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Wave Change: Final Evaluation Report



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1. Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

Wave Change works directly with youth who have a passion for social change to develop the knowledge, skills and networks they need to make a difference in Ireland. It was launched as a programme of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland (hereafter SEI) in 2011. Wave Change is delivered through an annual programme, providing training, support, development and networking opportunities to youth aged 18–25 from across Ireland. SEI, established in 2004, works with high-potential social entrepreneurs to enable them to maximize the potential impact of their ideas across the country through a combination of financial investment, direct support and celebration and communication of their achievements.

In collaboration with the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, National University of Ireland, Galway (NUI Galway), Wave Change is committed to knowledge generation and dissemination. This component of Wave Change is intended to generate learning that will guide the future of the initiative. It is further intended to feed into the evidence base on the implementation of youth civic action interventions and their value to young people, and to inform policy and practice at the national and international level. The evaluation covers a 2-year period, running from November 2011 to October 2013, which incorporates the first two cycles of the delivery of the Wave Change Programme. The Interim Evaluation Report (end of Year 1) and this Final Evaluation Report (end of Year 2) are outputs of this commitment to knowledge generation and dissemination.

For the purposes of this study, the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre is advised and supported in its research and evaluation activities by Professor Mark Brennan, who is an expert in the area of youth civic action and community development and who holds the UNESCO Chair in Rural Community, Leadership and Youth Development at Pennsylvania State University, USA.

1.2 Aims of the study

The aim of the evaluation, as set out in the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre Evaluation Plan (signed off by Wave Change in December 2011), is to examine the implementation and delivery of the Wave Change Programme, to generate learning to contribute to the ongoing development of the programme and to examine whether the initiative met its identified outcomes. The study therefore has a process, formative and outcomes focus. The objectives of the evaluation are:

1. to describe the Wave Change model;
2. to locate the initiative in the relevant theoretical literature;
3. to assess the implementation of Wave Change and generate learning for the programme;
4. to assess whether Wave Change met its intended outcomes;
5. to assess value for money.

1.3 Methodology

The evaluation is a mixed-methods study, incorporating quantitative and qualitative methods. A wide range of participants were involved in the evaluation process, including the participants in the Wave Change Programme (called 'Wave Changers'), the Wave Change Team (Director, Programme Manager, Programme Facilitator, Assistant Programme Facilitator (volunteer) and Programme Associate), the Wave Change Steering Group members and the programme funder (The Atlantic Philanthropies). In the main, the evaluation is qualitative due to the small number of Wave Changers partaking in the

programme during the period covered by this evaluation report (n=47). The methods used to address the objectives of the study and the response rates during the data collection period (November 2011 – October 2013) are detailed below.

1.3.1 Literature review

The literature in relation to youth social entrepreneurship and social innovation was reviewed in order to put the Wave Change Programme in context. The review of literature involved a search of academic databases such as Scopus and a search of the NUI Galway library catalogue using the key phrases 'social entrepreneurship' and 'social innovation' and derivatives of them. An Internet search was also conducted, using Google to identify relevant reports and publications. The authors further benefited from reviewing the bibliographies of key publications relevant to the topic. The literature review is supplemented by the background conceptual paper by Brady *et al.* (2012) entitled *Understanding Youth Civic Engagement: Debates, Discourses and Lessons from Practice*, which was produced for Wave Change by the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre in 2012.

1.3.2 Qualitative methods

The qualitative methods used included observation, a review of secondary data and the collection of primary data through the use of interviews, self-reflection diaries, focus groups and case studies as described below.

Observation

A researcher attended one recruitment weekend and two of the Wave Change Programme weekends in Year 1 of the delivery of the programme, and the Bootcamp and all of the five programme weekends in Year 2. A researcher also observed the seed funding process in Year 2 of the programme. Attendance by the researcher facilitated direct observation of the implementation of the programme. Field notes were recorded and factored into the analysis of the data.

Secondary data

A review of secondary data primarily drew on documentation supplied by Wave Change, including the original proposal to the funder, programme materials, the minutes of the Steering Group meetings and budgetary information. It also involved a review of the Wave Change website, Facebook page and Twitter account.

Primary data

The primary data collected for this evaluation report utilised the following qualitative methods: one-to-one interviews, focus groups, reflective diaries and case studies.

Interviews: Semi-structured, primarily face-to-face interviews were conducted with the Wave Change Team. For Year 1 of the programme, the Wave Change Team comprised the Director and a Programme Coordinator. In Year 2 of the programme, the Team expanded, to comprise the Director, the Programme Manager (the Programme Coordinator in Year 1), a Programme Facilitator, an Assistant Programme Facilitator (volunteer) and a Programme Associate who led on delivering the personal development workshops. Following the first year of the implementation of the Programme, one-to-one interviews were conducted with the Programme Director and Coordinator. Following the delivery of the second year of the programme, one-to-one interviews were conducted with all five members of the Team. An additional interview was conducted with a Wave Change intern who supported the Team during the recruitment phase in the lead into Year 2.

Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with the six members of the Wave Change

Steering Group in Year 1 of the delivery of the programme and with its four members in Year 2, as well as with two representatives of the funder, The Atlantic Philanthropies Ireland.

The purpose of these interviews was to explore a range of stakeholders' perspectives regarding the following issues, as appropriate to their role:

- the background to and history of Wave Change;
- the Wave Change model;
- the implementation of the programme;
- their perception of the outcomes Wave Change has achieved;
- the governance and management of Wave Change;
- the future of Wave Change.

All the interviews were recorded and transcribed in full.

Reflective diaries: The Wave Changers were asked to engage in self-reflection at the end of each of the five programme weekends, guided by a set of reflective questions. The purpose of the reflection was to collate the Wave Changers' perspectives to identify whether the programme was achieving its intended outcomes. In order to facilitate an element of personal choice and method variety, a number of options were provided to the participants in Year 1 of the programme to choose their preferred method of self-reflection. These options were: the use of video diaries (uploaded securely via YouTube), online journal entry blogs (via WordPress) or written journals. Several Wave Changers originally opted for the electronic formats of either video diaries or electronic blogs; however, during the course of the programme they changed to primarily using written journals. A total of 46 diaries were returned in Year 1, comprising 29 written diary entries and 17 diaries returned either by video diary or WordPress. In Year 2, Wave Changers used a standardised template for a written journal, which was sent to them by e-mail after each programme weekend and returned electronically to the Research Team. A total of 70 diary entries were returned in this manner, while one Wave Changer in Year 2 opted to reflect using the video diary method and sent it directly to the evaluator via e-mail.

In addition to the self-reflection diaries requested at the end of every programme weekend, during the fourth programme weekend in Year 2 the evaluator met individually with the Wave Changers to record a short video reflection. The purpose of this reflection was to specifically capture how the Wave Changers have been applying their learning from the programme to their projects for social change. During the course of the weekend, 19 video diaries were recorded with the attendees and transcribed using NVivo.

Focus groups: Four focus groups were carried out with the Wave Changers, with two held during the final programme weekends in Year 1 and Year 2. The purpose of the focus groups was to explore the Wave Changers' perspectives on the overall development and implementation of Wave Change as they graduated from the programme. In particular, a discussion was facilitated around whether Wave Change met their expectations, what was of most value and of least value to them regarding the delivery of the programme, their views on the Wave Change online presence, suggestions for changes to Wave Change in the future and a small number of additional areas identified (where the data was limited or clarifications were required). During the final programme weekend in Year 1, nine Wave Changers participated in the first focus group. Due to the small number of participants, a second focus group was held at a later date outside the programme weekend with five additional Wave Changers who had not attended the final programme weekend. In Year 2, two focus groups were held with the 16 attendees at the final programme weekend, with eight Wave Changers in each focus group. The focus groups in Year 1 and Year 2 were recorded and transcribed in full.

Case studies: Six of the Wave Changers and their projects (three from Year 1 and three from Year 2) were selected to take part in a person-centered case study to showcase at a more in-depth level their journey through Wave Change, with the focus on their social change projects. The selection process for the Wave Changers chosen differed in Year 1 and Year 2. Drawing on the available data, and in particular the questionnaire sent to the Wave Changers a year after completing the programme (Alumni questionnaire), the evaluators were aware of three programme participants from Year 1 who had developed a specific idea for social change and were continuing to progress their idea a year after leaving the programme. These three were chosen for the case studies. In Year 2, due to the greater emphasis on projects, all the Wave Changers were working on social change projects at the end of the programme, hence a set of criteria was developed to facilitate selecting three participants for case studies. In choosing the case studies, consideration was given to:

- gender diversity;
- geographical location (two from Dublin and one from outside of Dublin);
- project stage (one from each project stage – starting block, early stage and up-and-running);
- innovative projects where good progress has been made in rolling out their ideas (an indicator of good progress is whether the participant applied for seed funding);
- evidence of the participant having a high rate of attendance at the programme weekends and partaking in external engagement activities to progress their ideas.

On the basis of these latter two criteria, the 23 Wave Changers who graduated from Year 2 were narrowed down to 14. Of these 14, three were randomly selected, taking into consideration gender, diversity and project stage.

1.3.3 Quantitative methods

A baseline and follow-up self-completion questionnaire was administered to the Wave Changers in Year 1 and Year 2. To supplement the qualitative data, these questionnaires used primarily standardised measures for the purpose of assessing whether the Wave Change Programme was achieving its intended outcomes. The questionnaire sought to measure whether the programme inspired the Wave Changers to engage in social change; equipped them with strong, resilient personal foundations to lead on change (including enhanced self-awareness, sense of agency and self-efficacy); provided them with in-depth knowledge and practical experience of project management and social innovation; and nurtured a strong, diverse network of social change-makers. The baseline questionnaire also included questions on demographics about gender, age, ethnic origin, place of residence, level of education and current status of employment.

The baseline questionnaire was administered at the start of the first programme weekend in both years (Time 1). It was completed by 46 of the 47 Wave Changers selected to be part of the programme in Year 1 and Year 2. An identical follow-up questionnaire, administered during the final programme weekend, was returned by 27 of the 45 Wave Changers who completed the programme (Time 2). Relatively low levels of attendance at the final programme weekend in Year 1 and Year 2 affected the response rate. The measures used in these questionnaires are outlined below.

The Youth Inventory of Involvement Scale (Pancer *et al.*, 2007) was included to assess the Wave Changers' level of civic involvement at the start and end of the programme. The measure contains 30 items, accounting for several different areas in which youth can be involved. These can be clustered into political activities, community activities, responding activities (responding to requests or appeals for help) and helping activities. The respondents indicated the extent to which they had participated in these activities over the previous year on a 6-point scale, ranging from 0 (never did this) to 5 (did it weekly or more). This scale was adapted from Pancer *et al.*'s 5-point scale, with revised wording for the purpose of clarity. Using this revised scale, the scale range is 0–150.

The Youth Social Responsibility Scale (Pancer *et al.*, 2007) was used in the questionnaire to assess the extent to which the Wave Changers felt they had a responsibility to others in society, particularly those who are marginalised or oppressed, at the start and end of the programme. The measure has 29 items, containing statements expressing attitudes to socially responsible behaviour (e.g. 'Everyone should volunteer some time for the good of their community'). Some of the questions on this scale are reversed. For the purpose of this study, the scale was adapted from a 9-point scale to a 5-point scale, allowing the respondents to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statements (0 = neither agree nor disagree, 1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree). Using this revised scale, the scale range is 0–116.

According to Pancer *et al.* (2007), the Youth Inventory of Involvement Scale and the Youth Social Responsibility Scale both have excellent internal consistency in the study for which the scale was developed. In relation to the Youth Inventory of Involvement Scale, a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.90 was reported for Time 1 administration of the measure and 0.88 for Time 2 administration of the measure.¹ Regarding the Youth Social Responsibility Scale, a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.87 was reported for Time 1 administration and 0.88 for Time 2. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the Youth Inventory of Involvement Scale was 0.85 in Time 1 and 0.93 in Time 2. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the Youth Social Responsibility Scale was 0.80 in Time 1 and 0.80 in Time 2.

