If it didn't, why didn't it? Did participants go on to attend the matching event after their training or did they decide that being a trustee was not for them? For organisations, do they now know more about what they need and do the role descriptions devised reflect this learning?

Level 4. Results

Level 4 looks at the long-term impact of the training and whether the training met the desired outcomes as well as the unforeseen outcomes. At the conclusion of this pilot we will be able to establish the number of matches made, but not the actual quality of the match or the long-term impact of the training.

Limitations of the Methodology

The TrustIE pilot activities spanned six months so it is difficult to fully apply level four of the Kirkpatrick model. It will be possible to count the early successful matches between volunteers and community groups, but as boards typically meet every six to eight weeks it would take at least another six months to determine if the quality of the matches meets the desired outcomes of the training. To this end the researchers have created an evaluation template that the Volunteer Centres can use in six to nine months' time to measure the quality of the matches. At this point we can look not just at the recruitment of trustees, but also the role development and the turnover of trustees.

Methods

Mixed methods were used to gather the data. The Volunteer Centres used online feedback forms to gather the initial feedback from training participants - both volunteers and the volunteer-involving organisations. For the first three months of activities each Volunteer Centre used its own distinct feedback form, but the Centres moved to common feedback forms in September to standardise the process, at the suggestion of the evaluators. Some forms were given as hard copies at the training/ matching event and others were sent electronically to participants in the days following the training/matching event.

As well as written feedback, interviews were conducted with the Trainer and with the Coordinators from three of the Volunteer Centres – Dublin City, Galway and Cork.

3. The Volunteers

In this section we will examine the training provided to volunteers on becoming a trustee with a community organisation. We will introduce the context and background to the training, layout the design of the training and feedback process and provide the results of that feedback.

Summary of the Volunteer Findings

The findings overall express a very high level of satisfaction by the volunteers with the training. Attendees were very pleased with the location and set-up of the training and found it easy to get involved and engage. All surveyed participants acknowledged an increase in their understanding of the role and responsibility of a trustee. Respondents emphasised how much they learned about the way that charities are structured and the community sector in general. The vast majority of participants (9 out of 10) felt motivated and better able to become trustees in the future. A small but informed minority opted not to continue looking for a trusteeship in the immediate future.

Overview of the Volunteer Training

The Volunteer Centres' invited interested volunteers to participate in the TrustIE pilot programme by committing to a training session on Trusteeship, which would explore the role and responsibilities of being a board member. The training was designed and delivered by a facilitator from The Wheel. There were seven training sessions in total; four in Dublin, one in Cork and two in Galway. All but one session took place in the evening to maximise participation. Due to difficulty securing a venue in the evening in Cork, the remaining training session took place in the afternoon, which may have prevented some volunteers from being able to participate.

The Training Design

The training itself was designed to be participative. It was divided into three parts. The first part gave attendees an overview of the charity sector in Ireland, the second part explored the gravity of being a trustee and the third section gave participants the opportunity to

explore what they might have to offer as a trustee in terms of both hard and soft skills, as well as what they needed to know to find the right role for them.

Participant Feedback

There were 79 registered volunteers who took part in training across the six participating Volunteer Centres. The Volunteer Centres collected feedback electronically using Getfeedback.com. The Volunteer Centres recorded relatively high numbers of completed feedback forms.

Level 1: Reaction

The participants were largely extremely happy with the training. They were given a series of statements and asked to demonstrate on a scale of 1-10 the extent to which they agreed with the statement, with 1 meaning strongly disagree and 10 meaning strongly agree. Participants were happy with the facilities and the facilitator. They felt engaged and able to participate. They now believed themselves to have a proper understanding of the role of Trustee. They agreed the training was worth their time and would recommend it to others.

Figure 3.1 Shows the statements put to participants and the average weighted response of 105 participants. Participants were asked to weight their response out of 10.