Flanagan *et al.* (2007)² developed a set of civic engagement measures to measure civic behaviours, opinions, knowledge and dispositions among adolescents. One of these measures was used to assess changes in the respondents' perceived sense of agency. The competence for civic action measure includes nine items to assess respondents' perceived competence to take action on community issues. Using a 5-point scale, respondents indicate their level of ability to take action, ranging from 1 ('I definitely can't') to 5 ('I definitely can'). The scale range is 9–45. According to Flanagan *et al.* (2007), the competence for civic action measure has excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient reported of 0.90 in Time 1 and 0.92 in Time 2. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.83 in Time 1 and 0.72 in Time 2.

Chell and Athayde (2009) developed a tool to measure skills needed for innovation. One of these skills is self-efficacy, and this sub-measure was used to assess changes in the Wave Changers' perceived sense of self-efficacy. The measure of self-efficacy includes eight items designed to measure the respondents' sense of self-belief, self-assurance, self-awareness, feelings of empowerment and social confidence. Wave Changers were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 5-point scale (0 = neither agree nor disagree, 1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree) with a series of statements regarding their self-efficacy. The scale range was 0–32. The sub-measure of self-efficacy was found by Chell and Athayde (2009) to have an acceptable level of internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient reported of 0.70. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.09 in Time 1 and 0.34 in Time 2. These low alpha coefficients indicate a low level of internal consistency, thereby reducing the reliability of the scale in the current study. While the measure of self-efficacy was designed in part to measure the respondents' self-awareness, an additional two items were also included in the questionnaire, designed to assess changes in the respondents' perceived sense of self-awareness. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with two statements regarding their sense of self-awareness. The scale range was 0–8.

¹ Cronbach's alpha is used to test the internal consistence of a scale. Researchers usually find alpha coefficients higher than 0.7 to be acceptable (Nunnally, 1978).

² Adapted from the California Civic Index (Kahne *et al.*, 2005) and the Civic Engagement Questionnaire (Keeter *et al.*, 2001).

The Social Provisions Scale was adapted to measure the respondents' levels of social support (Cutrona and Russell, 1987). This scale has 24 items. However, for the purpose of this study, four of the most appropriate items were selected to form a much smaller scale. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements on the degree to which their social relationships provide social support, using a 4-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree). The scale range was 0–16. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.67 in Time 1 and 0.71 in Time 2.

A Project Management measure was developed by the researchers. This measure was designed to take account of the specific skills that Wave Change was seeking to enhance among its Wave Changers. The scale has seven items, whereby the respondents were asked to indicate their level of ability on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 ('I definitely can't') to 5 ('I definitely can') in the following areas: communicating, researching and evaluating their ideas; creating a road map from vision to execution; and project planning, leading a team and managing the necessary budget and resources. The scale range was 0–35. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.89 in Time 1 and 0.70 in Time 2.

1.3.4 Mixed-method questionnaires

The study used a number of mixed-method questionnaires, which were primarily focused on documenting the respondents' views on the implementation of the Wave Change Programme. Each of these questionnaires had a quantitative and a qualitative component and are outlined in further detail below.

Recruitment and Bootcamp weekend questionnaire: Questionnaires were administered to all 50 Wave Changers who attended the three regional recruitment weekends in Year 1 and the 42 attendees at the Bootcamp weekend in Year 2. There was a full response rate. The purpose of these questionnaires was to collect demographic data on the attendees and information on how they initially found out about the Wave Change Programme. In addition, the questionnaire was designed to gather their perspectives on the delivery of the weekends and suggestions to inform the ongoing development of Wave Change, through a series of open-ended questions.

Programme weekend questionnaire: These questionnaires were administered to the Wave Changers at the end of each of the five programme weekends in Years 1 and 2. Section 1 of the questionnaire asked the respondents to rate their level of satisfaction on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (very satisfied) to 5 (very dissatisfied) regarding:

- the overall weekend;
- the relevance of the sessions to the Wave Changers;
- the opportunity the weekend provided to network and discuss their ideas with their peers;
- the content of the sessions;
- the logistics of the weekend.

Section 2 included open-ended questions on what the Wave Changers found most useful and least useful about the weekend, with additional space to provide general comments. The final programme weekend questionnaire in both years included a Section 3, asking the respondents how many opportunities they had to participate in external engagement activities, whether they applied for seed funding, and how they rated their overall level of satisfaction with these aspects of the programme, using the same 5-point scale. The response rates to these programme weekend questionnaires are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Response rates to the programme weekend questionnaire

	Weekend 1	Weekend 2	Weekend 3	Weekend 4	Weekend 5
Year 1 Number of respondents	20	17	19	19	9
Year 2 Number of respondents	25	19	16	19	14

Practical Skills workshop questionnaires: In Year 2 of the programme, as the practical skills workshops were held primarily outside of the programme weekends, a questionnaire was administered to the attendees of these workshops via SurveyMonkey. There were 38 attendees across the six workshops delivered and the response rate was 32. Reflecting the programme weekend questionnaires, the Wave Changers were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the workshop and identify what they found most useful and least useful.

Seed funding questionnaire: In Year 2 of the programme, a questionnaire was sent to six of the judges sitting on the seed funding adjudication panel. There was a full response rate. The purpose of this questionnaire was to ask the judges to rate their overall satisfaction with the seed funding process, to gather their perspectives on what worked well or could have been improved, and how it compared to similar funding processes in which they were previously involved.

Alumni questionnaire: A year after graduating from Wave Change, a questionnaire was sent to the 22 Wave Changers in Year 1 of the programme via SurveyMonkey. The response rate was 17. The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect data on whether the alumni continued to be involved in or lead on activity intended to bring about social change since completing the programme. It also sought their perspectives on what were the barriers they encountered when involved in social change and whether they have maintained contact with their peers on the programme and, if so, the nature of this contact.

Website questionnaire – not administered: It was originally part of the study design to administer a questionnaire via the website to the public and the Wave Changers from both years. This questionnaire was designed to capture their views on the website, their reasons for visiting the site, how they would rate the quality of the site and their suggestions for improvement. However, due to low levels of traffic to the website, a decision was taken in conjunction with the Wave Change Team not to administer the questionnaire.

1.4 Analysis

As set out in Section 1.2 above, the study has a process, formative and outcomes focus. The analysis undertaken and supportive software tools used to write up the findings under each of these study components are detailed below.

1.4.1 Process and Formative Study Analysis

The qualitative data sources (consisting of interviews, focus groups, field notes from the observation and the relevant questionnaires) were reviewed and analysed to assemble the evidence on whether Wave Change was implemented as intended, what were the ingredients to successful implementation, and what barriers and challenges arose during implementation. The data sources were manually coded and analysed under various headings that reflected the key themes emerging from the research. The quantitative data from the questionnaires was input and analysed using Microsoft Excel.

1.4.2 Outcomes Study Analysis

To assess whether the programme contributed to its desired outcomes, the evaluation adopted a contribution analysis approach. In the context of programme evaluation, *'contribution analysis explores attribution through assessing the contribution a programme is making to observed results. It sets out to verify the theory of change behind the programme and, at the same time, takes into consideration other influencing factors'* (Mayne, 2008, p. 1). This approach recognises that it takes time to prove an impact (Kotvojs, 2006) and is therefore appropriate considering the evaluation timeframe. It does not seek to definitely prove impact, but acknowledges that there are other potentially influential contributing factors. In essence, it seeks to provide plausible evidence of how the programme is making a difference (Mayne, 1999).

In the current study, qualitative evidence was gathered and assessed, with the support of the qualitative data software package NVivo, to produce findings demonstrating whether the programme contributed to the intended outcomes. NVivo was used to code the self-reflection diaries, the video diaries and the relevant outcomes-focused data in the transcripts of the focus groups. This software facilitated the identification of emergent themes and enabled all stages of the analytical process to be transparent and traceable.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the data from the baseline (Time 1) and follow-up (Time 2) questionnaires. To assess whether there was a statistically significant difference between the Wave Changers in Year 1 and Year 2, in terms of their level of civic involvement and sense of social responsibility at the time of their selection for the programme, an Independent-Samples T-Test was conducted using the Time 1 data. However, the analysis primarily used a Paired-Samples T-Test to evaluate the impact of the Wave Change Programme on the respondents' mean scores between Time 1 and Time 2. This Paired-Samples T-Test was used for the purpose of measuring whether there was a statistically significant difference in the Wave Changers' level of civic involvement, sense of social responsibility, perceived sense of agency, self-efficacy, level of social support and project management skills between Time 1 and Time 2. However, given that the smaller the sample size, the more difficult it can be to detect small effects that are statistically significant (Rossi *et al.*, 2004, p. 312), the effect sizes were also measured and are presented as Cohen's *d* values. The convention recommended for the interpretation of Cohen's *d* values is that 0.2 is a small, 0.5 is a medium and 0.8 is a large effect size (Cohen, 1988, pp. 19–27). A Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used to compare the scores of the respondents at Time 1 and Time 2 to the two questions included in the baseline and follow-up questionnaire on their perceived sense of self-awareness.

1.5 Ethical approval and limitations of the methodological approach

The research was conducted according to strict ethical guidelines. Ethical approval was granted from the NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee in February 2012. A commitment was given to the interviewees that the information in the report would be presented in an anonymous format, with no identifying data used.

The methodological approach of this study faced certain limitations. The original intention of the evaluation was to use a participatory approach, which would include the establishment of a panel of Wave Changers who were interested in research to work in conjunction with the NUI Galway Research Team and be involved in the research process. It was envisaged that this panel would be used to assist with data collection and dissemination in particular. Several efforts were made throughout the course of Year 1 to establish this panel. An overview of the evaluation was provided to those interested, as well as an invitation to participate and information circulated via e-mail at various points during the programme roll-out in Year 1. A panel was established in Spring 2012. However, due to various logistical reasons, no actual research was conducted by the panel. Ensuring that the anonymity of the study participants was protected was one factor that came into play when seeking to involve Wave Changers in the research process.

Another limitation was the relatively low number of Wave Changers who attended the focus group discussions, comprising 14 in Year 1 and 16 in Year 2. While the small number of Wave Changers partaking in the programme during the evaluation period presented a challenge for the quantitative component of the study, this was further compounded by the low response rate to the follow-up questionnaire across both years. Finally, the method of collecting information subsequent to each of the programme weekends (via the reflective diaries) proved to be a very time-consuming exercise in terms of tracking and ensuring completion of diaries.

1.6 Structure of report

In meeting the objectives of this evaluation:

- **Chapter 2** reviews the literature on civic engagement, focusing in particular on social entrepreneurship, social innovation and youth.
- **Chapter 3** outlines the Wave Change model. It focuses on the history behind the development of Wave Change and examines the original model. In examining the model, it outlines the structure of the Wave Change Programme, its intended outcomes, the learning model and the target group for the programme. It also examines the governance and management of Wave Change.
- **Chapter 4** charts the implementation of Wave Change during the evaluation period. In examining the implementation, two sections are set out: one focuses on the Wave Change Programme, the other on Wave Change outreach. The chapter discusses the target group and participants, whether the programme was implemented as intended, what were the ingredients to successful implementation and what were the barriers and challenges encountered over the 2-year period. Each of the components of Wave Change is looked at individually. These are the programme weekends, the practical skills workshops, external engagement, seed funding, coaching and one-to-one support, and internships. On the subject of field development, an analysis is presented of key developments in terms of connecting and networking with the general public and certain organisations and relevant staff working in the youth and civic action field via online social media and face-to-face engagements.
- Drawing on a triangulation of the available evidence from the evaluation, **Chapter 5** presents the findings on the contribution the Wave Change Programme made in achieving its intended outcomes. These outcomes center on aspects such as being inspired to engage in social change, having an appropriate personal and practical skills set, having a strong peer support

network, and being provided with opportunities to take action on social change ideas or successfully lead innovative sustainable projects. A small selection of case studies are presented to demonstrate how some participants availed of opportunities and learning through the Wave Change Programme to actively engage in activities designed to bring about social change in response to a social need.