I was happy with the workshop environment i.e., location, venue, facilities	8.49
I was happy with the facilitators style, it allowed me to feel engaged	8.84
I felt I could ask questions I wanted to.	9.07
I feel I understand the role of trustees now	8.86
Attending this workshop was worth my time	8.66
I would recommend this workshop	8.51

"I learned that Board Members (Trustees) act as a group and not individually… and their role is to steer the organisation in the right direction in the best interest of all stakeholders. They look at the long-term vision of the Organisation and leave the everyday running of the organisation to front line management." Participant Quote

The Volunteer Centres wanted the participants to have a strong understanding of the role and responsibility of a trustee. The feedback forms asked participants to assess their knowledge and understanding of trustees before and after the training on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 meaning no knowledge and 10 meaning extremely knowledgeable. The participants measured an average score of 4.89 before the training, which suggests that participants did have a moderate baseline interest and understanding of the role. However, this increased to a score of 8.51 after the training, which represents a significant increase in their knowledge and reflects their confidence in the training they received and the level of information they took in.

Participants were also asked to identify their main learning from the training. Around 75% of those filling out the forms left comments. The comments left can be grouped into three main themes: governance structure of the charity sector, the extent of the responsibility of being a trustee and the volunteer's personal capacity to act as a trustee. From the comments provided it is clear that the participants had much to learn to about the structure of the charity sector in Ireland. Many did not realise that trustees are volunteers and not paid staff. Here are some of the remarks volunteers made about their learning:

"That there are no executive directors on the boards of charities."
"There are no paid Trustees in Charities, they are all volunteers."
"That charities have a need for recruiting Trustees - I had assumed they were internal opportunities."

This was an unexpected positive outcome of the training. The training provided by Volunteer Centres, Volunteer Ireland and other national organisations tends to be organisation focused. The feedback from participants at the volunteer training sessions suggests that there is a need to better inform and educate potential volunteers about the role of trustees, not just organisations. Even individuals registered with the Volunteer

Centres, who have identified themselves as being interested in the community sector and willing to volunteer, were quite poorly informed about governance and how the sector operates generally. Many participants acknowledged that they were now more aware of the responsibility of being a board member and echoed each other in their feedback, making comments such as, "Trustees are responsible'" or "Responsibilities of Trustee, there is more than I thought."

The last part of the training focused on capacity building and seemed to have particularly resonated with participants. Volunteers understood better what they could bring to the table and knew what resources to tap into and what questions to ask an organisation when researching opportunities or taking on board a trustee role. One participant said, "I learned a lot about myself and what I can bring to a board as a trustee that I never would have thought of before." Another volunteer echoed, "Everyone can be a trustee because each person has skills that are valuable to the organisation".

Finally, volunteers were asked if their attitude to trusteeship and governance had changed since the training and whether they were still interested in becoming a trustee. 64% of the polled participants said their attitude had changed, while 89% of those polled were still interested in becoming a trustee. Many participants had more assurance in themselves and in the role since undertaking the training. One volunteer reflected, "I have a much better understanding and appreciation for what the responsibilities are and the genuine value I could bring to an organisation as a trustee." Another participant commented, "After the presentation and through info I learned, I feel it is possible for me to become a trustee - boosted my confidence and helped articulate my skills. "

For many people the change in attitude relates to the fact they now take the role more seriously and are more aware of the commitment it takes. However, this awareness didn't stop participants from wanting to become a trustee as 9 out of 10 participants felt being a trustee was something they wanted to pursue. One participant remarked,

"*Before I attended the workshop I was very unclear as to what the role of a Trustee was and wasn't sure what I could personally bring to such a role. However after listening to Mairead's presentation I found myself becoming very interested in pursuing the role of a trustee… I also understood that the role of a Trustee is a very responsible role and not*

It is interesting to note that while most participants still wanted to pursue trusteeships after the training, some recognised that the training had made them rethink the role of a trustee and recognise that they were not ready for the commitment a trustee role required. This is a good indication of the impact of the training and would suggest that the volunteers who received the training were now making informed decisions about whether or not to apply for a role as a trustee. This should ultimately improve the quality of the matches between volunteers and organisations. This will be explored later when examining Level 3 of the Kirkpatrick model as it applies to the pilot – change in behaviour.

4. The Volunteer-Involving Organisations

In this section we will examine the training provided to volunteer-involving organisations on good governance and the recruitment and retention of good trustees. We examine the type of organisations that responded to this training, look at the training content and feedback process and provide the results of that feedback.

Summary of the Findings

Overall the organisations were very happy with the training. They rated the set-up, environment, content and networking opportunity quite highly. The summer timing of the workshops may have affected turn out in some areas. The overall response from participating organisations is that the training was very pertinent to their needs.

Overview of Volunteer-Involving Organisations

The Volunteer Centres, through their work in communities and their database of volunteer-involving organisations could see that organisations were struggling to recruit trustees and needed more support to meet their governance obligations. While many large and national volunteer-involving organisations are registered with the Volunteer Centres, the vast majority of groups registered with Volunteer Centres are small to medium organisations with a local remit.

The Organisation Training Design and Delivery

The training was co-facilitated by the Trainer from the Wheel and the local Volunteer Centre. The training was designed to be participative and constructive and was attended by a mix of senior management staff and trustees. The training was broken down to give attendees a thorough overview of good governance and process and moved on to giving the organisations the chance to assess their needs, undertake a gap analysis and work on the recruitment process.

The first training for organisations took place in June 2018. The Volunteer Centres were somewhat disappointed by the low turnout of organisations. On reflection, the Pilot Coordinators felt that the summer timing of the training was an issue as many organisations were dealing with annual leave or a cessation of activities. One Coordinator queried whether they were reaching out to the right people. Typically, Volunteer Centres work with Volunteer Managers who may see the board of directors as outside their remit or too far beyond their level to approach. This may have caused a delay or difficulty in communication about the project within the organisations themselves, and as such it is worth exploring how Volunteer Centres can improve communication directly with the boards of the organisations with whom they work. Due to the poor turnout at the initial training events, five of the Volunteer Centres opted to hold the training again in the Autumn. The Dublin Volunteers Centres pooled their resources and held a combined training session and Galway held a separate event. Cork Volunteer Centre opted to followup with organisations individually rather than offering a second training event. It should also be noted that none of the organisations from the original training in Cork came to the matching event. The Coordinator felt that the time delay between the first training and the matching event (June to November) was the reason for this.

All the coordinators agreed that it is frequently difficult to get follow-through from organisations. They noted that there was quite a bit of hand-holding and chasing up with the organisations between the training and the matching event in order to get the organisations to complete and advertise their trustee roles.

Participant Feedback

41 organisations attended the training. Significantly, organisations chose to send board members or senior management, who had the capacity to implement change in their organisation. Six of the organisations are recorded as having less than five staff and three were volunteer-led. Just under a third of participating organisations had taken part in other training or networking events organised by the Volunteer Centres - most notably Volunteer Management Training.

The Volunteer Centres used the online tool Survey Monkey to gather the feedback from the organisations. Nineteen organisations gave feedback. The feedback sought by the Volunteer Centres from the organisations falls under Level 1 of the Kirkpatrick evaluation model. The participants were asked a number of multiple-choice questions using a 5 point Likert scale i.e. very poor, poor, average, good very good. The multiple-choice questions were followed up by two qualitative questions, which also captured the attendees initial feeling about the training rather than the learning outcomes.

Figure 4.1 Shows the statements put to participants and the average weighted response out of 10 of 19 participants.

Pre-event communications	8.34
The venue	8.56
The structure of the event	9.22
Training from the Wheel (first half of the workshop)	9.26
Training by the Volunteer Centre (second half of workshop)	9.48
Materials provided at workshop	9.48
Other attendees	8.94

The organisations rate the organisation, set-up, training and networking elements of the training event extremely highly. When the participants were asked what they liked most about the training the overwhelming response made by 13 of the 17 people who answered the question was the networking and learning that came from the diverse groups that participated. In response to what was most beneficial, one participant said, "The interaction between the group of attendees who had similar problems". Another participant

said, "Meeting other groups with similar issues, knowing it's not just us and having a better understanding of volunteer expectations".

The training was designed to draw on the experiences of the participants and the active participation was key to its success. Others mentioned the timely nature of the training and that they now had the skills to start recruiting trustees.