- **Chapter 6** discusses the overall findings of the evaluation. It begins with an assessment of the Wave Change model; it then examines the core inputs of Wave Change comprising the programme and outreach dimensions, outlining key successes and challenges faced over the 2-year period; and finally provides an overall assessment of how Wave Change contributed to the five intended outcomes.
- **Chapter 7** presents a summary of the key evaluation findings. The overall positive implementation aspects of the initiative are discussed in terms of supporting and developing youth in their social change endeavours. Some implementation weaknesses are highlighted, particularly regarding electronic outreach and broader networking in the field. Finally, a summary of progress made in the achievement of intended outcomes by Wave Change is set out.

The report concludes with a list of the references that informed the report and several appendices detailing aspects of the analysis.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In 2012, the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre produced a conceptual paper for Wave Change entitled *Understanding Youth Civic Engagement: Debates, Discourses and Lessons from Practice* (Brady *et al.*, 2012). The paper provides an overview of the theory and literature on youth civic engagement. It sets out:

- key definitions and typologies of youth civic engagement;
- underpinning discourses that create the rationale for youth civic engagement;
- the benefits of civic activity to individuals and their communities;
- the barriers and challenges in civically engaging youth;
- learning that can inform the development of civic engagement programmes and issues associated with effective programmes.

Given the evolving focus of the Wave Change Programme, the aim of this chapter is to provide an additional overview of the literature specific to the context of social innovation and youth social entrepreneurship. Programmes designed specifically for youth in the area of social innovation and social entrepreneurship are said to be growing in popularity (Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, 2011). A large-scale quantitative study that measured the level and type of socially oriented entrepreneurial activity in the United Kingdom found that young people (aged 18–24) are more likely to be engaged in social entrepreneurial activity than any other age grouping (Harding, 2006). Despite this, however, there is a limited amount of literature or published evaluations in the area of youth social entrepreneurship.

At the outset, this review of the literature defines the concepts of ‘social innovation’ and ‘social entrepreneurship’. The chapter then proceeds to situate social entrepreneurship within the wider context of youth civic engagement. Following this, the critical ingredients of youth social entrepreneurship programmes are outlined, together with the challenges in delivering such programmes and the benefits of these programmes to youth.

2.2 Defining Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship

Drawing on the existing literature, the Young Foundation (McNeill *et al.*, 2012, p. 18) developed the following definition of social innovation:

Social innovations are solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes, etc.) that simultaneously meet a social need (more effectively than existing solutions) and lead to new or improved capabilities and relationships and better use of assets and resources. In other words, social innovations are both good for society and enhance society’s capacity to act.

The terms ‘social innovator’ and ‘social entrepreneur’ are often used interchangeably. Social innovation, however, has been described as encompassing both social enterprise initiatives and social entrepreneurship (Social Enterprise Taskforce, 2010; McNeill *et al.*, 2012).

In the Irish context, a social entrepreneur has been defined as ‘someone who recognises a social problem and uses entrepreneurial principles to organise, create, and manage a venture to make social change’ (Forfás, 2007). The difference between social entrepreneurship and social enterprises primarily lies in the emphasis. The emphasis in social entrepreneurship is on improving social

outcomes, whereas in social enterprises there is more of an emphasis on income generation and the creation of jobs, although they are both equally driven by social or environmental motives (UNICEF, 2007; Social Enterprise Taskforce, 2010).

The Young Foundation (McNeill *et al.*, 2012) identified five core elements of social innovation, as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Core elements of social innovation

Core elements	Description
1. Novelty	Social innovations are new to the field, sector, region, market or user, or to be applied in a new way.
2. From ideas to implementation	There is a distinction between invention (developing ideas) and innovation (implementing and applying ideas).
3. Meets a social need	Social innovations are explicitly designed to meet a recognised social need.
4. Effectiveness	Social innovations are more effective than existing solutions – create a measurable improvement in terms of outcomes.
5. Enhances society's capacity to act	Empowers beneficiaries by creating new roles and relationships, developing assets and capabilities and/or better use of assets and resources.

To make a distinction between social entrepreneurship programmes per se and youth social entrepreneurship, the focus in the latter is on 'engaging youth voice in solving social problems' (Kinkade and Macy, 2005). It is said that what distinguishes youth social entrepreneurship from other traditional youth development programmes is that the young people themselves initiate the ideas and control the projects (UNICEF, 2007, p. 8):

'Youth social entrepreneurship should grow out of young people's own interests, motivations and ideas. It entails young people being actively involved by initiating their own activities rather than just being told what to do. Yet it also requires resources and supportive and experienced adults who can mentor/guide young people without being controlling.'

2.3 Youth Civic Engagement and Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is categorised as a form of civic engagement. As set out in the background conceptual paper, civic engagement has been defined as 'individual or collective actions in which people participate to improve the well-being of communities or society in general, and which provide opportunities for reflection' (Innovations in Civic Participation, 2008). While youth civic engagement is an umbrella term for a wide variety of activities, social entrepreneurship has been classified as one form of youth civic engagement, along with activities such as community service and volunteering, advocacy and campaigning, and leadership training.

The Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organising (2003) developed a continuum of youth engagement, mapping different forms of youth activity along a scale of increasing ownership by the young people. This continuum is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Youth engagement continuum

INTERVENTION	DEVELOPMENT	COLLECTIVE EMPOWERMENT	SYSTEMIC CHANGE	
Youth Services approach	Youth Development	Youth Leadership	Civic Engagement	Youth Organising
		<i>Includes components of youth development approach, plus:</i>	<i>Includes components of youth development and youth leadership, plus:</i>	<i>Includes components of youth development, youth leadership and civic engagement, plus:</i>
Defines young people as clients	Provides services and support, access to caring adults and safe spaces	Builds in authentic youth leadership opportunities within programming and organisation	Engages young people in political education and awareness	Builds a membership base
Provides services to address individual problems and pathologies of young people	Provides opportunities for the growth and development of young people	Helps young people deepen historical and cultural understanding of their experiences and community issues	Builds skills and capacity for power analysis and action around issues that young people identify	Involves youth as part of core staff and governing body
Programming defined around treatment and prevention	Meets young people where they are	Builds skills and capacities of young people to be decision-makers and problem-solvers	Begins to help young people build collective identity of young people as social change agents	Engages in direct action and political mobilising
	Builds young people's individual competencies	Youth participate in community projects	Engages young people in advocacy and negotiation	Engages in alliances and coalitions
	Provides age-appropriate support			
	Emphasises positive self-identity			
	Supports youth-adult partnerships			

Source: Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organising (2003)

The continuum identifies five broad categories of youth activity, with the traditional youth services model at one end and the youth organising model at the other. Identifiers of youth civic engagement include skills development and building the capacity of young people to take action around issues they identify; building the collective identity of young people as agents of social change; and engaging young people in awareness-raising, advocacy and negotiation. As set out in Section 2.4 below, these identifiers are closely aligned with the aims of youth social entrepreneurship programmes.

2.4 Critical ingredients of Youth Social Entrepreneurship Programmes

A review of existing social entrepreneurship programme models by UNICEF (2007) concluded that the following key supports are needed for youth social entrepreneurs:

- **Knowledge:** Providing training and technical assistance to help young people gain the skills and information necessary for their projects.
- **Networking:** Facilitating a network to enhance knowledge-sharing, collaboration and collective discovery, including by means of electronic platforms.
- **Mentorship:** Providing training, motivation and feedback.
- **Finance:** Funding to transform ideas into action.

An evaluation of the Young Social Pioneers Programme in Australia, which supports young social entrepreneurs to develop the skills and networks they need to bring about social change, found that programmes designed to support young social change-makers require several essential attributes, largely mirroring those identified by UNICEF. These are: fostering an environment that promotes a community of like-minded change-makers; providing the space for them to think strategically about their goals and refine their purpose; and providing the young social change-makers with the opportunity to develop their skills and expertise in the area of sustainable business practice (Berman and Mellon, 2012). Relevant to sustainability is the importance of supporting social entrepreneurs to demonstrate the impact of their projects. This is considered particularly important as funders demand more evidence of impact (Heady *et al.*, 2012).

The valuable role of a mentor in providing one-to-one support to young social change-makers has also been a key finding in the evaluation reports of the Young Social Pioneers Programme and is viewed as a critical component of the programme (Foundation for Young Australians, 2010, 2013). It is reported that mentors acted as confidants and sounding boards for the pioneers, as well as helping them to develop their ideas, networks and business skills (Foundation for Young Australians, 2013). On the issue of finance, it is reported that the single biggest barrier to social entrepreneurs in the UK is the fear of not being able to access funding (Harding, 2006). For this reason, it is recommended that providing access to finance needs to be the focus of packages designed to support social entrepreneurs (*ibid.*). Similarly, the importance of equipping social entrepreneurs with financial management skills has been emphasised (Heady *et al.*, 2012), as well as the need to provide them with the expertise to negotiate the challenges of accessing funding (Berman and Mellon, 2012). Finally, a small-scale evaluation of a programme delivered by the School of Social Entrepreneurs to aspiring social entrepreneurs found that peer-to-peer learning, combined with learning from experts who have first-hand experience of operating in the field and opportunities for experiential learning (such as pitching or selling their idea to a panel of experts), contributed to the success of the delivery of the programme (Centre for Enterprise and Economic Development Research, 2011).

2.5 Challenges in delivering Youth Social Entrepreneurship Programmes

Some challenges in delivering youth social entrepreneurship programmes have been documented. Innovations in Civic Participation (2008), having reviewed a number of programmes in East Asia and the Pacific, identified the following challenges in delivering social entrepreneurship programmes: they are expensive to deliver, and they can only provide for a limited number of participants. It has also been found that, while there are benefits for individuals to become part of a like-minded community, this can have a negative effect on an individual's sense of efficacy. This is due to comparisons being made between individual achievements and those of their fellow participants, particularly in the early stages of such a community being formed (Berman and Mellon, 2012). On the basis of this evidence, Berman and Mellon highlight the importance of supporting young people in a group environment so that they 'utilise the experience to strive rather than retreat' (*ibid.*, p. 62).

While not focusing specifically on the delivery of youth social entrepreneurship programmes, a report Norman *et al.* (2013), reflecting on the importance of growth in the social innovation sector in Northern Ireland, identified a number of general challenges to growth in this sector:

- a lack of awareness and understanding of social innovation;
- the tough economic climate;
- access to funding;
- unwillingness to take risks;
- limited support, including mentoring, networking and training.

2.6 Benefits for programme participants

Two of the most commonly reported benefits of youth social entrepreneurship programmes are the contribution these programmes make in enhancing the participants' self-confidence and strengthening their networks of support. The School of Social Entrepreneurs has reported confidence-building as a key outcome of its programmes (Centre for Enterprise and Economic Development Research, 2011; Heady *et al.*, 2012). Similarly, an increase in confidence was almost universally reported by the participants in the evaluation of the Young Social Pioneers Programme in Australia, and this was found to contribute to the participants' belief that they could effect change (Foundation for Young Australians, 2013). It is also a reported outcome of the Young Foundation's Youth Leadership Programme, which is designed to build the capacity of young people (aged 19–25) to lead on social change (Gilbert *et al.*, 2011). The environment these programmes create to network with like-minded peers is also a consistent outcome of youth social entrepreneurship programmes. Among the reported benefits of strengthening their peer network is a reduction in the participants' sense of isolation (Centre for Enterprise and Economic Development Research, 2011; Foundation for Young Australians, 2013), a renewal of their commitment to their ideas for social change, and a sense of self-belief in what they could achieve (Berman and Mellon, 2012). Finally, the motivation to take action for social change is another reported benefit of youth social entrepreneurship programmes (Gilbert *et al.*, 2011; Heady *et al.*, 2012), as well as the opportunity to acquire knowledge and the relevant skill sets (Gilbert *et al.*, 2011; Foundation for Young Australians, 2013).

3. The Wave Change Model

This chapter documents the history of the development of Wave Change and outlines the original programme model. It examines how the model has evolved over the 2-year period of the evaluation. In examining the model, the structure of the Wave Change Programme is outlined, together with its intended outcomes, the learning model and the target group. The final section of the chapter details the governance and management structure of Wave Change and how it operates in practice. The chapter draws on the documentation supplied by Wave Change and the one-to-one interviews conducted with the funder, the Wave Change Team and members of the Steering Group.