5. Matching Volunteers and Volunteer-Involving Organisations

In this section we will look at the matching event *TrustIE - Get on Board!* organised by the Volunteer Centres to bring together interested volunteers and organisations looking to recruit trustees. We will use Level 3 of the Kirkpatrick framework to measure the changes in attendees' behaviour as well as the results brought about by the matching event.

Summary of the Matching Event Findings

The matching event demonstrates the success of the TrustIE Pilot. It indicates a change in behaviour as volunteers moved from simply being interested in the role of trustee to attending an event where they could actually become a trustee. Significantly, the volunteers now had the skills and knowledge to ask the right questions and were clear on the responsibilities of a trustee, thereby already increasing the likelihood of quality match. During their training, organisations had gone through the process of a gap analysis and constructed a recruitment and induction process. This allowed organisations to come to the event better prepared and with a better capacity to recruit new Trustees.

Overview of the Matching Event

Three matching events were held across the participating Volunteer Centre catchment areas. Cork and Galway held their own events and the Dublin Centres held a joint event at a city centre location. 40 organisations and 71 volunteers in total attended the matching events. Most of the attendees had previously attended the training workshops for either volunteers or organisations, but at each matching event there were exceptions. As the number of volunteers far exceeded the number of opportunities, the event was opened up to any organisation registered with the Volunteer Centres who had board vacancies. While organisations were supposed to have a trustee opportunity in order to attend, in some cases

organisations came without any open vacancies. In Cork, all organisations who attended the matching event were given one-to-one support instead of a training workshop.

The Dublin event consisted of a panel discussion with sitting trustees followed by a question and answer session with volunteers. This was followed by a 'speed dating' activity where volunteers met briefly with organisations seeking trustees. Neither the Galway nor Cork event had a panel discussion, but the Volunteer Centres were in attendance to provide any assistance or further information. Cork and Galway had smaller numbers, which allowed for a more intimate event and gave volunteers more time with each organisation.

Participant Feedback

Both volunteers and organisations were asked for feedback after the matching event. Just like the training, the participants were asked about their initial feedback, about the organisation and set-up of the event and were then asked some more qualitative questions about their experience and intentions.

The Volunteers

Overall the volunteers were highly satisfied with the organisation of the event and felt they had an opportunity to engage with the volunteer-involving organisations. They were able to ask the right questions and understand the requirements of the organisations, which indicates that they felt well informed and confident attending this event and represents a change in behaviour based on their experience of the training. The volunteers felt the event was worthwhile and would recommend it.

Figure 5.1 Shows the statements put to volunteers about the matching event and the average weighted response out of 10 of 105 participants.

I was happy with the event environment i.e. location, venue, facilities	9.18
I was happy with the style of the event, it allowed me to engage with potential organisations	8.5

I felt I could ask organisations the questions I wanted to	9.05
I feel I understand the requirements for each trustee opportunity available	8.36
Attending the TrustIE – Get On Board! event was worth my time	9
I would recommend the TrustIE – Get on Board! Event to others.	9.14

The main critique from volunteers related to the tight fit in the venue at the Dublin event and the time it took to meet the organisations. Some volunteers would have preferred more time meeting the organisations and less time listening to presentations.
The volunteers also acknowledged that they learned something from the matching event itself. They rated their knowledge about the organisations and opportunities changing from an average of 5.91 out of 10 to 8.57 out of 10.

When asked whether their attitude to trusteeships had changed since the event 53% of volunteers said no and 47% said yes. However, when the respondents were asked for more information it appears that their enthusiasm for becoming a trustee remained the same. Volunteers who said they had no attitude change made the following comments: "I remain interested and [my] overall understanding is the same". "It hasn't changed since then because I am still looking forward to becoming a board member". "The initial workshop explained the principles very well and all the information since then has been consistent ".

For those that believed their attitude had changed, the vast majority felt it was for the better and felt even more informed about the responsibilities and requirements of a trustee with particular organisations. Participants who said their attitude had changed made the following comments: " [I am] more knowledgeable about different organisations needs and how one may support different initiatives" and "I understand the responsibilities more".

The Organisations

The organisations rated the set-up and organisation of the matching event highly. They felt the potential volunteers had a good grasp of the role and responsibility of being a trustee, and that they were able to ask the volunteers the right questions. The organisations felt the event was worth their time and that it was something they would recommend to others. This suggests that the matching event represents a positive behavioural change in the recruitment process of volunteer-involving organisations.

Figure 5.2 Shows the statements put to the organisations about the matching event and the average weighted response out of 10 of 24 participants.

I was happy with the event environment i.e. location, venue, facilities	9
I was happy with the style of the event, it allowed me to engage with potential volunteers	8.91
I felt I could ask potential volunteers the questions I wanted to	9
I feel the potential volunteers understood the role of a trustee	8.14
Attending the TrustIE – Get On Board! event was worth my time	9.18
I would recommend the TrustIE – Get on Board! Event to others.	9.14

The feedback from the organisations about the event is overwhelmingly positive. 61% of the organisations registered a change in attitude about involving new trustees in the organisation and 96% of the organisations wished to continue the recruitment process with the Volunteer Centres. On average, the organisations ranked their experience of recruiting volunteers before the TrustIE process as 6.25 and after the matching event as 7.7. This is a moderate increase which would need to be explored further with more detail than was provided in the feedback forms.

6. Challenges

Supply and Demand

If one is to look at the supply of volunteers and the demand for opportunities, Volunteer Centres typically report an over-supply of volunteers compared to the demand from organisations. In this sense, volunteers come to the Volunteer Centres ready to go, but organisations must be approached, engaged and supported to effectively recruit volunteers. Many small community organisations lack resources and time. For the TrustIE programme getting the volunteer-involving organisations to the point where they had prepared their trustee opportunities was difficult and a certain amount of handholding was required. One Volunteer Centre felt that they got better results when they engaged with the organisations on a one-on-one basis, however the other Coordinators interviewed felt that the workshopping approach really helped prepare the organisations.

Start to Finish

There were only a few mildly negative remarks from participants regarding the matching event. However, they seemed out of place compared to the general feedback both via the surveys and directly to the Volunteer Centres. The content of the comments would suggest that the participant making the criticism had not themselves attended training previously or had spoken with someone who hadn't received the training. Examples of such comments include, "…. I was not expecting to be asked by some organisations to literally take over from its founding members who were retiring." and "Some of the people we met seemed unsure as to what the event was for. They seemed to think that is was a volunteering position other than a board member we were seeking"

In anticipation of low attendance and/or to ensure an even number of volunteers and organisations, the Volunteer Centres invited volunteers and organisations to the matching event who had not attended any previous workshops. While the method used to collect the feedback does not allow one to track who attended the training and who did not, it may reasonably be concluded that these comments were made by or about participants who were not as prepared as those that had received the training.

Of Two Minds

Some organisations were a little frustrated with the length of the panel discussion prior to the 'speed dating' activity. One participant from an organisation said they would have liked "less time at the top table on presentations and more time for the interaction between potential directors and organisations." However verbal feedback from the volunteers to the event organisers directly suggests that the volunteers got a great deal out of the panel discussion. Weighing up the needs of different audiences is one of the challenges with an event that caters for two different target groups.

7. The Results

In this section we will look at the overall results of the pilot. We will examine each of the project objectives individually and we will outline the outcome results.

Summary of the Results

Although the Centres missed their target of 60 organisations and 120 volunteers – they did maintain a similar ratio with 49 organisations and 79 volunteers. In general, both target groups (volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations) were extremely happy with their experience of TrustIE. Through the workshops, organisations were able to identify their board needs and governance requirements. With the support of the Volunteer Centres organisations were able to create comprehensive role descriptions and recruitment policies. The matching event provided a new source from which organisations could recruit well prepared and committed volunteers. TrustIE gave volunteers an introduction into the structure of the community sector, gave them a thorough understanding of good governance practice and showed them how they could bring value to an organisation. For the participating Volunteer Centres, they registered a 560% increase in the number of 'Board Related' volunteer opportunities compared to the same period last year. This is a significant result and achievement in a relatively short time. 66 trustee vacancies were registered with the six Volunteers Centres. While ten volunteers have since been placed with organisations, a further 26 applications are currently in-progress. A total of 177 volunteers have been applied for trustee roles.