3.1 History of the development of Wave Change

The idea for Wave Change originated in The Atlantic Philanthropies Ireland³ (AP) in 2010. At the time, the prevention and early intervention strand of the AP Children and Youth Programme was investing in the area of adolescents and early childhood, and, according to AP, was interested in delving further into the rubric of civic engagement and promoting youth voices. It was considered by AP that in Ireland there was a lack of programmes to ‘develop and test demonstrations of innovative youth civic engagement’. The idea of ‘demonstrating action’ was considered key.

Interest by Social Entrepreneurs Ireland (SEI) in developing the programme arose due to its work in the area of social entrepreneurship and from a gap identified in the youth work sector in Ireland. SEI found that only a very small proportion of those who approached the organisation were under 30 years of age. However, it was aware of many young people, particularly in the 18–25 age group, who were passionate about social change and involved in civic engagement activities through universities, colleges, not-for-profit organisations and on an individual basis, and who had their own ideas that required support. It was this group that the Wave Change Programme was set up to target, with the aim of equipping young social change leaders from around Ireland with the skills and networks they needed to be effective, resilient and ethical change-makers.⁴

According to a member of the Steering Group, there were a significant number of initiatives or organisations successfully working with young people in Ireland and providing them with a certain level of confidence, leadership skills and networks. However, for those with high potential emerging from the existing programmes, there needs to be a follow-on. To maximise their potential, they require ‘more intense support’. A Wave Change Team member explained that SEI was of the view that there was a gap around ‘innovation, social entrepreneurship and activism’ for the 18–25-year-old age group in Ireland and limited opportunities for them to have their voices heard. According to this Team member:

‘It wasn’t that there was a lack of ideas, but there was some kind of barrier in between actually having the idea or doing something and that sense of agency or saying I am doing this, declaring it and starting to try and get some official support and recognition for it.’

³ The Atlantic Philanthropies, founded in 1982 and operating in Ireland since the late 1980s, provides grants to advance opportunity and lasting change for those who are unfairly disadvantaged or vulnerable to life's circumstances. For further information, see <http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org>.

⁴ Internal Documentation, ‘Overview – SEI Board Meeting, March 2013’.

3.2 Original Wave Change model

Wave Change is not modelled on an existing programme. As described by a member of the Steering Group, at the time of its inception Wave Change was ‘unique’ in the Irish context and ‘very fresh’. However, it was influenced by a visit of the funder and the Director of the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre to the Southwest Youth Collaborative in Chicago, USA. This is primarily a youth-led project, for youth living in adversity, and involved a stream of activity around community organising.⁵ According to the funder, AP was keen to ‘tap into that kind of thinking and approach of engaging young people’.

As set out in the original programme design, it was proposed to deliver Wave Change through a number of linked activities:

- **Field development:** A web-based portal for connecting and networking both young people and adult allies from leading organisations that support youth civic action and social justice.
- **Youth civic action programme:** A 10-month programme of training, support, development and networking opportunities for young people aged 18–25. This skills-based, staged programme was intended to support a group of young people in areas such as social research, journalism and media, social entrepreneurship and advocacy.
- **Knowledge generation and dissemination:** The generation of learning to guide future improvements of the programme and to inform policy and practice regarding the development of youth civic engagement interventions.

It was noted by AP that, at the time the funding was approved, there was flexibility in terms of the development of the model. It was not the intention to detail the model in writing. AP acknowledged that the development of Wave Change would require ‘creative thinking’ and ‘energetic leadership’ and that the research and evaluation component provided by NUI Galway would support the development of the model.

In developing the model, the emphasis was on how to stimulate young people, aged 18–25, to engage in social action and to build their capacity through the delivery of a programme. One member of the Steering Group described it as creating an ‘incubator’ for young people who show potential, to provide them with support and ‘springboard’ them onto the national stage. Developing skill sets, confidence and access to expertise were among the issues commonly mentioned by the Wave Change Team and members of the Steering Group in the context of capacity-building. A member of the Wave Change Team noted that, while the initial thinking was very much focused on practical skills, it did emerge early on that the personal development component of the model would be ‘critical’. It was considered that developing the participants’ sense of agency and confidence would empower the Wave Changers, not only to have their voices heard but also to have the ability to act.

3.3 The Wave Change model

This section details the Wave Change model as it had evolved at the time the programme commenced in 2011. While the core programme model remained largely the same in Year 1 and Year 2, as noted by members of the Steering Group, the experience of the first intake enabled the Wave Change Team to refine the model for the second intake. As the roll-out of the programme

⁵ The Southwest Youth Collaborative in Chicago suspended its services in October 2012.

commenced, the following mission statement for Wave Change was approved by the Steering Group:

‘Wave Change works directly with young people who have a passion for social change to develop the knowledge, skills and networks they need to make a difference in Ireland.’

In the recruitment phase for Year 2, Wave Change was described as ‘a social change and innovation programme that connects, supports and invests in 18–25-year-olds from across Ireland who think that Ireland needs to change and have experience of taking action on their passion.’⁶ This description captures the revised emphasis in Year 2 of the programme on social innovation. It also established the programme as one that works with 18–25-year-olds who already have experience of taking action for social change.

At the time of preparing this evaluation report, the mission statement read as follows:⁷

‘Wave Change equips young social entrepreneurs in Ireland with the skills and networks they need to be effective, resilient and ethical change-makers.’

As outlined in Section 3.2 above, it was originally intended that Wave Change would engage in activities beyond the delivery of the core programme, to develop the youth civic action sector in Ireland by connecting and networking both young people with an interest in youth civic action as well as practitioners, youth leaders and organisations (adult allies) operating in the field. This was to take the form of an online presence to provide young people aged 16–25 with access to information on civic action opportunities in Ireland, opportunities to network and inspiration to engage in social change. It was also the intention to provide a forum for those working and volunteering in organisations directly supporting young people in the field to come together and share ideas, experience and learning. While Wave Change did engage in outreach (via its website, Facebook page and Twitter) and established relationships with other organisations working in the sector, these intended activities were significantly scaled down. The primary focus became the delivery of the core capacity-building programme, which was run for an 8-month period (February to September) in 2012 and 2013, as described below.

3.3.1 Programme structure

The Wave Change Programme is structured around a series of five programme weekends delivered over an 8-month period. These weekends are integral to the programme and are designed to provide training, support, development and networking opportunities to the Wave Changers to enable them to develop and implement their ideas for social change. This is facilitated through the delivery of workshops, masterclasses, inspirational talks delivered by invited speakers, skills share sessions and small group-based work with their fellow-Wave Changers, as well as time for personal reflection, planning and informal networking. Outside of the programme weekends, the Wave Changers are expected to lead on their own learning and progress their ideas or projects for social change, but supported by the following structures:

- **Practical Skills workshops:** These workshops are designed to offer specialised training, for example, in the areas of pitching (selling an idea), fundraising, lobbying and communications. They are intended to provide the Wave Changers with the practical skills required to progress their projects and ideas for social change. While primarily delivered during the course of the programme weekends in Year 1 of Wave Change, they were delivered as standalone workshops outside the programme weekends in Year 2.

⁶ As provided on the Wave Change website www.wavechange.ie (accessed on 18 January 2013). This webpage is no longer accessible.

⁷ Internal Documentation, ‘Overview – SEI Board Meeting, March 2013’.

- **External engagement:** This aspect of Wave Change is intended to create opportunities for the Wave Changers to be introduced to key and strategic influencers in the social and business fields, to attend and participate in events and conferences and to partake in site visits to organisations relevant to their project or ideas for social change.
- **Seed funding:** Designed to support the ideas and projects of the Wave Changers by investing financially in their projects, as well as providing them with the experience of partaking in a funding process.
- **Coaching and one-to-one support:** This component of Wave Change was intended to offer the Wave Changers one-to-one individual support through a formal structured coaching programme. Informal and semi-formal one-to-one support is also provided by the members of the Wave Change Team to the individual Wave Changers.

In Year 1, internships were an additional component of the programme model. Wave Change sought to offer the Wave Changers the opportunity to undertake high-quality internships in social-justice-focused NGOs or in international organisations. Facilitating the Wave Changers to undertake internships was not a component of Wave Change in Year 2.

3.3.2 Intended outcomes

The set of intended outcomes of the Wave Change Programme are as follows:

- Participants have strong, resilient personal foundations to lead on change now and in the future, including enhanced self-awareness, sense of agency, self-efficacy and well-being.
- Participants have in-depth knowledge and practical experience of project management and social innovation, which can be applied to any work on social change they carry out now and in the future.
- Participants are part of a strong, diverse network of social change-makers aged 18–25 from across Ireland.

In Year 1, two additional intended outcomes were:

- The participants are inspired to engage in social change and make a difference.
- The participants are provided with the opportunity to develop and implement ideas for social change.

Having innovative, sustainable projects emerge from the programme was an additional bonus outcome identified for Year 2. It was categorised as being a bonus outcome since social innovation by its very nature means that not all projects will be seen through to the end. The Wave Changers' projects were primarily intended as a vehicle to apply their learning.

3.3.3 Learning model

In addition to the structured learning environment facilitated by the programme weekends and the skills workshops, Wave Change placed high importance on peer-to-peer learning. The programme sought to enable the Wave Changers to tap into the knowledge and experiences of their fellow Wave Changers and to exchange feedback. This was facilitated on a one-to-one level and in group settings. Particularly in Year 2, the Wave Change Team sought to strike a balance between the Wave Changers relying on the Team and the programme to acquire their learning, and encouraging them to support, advise and learn from each other.

In Year 2, another important development was the project-based pedagogical model adopted. All of the Wave Changers in Year 2 came to the programme with an idea for social change and were expected to apply their learning to the development and implementation of their social change project. In particular, the Wave Changers were encouraged to work on either piloting or developing

their project over the summer period when there was a break in the delivery of the programme weekends. This form of applied, experiential learning was viewed as the best way to develop practical skills. As one member of the Wave Change Team explained:

‘People need to have something that they’re working on and that is not, like, the be all and end all, but it’s just a vehicle. It’s something to hang the learning on. I think it’s always much more relevant where you’re applying it to something practical that you’re doing at the moment.’

3.3.4 Target group

Wave Change intended to recruit 25 Wave Changers in Year 1 and 25 in Year 2. Those targeted in Year 1 comprised young people aged 18–25 from across Ireland. As described by a member of the Wave Change Team, the target group in Year 1 were ‘people who were interested in the area and who had an idea, but the threshold was relatively low’. Specific traits sought in Year 1 included:

- innovation;
- passion for social change;
- resourceful and able to take opportunities;
- open to peer-learning experiences;
- untapped resilience capacity.

In Year 1, diverging views emerged among the funder, the Wave Change Team and the Steering Group regarding who was the intended target group. It was unclear whether the programme was intended to target young people who would be inspired to engage in social action or to target those who were already active. According to the funder, the original thinking was to target people in the age range who had ‘some fire in the belly as a result of having had some exposure at a younger age to activism or social engagement’. One of the Wave Change Team said it was intended that there would be a mix of Wave Changers – those who would be inspired to act and those who were already engaged in social action. Reflecting on the first cohort of Wave Changers, a member of the Steering Group described them as the ‘usual suspects’, in the sense that they were already involved in various types of social activity, and another mentioned that perhaps they were ‘too ready to engage’. However, as another member of the Steering Group observed, targeting young people who were already socially active ‘made sense’: if young achievers are grouped with those who are sitting on the fence (in terms of whether to engage in social action), they may become less motivated.

In Year 2, the target group for Wave Change was significantly refined. It was a prerequisite of the programme that the applicant have experience of taking action for social change and an idea ready to be worked on. As described on the Wave Change website in the lead-up to recruitment in 2013, the programme targeted ‘high-potential social actors, social entrepreneurs and change-makers’.⁸ The type of participants sought were 18–25-year-olds from across Ireland who:

- had experience of or a track record in taking action for social change;
- had an idea for social change they are ready to work on;
- had an interest in supporting and being supported by other social actors aged 18–25 from across Ireland;
- were ready for an intensive 10-month personal and social change project development programme.⁹

⁸ <http://www.wavechange.ie/index.php/about-us/overview-2/> (accessed on 18 January 2013). This web page is no longer accessible.

⁹ Wave Change 2013 Bootcamp Interview Guide (January 2013).

A candidate's idea for social change could fall within one of the following strands:

- (a) **Starting Block** (the participant has an idea and is ready to start working on it, with the support of Wave Change).
- (b) **Early Stage** (the participant has an idea and it is in its early/pilot stage or at a crossroads).
- (c) **Up and Running** (the participant's idea is up and running).

A further key distinction in Year 2 was the emphasis on the candidates demonstrating 'high potential'. What was meant by high potential was not defined in the programme documentation. However, it emerged from the interviews with the Wave Change Team and Steering Group that the indicators of high potential were the applicant demonstrating that they were ready to act and had the drive, commitment and initiative to progress their idea or project for social change. The focus on targeting high-potential applicants reflected the programme's emphasis in Year 2 on entrepreneurship and, as articulated by a member of the Wave Change Team, the programme's vision to develop 'autonomous ... leaders of change and social innovators'.

Within the pool of potential candidates in Year 1 and Year 2, it was the intention to target a diverse group of Wave Changers. According to the funder, it was envisaged that the initiative 'should be inclusive of youth from marginalised communities or who were themselves marginalised'. The issue of diversity among the Wave Changers arose during the initial Steering Group discussions and it was agreed that targets should include the recruitment of a mixed profile group. The Wave Change Team later established that diversity should be considered in terms of:

- educational background;
- employment status;
- ethnic origin;
- geographical diversity;
- diversity in area of interest (e.g. education, environment, mental health);
- representation of minority groups in Ireland (e.g. LGBT, Travellers, young carers).

3.4 Governance and Management

The overall governance of Wave Change is the responsibility of the SEI Board of Directors. The Board delegated a number of its functions, primarily oversight of the implementation of Wave Change, to a Steering Group constituted by SEI. As articulated by a member of the Steering Group, given it is quite separate to SEI's other functions it was considered that it would have been inappropriate to leave all the governance functions to the SEI Board since it would not have been able to give it 'the visibility and the time it needs'.

3.4.1 Steering Group

Membership of the Steering Group during Year 1 of the roll-out of Wave Change comprised six individuals, including a representative from SEI, a member of the SEI Board of Directors and representatives from the youth, social entrepreneurship and communications sectors. Members were asked to make an initial Year 1 commitment to the group. As Wave Change embarked on its second year, membership of the group had reduced to four. The Terms of Reference for the Steering Group were agreed during the initial meetings. Accordingly, the purpose of the group is to provide strategic direction for the initiative. It is the body to which the Director of Wave Change reports regarding strategic, operational and programme design matters. The Steering Group has no legal standing or obligations. However, while it is not a legal entity, decisions pertaining to Wave Change have been delegated by the SEI Board to the Steering Group. A Steering Group member noted that, while not a board, the group carry out its functions with a 'strong sense of responsibility'. Based on the discussions and decisions of the Steering Group, regular reports are prepared by the Chair of the group and given to the Director of the SEI Board.

Operationally, some of the core roles of the Steering Group include:

- providing recommendations and alternative solutions for the initiative and issues arising;
- reviewing budget and financial matters of Wave Change;
- ensuring an open two-way communication channel between Wave Change and other strategies or projects, and effective representation of Wave Change;
- identifying individuals, groups, networks and organisations with expertise in specific or specialised areas, and proposing their involvement in Wave Change as appropriate;
- advising on the best channels for dissemination of information;
- framing appropriate goals and milestones for the initiative and monitoring progress by the Wave Change Team in achieving these.

One of the roles of the Steering Group that evolved over time is the members' work as allies or ambassadors for the Wave Change Programme, whereby they forward on details of relevant events or use their contacts to request an opportunity for a participant to attend an external event. Outside of the Steering Group meetings, members of the group also provide advice and support on an individual basis to the initiative.

In the aftermath of Year 1 of the Wave Change Programme, members of the Steering Group and the Wave Change Team stated that, operationally, the group was functioning well. It was perceived to be working well since it was a challenging but supportive environment, in which the members had a positive relationship with the Wave Change Team. The members offered a good range of insight and it was a forum to hold things in check. According to a Wave Change Team member, given that they were caught up in the operational day-to-day running of the programme, it was useful to have the Steering Group to '[have an eye on the strategic all the time](#)'.

It was evident from the interviews with members of the Steering Group in the aftermath of Year 2 of the programme that the group was less engaged in Year 2 than in the previous year. As the programme model did not radically change between the two years, it was considered that less input was needed from the group in Year 2. The focus of the engagement of the group in the second year was primarily on the future of Wave Change. Members of the Steering Group and Wave Change Team noted that it was challenging to operate in an environment where the funding for the initiative was coming to an end and there was uncertainty regarding its future. The Steering Group, as a governance structure, was considered unsatisfactory by some of the members given its ambiguous nature, since it did not have the functions of a board and there was a lack of clarity around where it fitted within SEI.

3.4.2 Youth Advisory Group

Another body associated with the governance of the Wave Change Programme was the Youth Advisory Group. In the very early stages of the initiative, it consisted of four young people aged 18–26 from across Ireland. They were recruited by word of mouth by the Wave Change Director in February 2011. Through regular meetings, they were directly involved in making inputs to specific aspects, including branding, on-line communications, policies and evaluation. However, as the roll-out of Wave Change progressed, the members of the Youth Advisory Group individually resigned. One joined the programme and the others left for various personal reasons. They were not replaced, but instead it was decided to tap into the ideas of the Wave Changers as required.

3.5 Assessing value for money

Documentary sources regarding Wave Change’s budgetary allocation and actual spend were supplied to the NUI Galway Research Team for review as part of this evaluation. Value for money is a key part of evaluating efficiency, and one of the ways in which it can be examined is by comparing the costs of an intervention with other such activities where similar outcomes or impacts have been aimed for or achieved. As part of this evaluation, the original intention was to conduct a value-for-money assessment focusing on the costs of delivering the programme in order to generate learning for other organisations interested in setting up a similar type of programme. In order to do this, a comparative approach was decided upon, whereby the evaluation would seek to access relevant financial data from similar programmes to compare with the costs of running Wave Change. Notwithstanding the complexities of comparing interventions, the overall purpose of this exercise is to examine ways of achieving the same or similar outcomes with more efficient use of inputs (Emmi *et al.*, 2011).

Two programmes were selected for review, based on the nature and type of intervention being delivered. Since the public documents available for these programmes did not contain details of budgets and costs, direct contact was made with relevant personnel via e-mail and telephone in order to gain such information. The researchers were only successful in obtaining information from one such programme – the Young Social Pioneers Programme established by the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) in 2009 (see Table 3). This programme is run over a 12-month period and seeks to develop the capacities and enhance the professional and social support networks of a small group of change-makers aged 18–29 years. It seeks to do this by supporting individuals to achieve positive social change through a range of innovative social initiatives (FYA, 2010).

Table 3: Comparison of the costs of the Wave Change and Young Social Pioneers Programmes

Intervention	Wave Change, Ireland Programme delivery costs for the period January 2012–October 2013	Young Social Pioneers (YSP) Programme, Australia
Staffing costs	Average of 2 core staff per 25 participants	The staff: participant ratio was 1:18
Programme weekends costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speakers/facilitators/contract staff • Venue, food, accommodation, travel for participants 	€24,000 €34,000 A small number of external workshop providers offered their time pro bono.	The vast majority of speakers/facilitators provided input on a pro bono basis, with heavy reliance on the alumni. Programme participants at the live-in retreats and weekend skills workshops were provided with free travel, free accommodation and some free meals.
Seed funding	€28,000	There was no seed funding component in the YSP at the time of writing of this report.
External engagement	€1,400 Financial assistance was provided to facilitate the Wave Changers to attend events if required.	A similar strategic networking element of YSP did not have any associated costs.
Coaching/mentoring	Pro bono	Mentors offer their time pro bono, with some initial set-up costs each year.
Internships	€7,000	No internship component at the time of data collection.
Marketing, branding	€10,000	

As Table 3 shows, it may be possible for Wave Change to make some efficiency gains or savings across a number of core programme inputs. Possible savings could be made by Wave Change if the programme continues in the future and becomes more established, with a larger pool of alumni members to draw on. For example, this would reduce costs if more speakers and facilitators were sourced on a pro bono basis to provide input for the programme weekends, hold workshops and assist with coaching, and so on. In addition, SEI has a considerable and extensive relevant network of key contacts in the civic engagement and social innovation and social entrepreneurship fields. Both this and the alumni network built up by the programme could be highly valuable assets from which to draw in the future.

In terms of recommendations, the Research Team would suggest that in the future, evaluation reports of social interventions (including some financial/budgetary data concerning core unit costs incurred) should be considered so that more of this type of comparative value-for-money analysis can be conducted.

3.6 Summary

- The Wave Change structure consisted of five programme weekends, as well as some or all of the following aspects during Years 1 and 2: practical skills workshops, external engagement activities, seed funding, coaching/one-to-one support, and internships.
- The learning model emphasised peer-to-peer learning among fellow-Wave Changers, with a particular focus on this in Year 2.
- The learning model in Year 2 was also based on applied, experiential learning through an emphasis on project-based pedagogy.
- There were divergent views among funder, Wave Change Team members and the Steering Group concerning who the target group for Wave Change was in Year 1. This was refined in Year 2, with a specific focus on young people who were socially active and had a social change idea that was ready to be developed into a project or who already had a project in the implementation stage.
- In Year 2, there was a more definitive focus on high-potential candidates with social entrepreneurship traits, such as autonomy and leadership.
- The original intention according to the programme's funder was to have a diverse group of young people from different backgrounds and life experiences.
- The governance and management structure of Wave Change was based on a Steering Group who reported to the Board of SEI. While generally thought to have worked well, there was some dissatisfaction with this structure in the sense of uncertainty regarding its fit within SEI and its status in terms of specific role and function.
- The Steering Group's core remit was the provision of strategic direction to the initiative. This function altered as the initiative developed and it focused mainly on the future of Wave Change in Year 2.
- Another structure, the Youth Advisory Group, was directly involved in planning and communications regarding the establishment of Wave Change in the early stages. When its members individually ceased to be part of the group as the initiative was rolled out, it was disbanded and perspectives from youth were sought from current and former Wave Change participants instead.
- A short value-for-money exercise was conducted as part of the evaluation, comparing the major costs of Wave Change with those of a similar type of intervention – the Young Social Pioneers (YSP) programme, established by the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) in 2009.

4. Process and Formative Study Findings

This chapter charts the implementation of Wave Change, presenting the findings from the process and formative study. The findings are based on qualitative and quantitative data collected from the study participants during the 2-year evaluation period. The contents of this chapter primarily focus on the delivery of the core Wave Change Programme. The latter part of the chapter documents the outreach activities Wave Change engaged in beyond the delivery of the programme in order to increase its exposure and develop the youth civic action sector in Ireland. These activities comprise the development by Wave Change of an online presence (using social media technologies) and facilitating face-to-face engagement and networking with similar organisations working in the fields of youth civic engagement, social justice, social entrepreneurship, and social innovation via the establishment of a Youth Civic Action Network.

4.1 The Wave Change Programme

This section documents the implementation of the Wave Change Programme in its first and second year. It sets out the findings on how the programme participants were targeted and selected during the recruitment phases in Year 1 and Year 2, and the profile of the 47 Wave Changers selected. The delivery of each of the programme components is then examined in turn: the programme weekends; the practical skills workshops; the external engagement activities; the seed fund; the coaching and one-to-one support provided to the participants; and the internships facilitated in Year 1. The focus is on how the programme was implemented and how it was experienced by the Wave Changers, the Wave Change Team and others involved in its delivery. Their perspectives on the factors that contributed to the programme's successful implementation are presented, together with the barriers and challenges to implementation.

4.1.1 Targeting and selection of participants

The findings in this section are based on observation, documentary analysis, interviews with the Wave Change Team, questionnaires completed by the attendees at the recruitment weekend in Year 1 and at the Bootcamp in Year 2, and a focus group with the Wave Changers.