Meeting the objectives

Although the Volunteer Centres have missed their initial targets the TrustIE Pilot has met all its desired outcomes, some to a greater degree than others. We will now look at each objective individually to determine the extent to which the objectives were met.

Objective 1: Establish the needs of community groups with regard to board membership and board roles. The Volunteers Centres achieved this objective in two parts. First they surveyed the organisations to demonstrate there was a need for this type of support and secondly they helped the organisations to establish their needs through the workshop approach of the training. Organisations undertook a gap analysis with regard to governance and learned to create role descriptions and opportunities.

Objective 2: Build the capacity of community groups with regard to governance requirements. The organisations rated the training provided by the Wheel and the Volunteer Centres very highly. The fact that most organisations then took further action by creating roles and attending the matching event (rather than the ad hoc methods used previously) shows to a certain extent that their understanding of good governance and how to approach trustee recruitment had improved.

Objective 3: Build the capacity of community groups to recruit trustees. The Volunteer Centres registered 66 trustee opportunities as a result of TrustIE, compared to just 10 opportunities the year before. The training took organisations step-by-step through the recruitment process and they were given follow-up support by the Volunteer Centres. Over 40 organisations took the step to attend their local matching event, an entirely new recruitment path. And most importantly, they did so from an informed and well planned perspective.

Objective 4: Support community groups to develop good practice in managing and involving volunteers as trustees. At this point it is too early to analyse the quality of the Trustee matches and time will tell whether the organisations take on board what they learned about involving Trustees. It is important to note that volunteer management training is a key service of a Volunteer Centre and as such these organisations will have access to the Volunteer Centres' ongoing support in this area. As well, the evaluators have provided the Volunteer Centres with a template to measure this objective in six to nine months' time.

Objective 5: Promote board roles to existing volunteers on the iVol database in defined pilot areas and support those volunteers interested through information and training to pursue the role of trustee. The TrustIE training for volunteers was very successful. 9 out of 10 volunteers who participated in the training wished to seek out a role as a trustee. Until the TrustIE pilot there was very little choice on iVol for applicants looking to volunteer on Boards and there was no training on offer for members of the public regarding trustee roles and responsibilities.

Objective 6. Match volunteers from the iVol database with board roles as developed by the community groups who participate in the pilot. In terms of matching volunteers with organisations the early signs are very positive. 177 volunteers have applied for 66 roles over the past few months, and several matches have been made or are underway.

8. Strengths of TrustIE

Our findings show that the TrustIE project is a very effective model of leading small and medium organisations towards a point where they will be compliant with the new governance regulations in 2020. Its key strengths are:

- **Local presence.** Volunteer centres have local knowledge and trust with organisations which means they are ideally placed to raise the issue of good governance with organisations.
- **Public-facing:** A relationship already exists between the Volunteer Centre and members of the public (registered volunteers) who want to make a difference in their community.
- **A selective pool of potential Trustees.** The volunteer training boosts the confidence of organisations, who can now access a pool of committed, informed volunteers who are up-to-date with the latest good governance practice. The volunteer training is the first step in a selection process for the organisations.
- **It keeps organisations on their toes!** The volunteer training forces the organisations to operate to a higher standard. When volunteers know and understand good governance, they will be more discerning about where to volunteer and will have higher expectations.

- **Awareness-raising about the community and voluntary sector.** The TrustIE project is an opportunity to engage with the wider public about the community and voluntary sector and the steps being taken to ensure everyone complies with best practice. This is particularly important at a time when the sector has suffered reputational damage.

- **Peer-to-peer support.** The organisational training and the matching event are very important for peer-to-peer support and offer the organisations an excellent opportunity for shared learning, collaboration and growth.

- **Collaboration**. The involvement of the Wheel in delivering this training is a demonstration of the effectiveness of collaboration. The Wheel has positioned itself as a leader in governance training and has national recognition, while the Volunteers Centres have local reach and on-the-ground experience and knowledge.

- **Accessible**: There are many other organisations at the forefront of good governance in Ireland, but the Volunteer Centres can reach those small to medium sized organisations who do not have the resources to access expensive and/or Dublin based training and support services.