Targeting potential Wave Changers

In Year 1, the strategies used to target potential candidates were primarily word-of-mouth, building relationships with other community and youth organisations, and circulating the details of the new Wave Change website, Facebook page and Twitter among organisations and interested parties. The focus was on developing relationships with key contacts. While building on the relationships established in Year 1, the recruitment strategy in Year 2 was more extensive and involved widespread contact by e-mail and telephone with community and youth organisations, as well as university departments, schools, clubs, societies and employment agencies to inform them about Wave Change. Contact was initially made by e-mail and followed up with a telephone call. While extensive contact was made, this strategy alone was considered not to have achieved an adequate response rate, so additional targeted social media and networking approaches were tried, including:

- creating new links and holding face-to-face meetings with local and national organisations in the fields of youth civic action, social change or other relevant areas;

- circulating postcards with details of Wave Change;
- attendance at events to network and follow-up in person with contacts that had been e-mailed;
- providing alerts via social media (Twitter and Facebook) and the use of Facebook advertisements;
- messaging via Facebook to organisations whose following would include potential candidates for Wave Change;
- making follow-up contact with individuals who had initiated contact with Wave Change via Twitter;
- seeking referrals by contacting individuals who had previously worked on the programme (speakers and volunteers) via the Wave Change alumni.

When potential candidates for Wave Change were asked during the recruitment weekends in Year 1 (n=50) and the Bootcamp in Year 2 (n=42) how they heard about the initiative, the majority of respondents in Year 1 said 'indirectly from a family or friend' or 'directly from the Wave Change Team'. A large number also said they heard 'via a community or youth organisation'. In Year 2, the majority of respondents heard about Wave Change 'via the website, Facebook page and Twitter'. Other common responses were 'directly via the Wave Change Team or alumni' or 'indirectly from a family or friend'.

Selection of the Wave Changers

In Year 1 of Wave Change, the selection of potential candidates took place via three regional recruitment weekends, held in the cities of Cork, Dublin and Galway in late 2011 and early 2012. This changed in Year 2, whereby selection took place via a one-day Bootcamp held in Dublin in early 2013 for those who had already applied to be on the Wave Change Programme, followed by a one-to-one interview. The objective of these recruitment weekends and the Bootcamp were to give the Wave Change Team and the young people an opportunity to meet face-to-face, to provide potential participants with a good sense of what the Wave Change Programme is about (through showcasing a range of the programme components) and to get a sense of who were the potential candidates for the programme.

In Year 1, the recruitment strategy generated 50 applicants. All 50 attended one of the three regional recruitment weekends, and 22 of these attendees then applied to be part of the Wave Change Programme. All 22 were selected for Year 1. In Year 2, the recruitment strategy generated 75 applicants for the Wave Change Programme. Of these 75 applicants, 43 were chosen to partake in the Bootcamp (one was unable to attend on the day). Following their participation in the Bootcamp and a one-to-one interview, 25 were selected to be part of the programme. The selection was made on the basis of the candidate's application form and a one-to-one interview, which took place the day after the Bootcamp. Each candidate was interviewed by a panel of two, comprising a member of the Wave Change Team, Steering Group or associate of Wave Change, and a member of the 2012 Wave Change alumni group. Candidates were evaluated on the basis of five core competencies:

- commitment to social change to date;
- their idea for social change and progress made so far;
- their overall readiness for the programme and ability to commit the time and energy it requires;
- teamwork and collaboration – their ability and potential to work constructively with others in the group and to share skills and networks;
- service leadership – their longer term potential and aspiration to lead and influence positive change at the local, national or international level.

In terms of the final selection process, candidates who demonstrated these competencies and overall demonstrated high potential were chosen for the programme. In the case of a small number of participants, an exception was made to enable candidates with high levels of personal insight into the social problems and challenges faced by 18–25 year-olds in Ireland to participate in the programme. However, the Wave Change Team noted that the programme only had the capacity to support a small number of such candidates. During the selection process, the Wave Change Team was mindful of the need for diversity in terms of gender, educational background, employment status, geography, representation of minority groups, area of interest and the level of development of their project.

Perspectives of the Wave Change Team, Steering Group and Wave Changers

The Wave Change Team explained that the personal, one-to-one contact with potential candidates, or organisations who may know of potential candidates, was very important when targeting potential participants. When asked what had worked well in targeting potential participants, a member of the Wave Change Team remarked:

'Facebook to just break the ice. Phone call to develop some sort of working relationship. But then, in person ... definitely the best.'

According to another member of the Wave Change Team, the one-to-one personal contact was considered to work best for targeting the real *'gems'*, those who demonstrate high potential but also have a personal insight into the social problems faced by 18–25 year-olds in Ireland today. In addition, a Team member noted that social media also had a valuable role to play. The more novel approach of messaging via Facebook, instead of e-mail, was found to be a useful medium to get the attention of organisations in contact with potential candidates. Members of the Wave Change Team explained that candidates who self-nominate, after hearing of Wave Change online or via social media, can have the most potential since they are more likely to demonstrate the initiative required and to be fully committed to the programme, as opposed to a candidate who is being encouraged by someone else to apply. In terms of the selection process in Year 2, having explicit criteria on who the programme was targeting worked very well, according to Team members. However, there was still the challenge of being able to identify those who were genuinely committed to social change and those who saw the programme as contributing to their CV. The Team highlighted a need for more of a focus on determining a candidate's level of commitment during the selection stage.

A lack of resources, in terms of staff time, was identified as a key challenge in the recruitment phase. One Team member considered that *'it needed to be a full-time job'*, partly due to the time it takes to network face to face. Team members explained that it is only by travelling to different locations that they can become aware of who they should be talking with to access potential participants. These contacts could then be targeted via social media. The lack of time to do this was thought to have contributed to the online engagement being very *'Dublin-centric'*. The challenge of reaching out to a diverse group of potential candidates in Years 1 and 2 was also recognised by members of the Wave Change Team and Steering Group. In the interviews with the Steering Group, one member commented, *'I was always very conscious that they weren't going to be middle-class people, white people from Dublin ... that was the real danger.'* A member of the Wave Change Team raised the concern that the candidates were primarily attending or recently graduated from third-level education, but at the same time noted that today universities are inclusive of people from diverse backgrounds. In essence, it was considered important that the selection criteria did not exclude any potential participants. As one member of the Steering Group noted:

'I think what is important to me when I look at it is that I don't see anybody within that target population that is feeling excluded because of another criteria ... Now there might be

a bias, there might be more of those people in college education than others, but that is by virtue of the fact that these people are actively engaged.'

One member of the Wave Change Team suggested that recruitment needs to be a 'long-term strategy', to be built on every year, and would be aided by Wave Change becoming more established. In the questionnaires administered to the attendees at the recruitment weekends and the Bootcamp, suggestions were made regarding how Wave Change could reach out to other young people who may be potentially interested in becoming involved in the programme. The most common response from the attendees in Years 1 and 2 was to target the education sector, including schools, colleges and universities. Other frequently mentioned suggestions were to promote Wave Change via existing youth forums (such as clubs, programmes and organisations) that young people attend and to use social media (namely Facebook and Twitter), as well as holding radio and television campaigns.

4.1.2 Profile of the selected participants

The findings in this section are based on demographic information received from the Wave Changers, a special tabulation report obtained from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in May 2013 (following a request for information on the youth population aged 18–25) and the Wave Changers' self-reflection diaries.

Demographic information

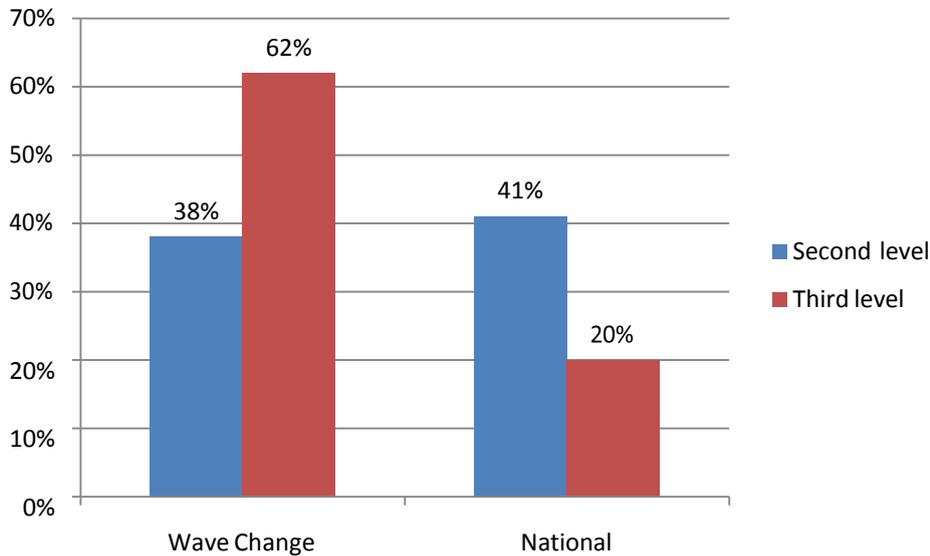
In total, 47 people aged 18–25 were selected to be part of the Wave Change Programme in Year 1 and Year 2. In Year 1 there were 22 participants and in Year 2 there were 25. Two Wave Changers dropped out of the programme in the early stages of Year 2. Looking at the total number of participants selected across the two years, 27 were female and 20 were male. The average age of Wave Changers was 22.7 years. During the delivery of the programme, the majority of the Wave Changers (n=28, 60%) were living in Dublin, with the remainder spread out across other cities and towns in the Republic of Ireland. Just one participant was living in Northern Ireland. The vast majority of participants self-identified as Irish (n=39, 83%), with a small number describing themselves as being of mixed Irish heritage or from elsewhere, such as England, Africa or Afghanistan.

In terms of their level of education, most Wave Changers (n=29, 62%) had a third-level qualification, ranging from non-degree to postgraduate degree, with the remaining 18 (38%) having a second-level qualification at the time of their involvement in Wave Change. Many of the participants were currently either in full-time education (n=15, 32%) or full-time paid employment (n=13, 28%) whilst participating in Wave Change, and some were studying full-time and working part-time (n=8, 17%). Small numbers were starting a business (n=4, 8%) or unemployed (n=3, 6%). The current situation of the remainder of the Wave Changers included being involved in various activities such as part-time further education and taking a year out of college.

Key demographics of Wave Changers were compared with those of young people aged 18–25 in the Republic of Ireland. In terms of place of residence, 31% of 18–25-year-olds nationally are living in Dublin, while this figure was much higher for Wave Changers, with 60% resident in Dublin. Their profile was the same in terms of ethnicity, with the majority of Wave Changers identifying as Irish (national average = 82%). As illustrated in Figure 2, significantly more people on the Wave Change Programme had attained higher levels of education than their peers nationally (national average: third-level [degree to PhD] = 20%; second-level only = 41%). A lower number of Wave Changers were in full-time paid employment compared to their peers nationally (national average = 36%).

Approximately similar numbers classified themselves as full-time or part-time students (national average = 40%).

Figure 2: Level of education completed – comparison between Wave Changers and 18–25-year-olds nationally



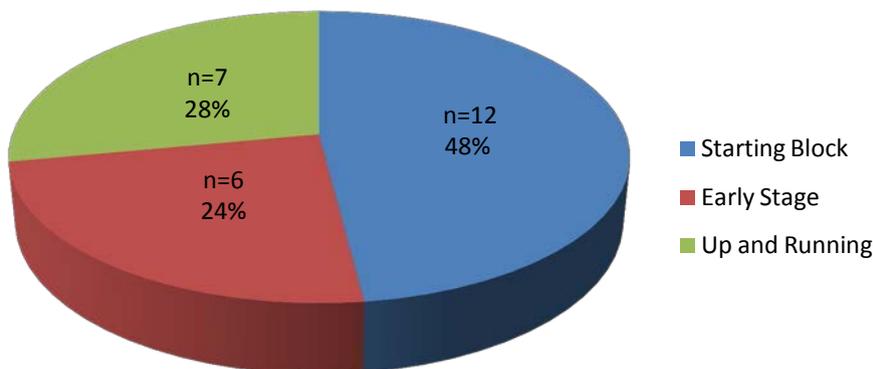
Status, focus and inspiration behind the Wave Changers’ projects in Year 2

In Year 2 of Wave Change, the applicants had to indicate the status of their project or idea for social change. Their project or idea could come under the following categories:

- **Starting Block:** They have an idea and are ready to start working on it with the support of Wave Change.
- **Early Stage:** They have an idea and it is in its early or pilot stages or at a crossroads.
- **Up and Running.**

As seen in Figure 3, almost half of the Wave Changers in Year 2 were at the ‘starting block’ stage of their project, with the remainder almost equally divided between being at the ‘early stage’ of their project development or having their project ‘up and running’.

Figure 3: Status of the Wave Changers’ projects in Year 2



The focus of their projects addressed issues of youth mental health and well-being, youth unemployment, LGBT issues, harnessing and managing cultural diversity, lack of accountability in the political system, disengagement with the arts, and climate change. In the aftermath of weekend 1 in Year 2, the Wave Changers were asked to reflect in their diaries on their inspiration to work on addressing the social issue of interest to them. The most common response was that they had identified from their personal and life experiences a social need to be addressed or an innovative solution to the issue. Many also expressed feeling a sense of responsibility to work towards solving the problem:

‘Many of my peers had moved overseas, claiming there were “no jobs” ... I decided I wanted to be part of building Ireland, a place I’m very fond of, back up again. Having just come back from living in a country with such limited resources, all I could see around me upon returning was potential.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

‘The issue is close to my heart. This drives me to try and find a solution. Also, I was tired of complaining while waiting to see a change happen, so I decided to do something about it.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

4.1.3 Programme Weekends

The Wave Change Programme is structured around five programme weekends, which run from February to September. These weekends, held in Dublin and locations around the country, bring the Wave Changers together to share their work and goals. They are designed to provide training, support, personal development and networking opportunities to the participants. The overview of the implementation of the programme outlined below is based on observation and a review of the relevant documentation. The findings on how the programme weekends were experienced by the Wave Change Team and the programme participants are based on a questionnaire administered to the Wave Changers at the end of each programme weekend, the focus group with the Wave Changers, some data from the self-reflection diaries and interviews with the Wave Change Team.

Implementation

The delivery of the programme weekends included some or all of the following core elements:

- inspirational or keynote speakers with first-hand experience of social and business entrepreneurship and social change;
- practical skills workshops or masterclasses (all of these were run outside the programme weekends in Year 2);
- personal development workshops;
- problem-solving individual and small-group-based work (where Wave Changers share problems they are facing with their projects or ideas for social change, and their fellow participants brainstorm ways to solve these problems);
- skill-share sessions (workshops designed to transfer knowledge and skills among the Wave Changers);
- goal-setting, review and personal reflection;
- evaluation (individual and group-based);
- outdoor activities, mindfulness sessions and self-care.

The following additional elements formed part of the weekends in Year 2:

- project development workshops, convened by the Programme Facilitator;
- external engagement workshops (delivered in weekends 1 and 2).

While the core programme model remained largely the same in Years 1 and 2, there were some marked differences in Year 2 regarding the delivery of the content during the programme weekends. In Year 2, the workshops during the weekend were primarily delivered by an in-house Programme Facilitator. They were focused on equipping the participants with practical tools and resources to progress their projects. Additional practical skills workshops, convened by external experts in the social entrepreneurial field, were held outside the weekends. In contrast, in Year 1, external experts were brought in to deliver workshops and masterclasses during the programme weekends and to train and inspire the participants to engage in social change. A further difference was that more personal-development workshops were delivered in Year 2, primarily by the designated Programme Associate with responsibility for personal development. The other notable difference was that in Year 1 there was a dedicated programme weekend (weekend 4) where the workshops were primarily led and delivered by the Wave Changers themselves to share their knowledge and skills. In Year 2, while a workshop was facilitated by the Wave Change Team to enable the Wave Changers to learn what skills their fellow participants had during the first programme weekend, there were no workshops delivered by the Wave Changers in Year 2 to transfer their skills. The opportunity was presented to the Wave Changers to organise an additional sixth weekend during the summer period (described as a 'mystery weekend') which would be entirely led and content-driven by them. However, due to the absence of a designated Wave Changer or Team member taking responsibility for this, it did not materialise.

A brief summary of the focus of each of the programme weekends delivered during the period of the evaluation is detailed in Table 4. The weekends in Year 2 had an explicit focus on project development and personal development. Examples of the agenda for programme weekends in Year 1 and Year 2 are given in Appendices 1 and 2.

Table 4: Overview of the focus of the programme weekends in 2012 and 2013

YEAR 1				
Feb. 2012 Weekend 1	March 2012 Weekend 2	April 2012 Weekend 3	June 2012 Weekend 4	Sept. 2012 Weekend 5
Setting the scene for the Wave Change learning journey.	Developing a shared vision, identifying and influencing key stakeholders and communications for social change.	Skills and learning Bootcamp focusing on two thematic strands: research and evaluation, or campaigning and activism.	Exchange of skills, talents, expertise and sharing of personal stories among the Wave Change participants.	The future post-Wave Change, with an emphasis on reflection and evaluation.
YEAR 2				
Feb. 2013 Weekend 1	March 2013 Weekend 2	April 2013 Weekend 3	June 2013 Weekend 4	Sept. 2013 Weekend 5
<p>Project development focus: Setting the foundation – achieving visions for social change.</p> <p>Personal development focus: Self-awareness and goal-setting.</p>	<p>Project development focus: Ideation and creative entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Personal development focus: Managing and achieving your goals.</p>	<p>Project development focus: Failures, successes and pivots.</p> <p>Personal development focus: Bulldozing your barriers.</p>	<p>Project development focus: Team-building and project-planning.</p> <p>Personal development focus: Team-building.</p>	<p>Project development focus: Reflect, celebrate and the future.</p> <p>Personal development focus: Reflect, future visions and next steps.</p>

In terms of attendance, three-quarters or more of the participants attended each of the programme weekends in Years 1 and 2. The exception was the final programme weekend across both years, where attendance levels were less than half those in Year 1 (n=9) and down to two-thirds of those in Year 2 (n=15).

Views of the Wave Change Team and the Wave Changers

There was a general consensus among members of the Wave Change Team that the programme weekends had been implemented as intended in Year 1 and Year 2. Among the Wave Changers, there were high levels of satisfaction with the overall delivery of the programme weekends. Across Years 1 and 2 the vast majority of the Wave Changers were either ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with the delivery of the programme weekends. Weekend 4 in Year 1 attracted the highest satisfaction ratings.

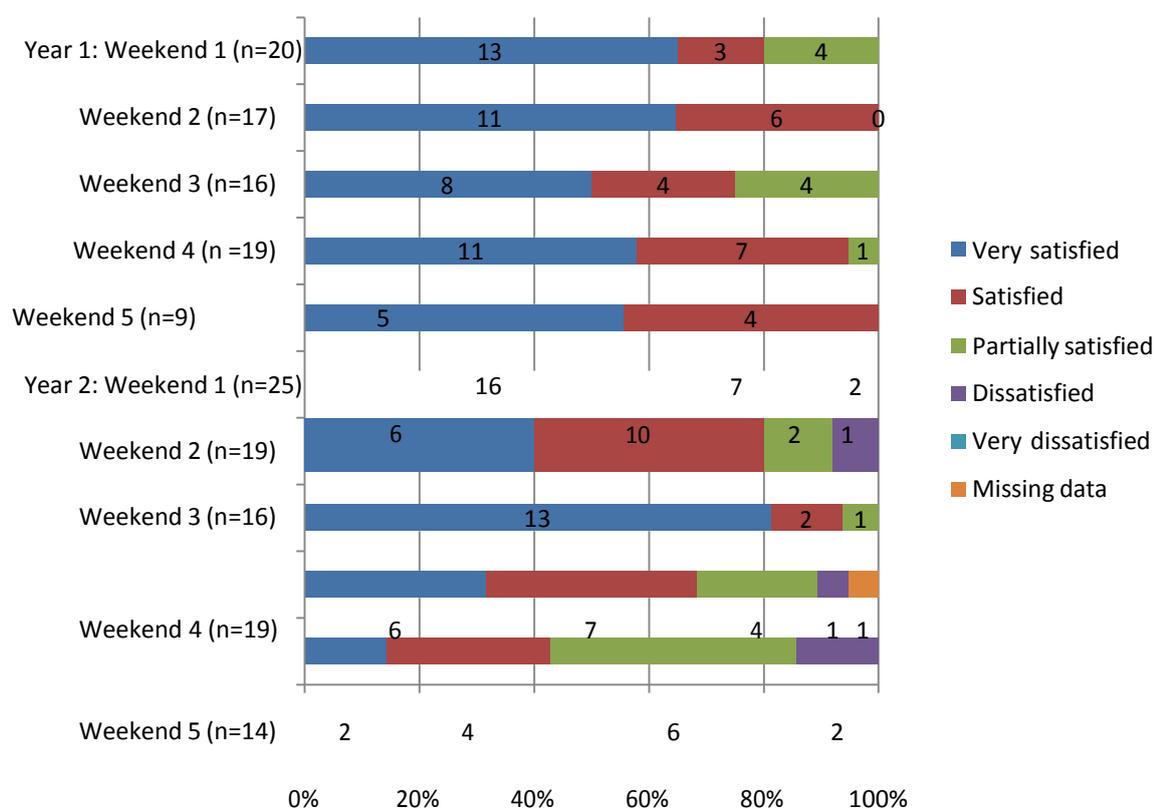
Peer-to-peer support and learning

It emerged strongly in both the qualitative and quantitative data that the Wave Changers valued the programme weekends for the opportunity they provided to meet, network and brainstorm with their fellow participants.

The quantitative data consistently recorded high levels of satisfaction among the Wave Changers with the opportunity the weekends provided to meet and discuss their ideas for social change (see Figure 5).

Figure 4: Wave Changers' satisfaction with the opportunities the weekends provided to meet and discuss their ideas for social change

(n = number of respondents to questionnaire)



The qualitative data revealed why the Wave Changers valued these opportunities. It was evident across the data that many of the Wave Changers valued the time spent drawing on their peers for support, advice and inspiration. These opportunities for interaction with their fellow participants happened both informally and formally during the weekends. In Year 2, these small group work sessions were frequently identified in the programme weekend questionnaires as being of most value to the participants. When asked what was most useful about the weekends, a common response from Wave Changers was:

'I found the ... individual and group work very useful' [Programme weekend questionnaire, Year 2] or *'Discussing my project in a small group context – having feedback and suggestions was most useful'* [Programme weekend questionnaire, Year 2].

The Wave Changers valued the opportunities the weekends provided to learn about each other's projects or ideas, problem-solve on challenges and solutions, and receive feedback and support:

'Just being surrounded by 25 people who are trying to make things better in Ireland, around your same age group, for weekends throughout the year is just a very, very positive and cool thing.' [Focus Group, Year 2]

The data further revealed that the Wave Changers valued the structured peer-to-peer skills-sharing session. The content and delivery of the fourth programme weekend in Year 1 was primarily led by the Wave Changers themselves and, as seen in Figure 5, they were most satisfied with this weekend. On the other hand, but again reflecting the value placed on learning from their peers, a small number of Year 2 Wave Changers expressed disappointment during the focus group that the skills-sharing session held in weekend 4 (where the Wave Changers informed their fellow-participants of their existing skills sets) was not followed up on in later weekends. Regarding informal opportunities for interaction, some of the participants highlighted the value of the residential weekends held outside Dublin, where all the participants stayed in the one location, which offered more time for informal conversations.