9. Recommendations

Clearly, when looking at the objectives of the pilot, it has succeeded to a great extent in meeting the intended outcomes of the project. That said, part of the purpose of a pilot project is to gain greater understanding and to learn from the experience. If TrustIE is to be rolled out as a programme across the Volunteer Centre network, and the evidence would show that it should be, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration.

1. **Only participants who have undergone the training should attend the Matching Event.** While some volunteers and organisations were invited to the Matching Event despite having not participated in the training events, the evidence demonstrates that this is not effective and has a negative impact on the success of the event. What makes TrustIE distinct is the fact that volunteers and organisations are being educated about the role of trustees and supported to recruit/apply for these roles. The feedback suggests that organisations in particular were looking for

informed applicants and were frustrated by the fact that some volunteers at the event did not have the awareness of the role of a trustee and/or the skills required.

2. **Add a second workshop for organisations**. Staff from some of the Volunteer Centres noted that it was difficult to get the organisations to write up the role descriptions after the training event and that there was a need to chase up these organisations frequently and do some handholding to get the roles written and advertised in time for the matching event. It may be useful to have organisations attend a second workshop event, at which they actually write up their role descriptions. This would free up Volunteer Centre staff time as they would no longer need to be individually chasing up and supporting organisations to create their roles descriptions. The advertising of the roles could then be an opportunity for promotion of the programme. An announcement can be made about how x number of opportunities have just 'gone live' on iVol, thereby garnering some attention for the programme and how it benefits voluntary organisations.

3. **Restructure the matching event.** There was a mixed reaction from participants at the TrustIE – Get on Board! event about the panel discussion. Generally, volunteers found the panel discussion interesting and worthwhile, while some of the organisations found it took up too much time. This is likely a reflection of the different needs of volunteers and organisations. A solution could be to have volunteers come earlier for a panel discussion, followed by the arrival of the organisations and the matching event itself. Alternatively, the panel discussion could be shorter or replaced with one keynote speaker.

4. **The same evaluation method be used for all workshops and all Volunteer Centres.** This would allow for better clarity and more in-depth analysis when evaluating the overall programme.

5. **Agree on the way in which the training and programme activities are to be delivered to ensure consistency.** While the local context can require activities to be adapted or delivered differently from one Volunteer Centre to the next, agreement should be made on what aspects of the programme are flexible and what aspects are required. For example, some training of voluntary organisations took place as a one-to-one service between the Volunteer Centre staff and a staff member from the voluntary organisation. If shared learning and capacity building are objectives of the programme it would seem necessary for training to be offered

to groups of organisations rather than one-to-one. Feedback from organisations who attended the training workshops indicated that there was a great benefit in shared learning.

6. **Evaluate the quality not just the quantity of the matches.** It is suggested that a six to nine-month follow-up be done after matches are made to evaluate the quality of the match and to fully evaluate the long-term effects of participating in the programme. While achieving a successful match is an important outcome, what that match leads to could be considerably more significant.

7. **Plan and book dates for the entire programme at the start.** The timeframe of the programme could be tightened and the programme would benefit from being scheduled at the start so that all participants were aware of and committed to the programme. The summer months were particularly challenging as many participants and Volunteer Centre staff were on holidays at different periods throughout June, July and August. January through May and September through November may be better time periods in which to run the programme. Having a shorter time period between events may also lead to a feeling of greater momentum and follow-through from participants.

10. Conclusion

Good governance is something all voluntary groups are contending with, particularly as the time for compliance with the Charities Code draws nearer. For larger organisations with time, resources and access to experienced trustees this may not be a significant challenge. However, for the small, local community groups that make-up a considerable portion of the Irish Community and Voluntary sector this poses a daunting challenge with a fast approaching deadline. TrustIE clearly has the potential to respond to this need and to build the capacity of these organisations to ensure good governance prevails, and the incredibly valuable service they provide continues. TrustIE demonstrated the Volunteer Centre's capacity to deliver the programme as well as the real opportunity for significant and long-lasting change for both volunteer-involving organisations and volunteers.