The peer-to-peer learning and support aspect of the programme weekends was also considered to have worked well by the Wave Change Team. As one member commented:

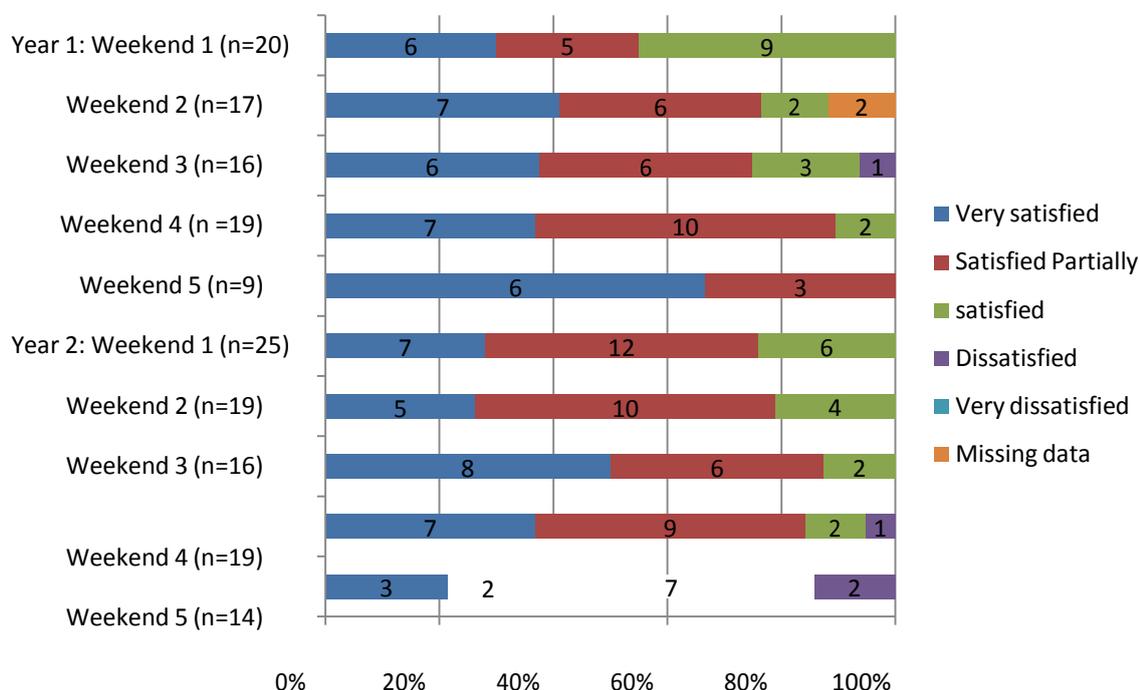
'The bonding within the group was brilliant, I thought. People got on really well ... all of the people who had projects and were pushing them really helped each other out.'

However, one issue identified, in the interviews with the Wave Change Team in both Years 1 and 2, was the challenge of achieving the appropriate balance between creating a safe and supportive space and creating an environment where the participants can critically engage. There were diverging views in Year 2. One member of the Team felt that the correct balance had been achieved, while another observed that they would have liked the environment to be more challenging – for the participants to have felt sufficiently safe to question and test each other further in the small group work sessions.

Content delivered

Across Years 1 and 2, there were consistently high levels of satisfaction among the Wave Changers about the content of the sessions delivered during the weekends and the relevance to them (see Figure 6). The only exception was the final programme weekend in Year 2, where half the Wave Changers were only 'partially satisfied' and a further two were 'dissatisfied'.

Figure 5: Wave Changers' satisfaction with the content and relevance of the weekend sessions
 (n = number of respondents to questionnaire)



While some of the Wave Changers in Year 1 expressed an expectation that the programme would have been more action-orientated, and highlighted the value of the practical sessions, on the whole the participants in Year 2 placed a high value on the practical and applied sessions. This was consistently reported across the various data sources (the programme weekend questionnaires, the focus group data and the self-reflection diaries). These practical sessions included workshops delivered by the Programme Facilitator on useful tools and resources to progress their projects and also small group work sessions designed to brainstorm and problem-solve on individual projects. These focused sessions were considered very useful because the learning could be applied directly to their projects:

'I thought the stakeholder mapping exercise was of use as it did force me to think laterally about who I could bring into my ideas for change, and I came up with some creative results that I wouldn't have come up with if I'd just sat thinking about it quietly.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

'Workshops with [the Programme Facilitator] I find are the most useful to me as I can implement them almost immediately into my project.' [Programme weekend questionnaire, Year 2]

The third weekend in Year 2 included a number of these sessions, such as 'Taking Stock' of their projects and a session on understanding and prototyping their minimum viable product. As illustrated in Figure 6 above, half of the participants were very satisfied with the relevance of the sessions during this weekend. In contrast, the final programme weekend in Year 2 incorporated no practical or applied sessions and only a minority of the participants expressed satisfaction with the relevance of the sessions. It was observed in the focus groups that the initial weekends in Year 2 were very focused on project development, but this dwindled in the later weekends. The data revealed that some of the Wave Changers were dissatisfied with both the lack of in-depth focus on their projects and the emphasis on learning practical skills during all the programme weekends:

'It would be better to do a few more practical things during the weekend.' [Focus Group, Year 2]

These views of the Wave Changers correlate with the observations made in the interviews with Wave Change Team members at the end of Year 1. They reflected that at the close of the first year of the delivery of the programme, working with those who have a clear idea for social change and could apply their learning to a project was a contributing factor to successfully up-skilling the participants. This influenced the requirement in Year 2 that all applicants to the programme had to have an idea for social change that they were ready to work on. This focus on applied learning and providing the participants with practical tools and worksheets to use in the development of their projects was considered by the Wave Change Team to have worked well in the second year of the delivery of the programme.

'People changed ideas, things evolved, things collapsed, things were abandoned and that's absolutely fine; that's part of the course. But just to be focused on something, to use the learning, I think it made a big difference this year [Year 2].' [Wave Change Team member]

However, an issue identified by some members of the Wave Change Team was the challenge of keeping track of the Wave Changers' projects and the related developments and activities that took place outside of the programme weekend sessions. Apart from the Director of Wave Change and the Programme Manager, the other Team members were geographically dispersed and were not present at every programme weekend. Thus, communication among Team members was identified as a challenge and also the 'disconnect' between the Team and programme participants in between the programme weekends. Some members of the Team observed that had they been more familiar with the Wave Changers and their projects, the sessions delivered could have been more effective and focused. As one Team member commented:

'I think that [we] could have made the weekends stronger if we had kind of a good idea of where, how things were going, what kinds of needs, what kind of questions they had.'

Indeed, some of the Wave Changers themselves expressed disappointment during the focus groups that members of the Team were not more familiar with their projects.

‘Very much Google-esque and let’s all be laid back and see what happens and let’s create a creative space where ideas can flow.’ [Focus Group, Year 1]

‘I feel that the weekend had some very important aspects and others were a little scattered and unnecessary. The activity at the end of the day, where we had group critiques on specific projects, was very beneficial for the individuals who presented their project. I feel these activities have more of an impact.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

A conscious effort was made by the Wave Change Team to include a sufficient level of content in the weekend programmes, while also allowing sufficient time for reflection and recreation. However, getting the balance right for all participants was difficult, and one member of the Team acknowledged that it was a challenge to achieve the appropriate balance between structured and unstructured learning.

In relation to the delivery of the programme sessions, the personal development and project development aspects of the programme generally blended well, according to the Wave Change Team. However, one Team member acknowledged that while it was the intention at the beginning of Year 2 for the project development and personal development components of the programme weekends to be on an equal footing, greater emphasis was placed on project development. There were diverging views among the Wave Changers in Years 1 and 2 about the personal development sessions. There were higher levels of satisfaction with the personal development sessions delivered in Year 2 compared to Year 1, with some of the participants identifying them as among the most valuable aspects of the weekends:

‘These [the personal development workshops] gave me the opportunity for some critical personal reflection and cemented some of my previous reflections in this area.’ [Programme weekend questionnaire, Year 2]

‘The best thing about this [the programme] was the personal development.’ [Focus Group, Year 2]

A common view expressed by a small number of participants who did not place a high value on these sessions was that they did not learn anything new from the sessions, that they lacked sufficient depth, that they were too long and that the time could have been better spent on learning practical skills.

Pitching the programme at the appropriate level

There was a general consensus among the Wave Change Team that delivering the programme to a diverse group of people, with different backgrounds, experiences, areas of interest and stages of project, was a challenge. This manifested itself in difficulties keeping the group cohesive and in pitching the content delivered at the appropriate level and with sufficient depth. It was also a challenge to achieve the correct balance between being supportive to the participants by facilitating a nurturing environment, while creating a programme that challenged them sufficiently. Some of the Wave Change Team pointed out that the Wave Changers required different levels of support and that the programme did not have the capacity to deliver intensive one-to-one support given the numbers involved. The Wave Changers in Year 1 spoke about the skill level at which Wave Change was pitched. A small number of participants were of the view that because of the diversity within the group, some of the workshops were not of value because they had been exposed to similar content in the past, prior to joining Wave Change. As a result, a number of participants did not think the level of time commitment at the weekends justified their participation. The challenge of delivering the programme to people who were at different stages of their project development was also raised as an issue during the focus groups with the Wave Changers in Year 2. It was described as ‘intimidating’ to be in a programme with people who were at a more advanced project stage, while others wanted to move on their projects but felt that the programme was not tailored to specifically meet this need. Overall, the importance of providing tailored support to people at different project stages was highlighted by the participants.

4.1.4 Practical Skills Workshops

Outside of the programme weekends, standalone tailor-made skills development workshops were offered to the Wave Changers. These workshops are designed to offer specialised training to provide participants with the practical skills required to progress their projects and ideas for social change. The findings in this section are based on a review of the relevant documentation; questionnaires completed by the attendees of each of the workshops in Year 2; data obtained during the focus groups with the Wave Changers; and interviews with the Wave Change Team.

Implementation

While most of the training and project development opportunities took place within the programme weekend format during Year 1 of Wave Change, the participants were offered the opportunity to attend some specialised skills workshops in the fields of communications, media and film outside the programme weekends. Two 'Communications and Media' workshops were held in different locations (Dublin and Cork) during the summer of 2012, and a third workshop on media and film was held immediately prior to the second programme weekend. In Year 2, there was a significant change in this approach, whereby much of the intensive skills-based input was provided to interested participants as standalone components outside of the programme weekends. A total of six specialised workshops were held, primarily concentrated in the summer months of 2013, in the fields of pitching, creative writing, fundraising, lobbying, social innovation and media training. All of these took place in Dublin. One workshop on 'Research and Planning for Social Change' was scheduled to be held in Galway; however, it was cancelled due to lack of numbers.

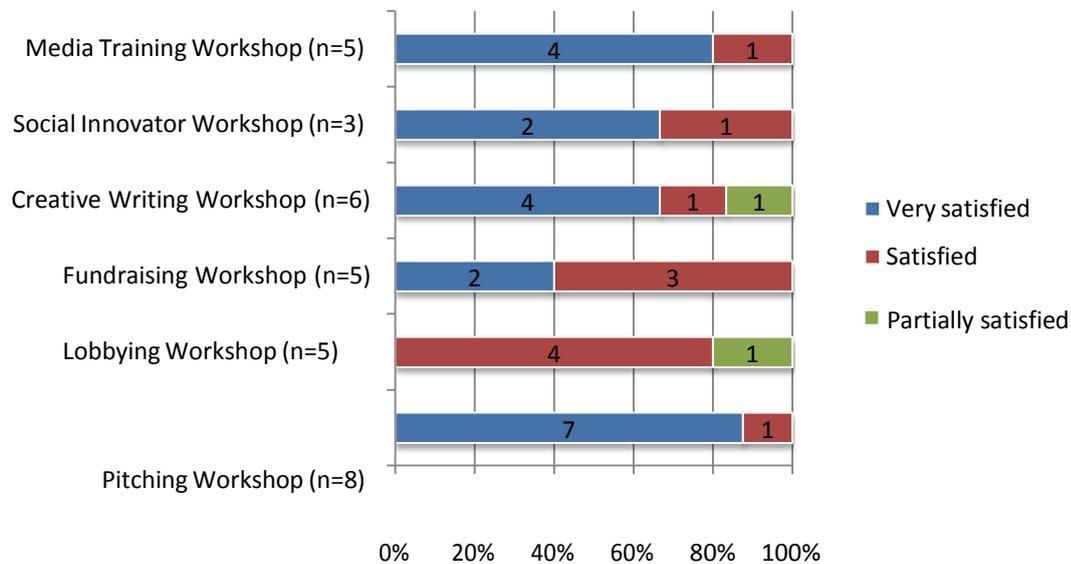
In both Year 1 and Year 2, these practical skills workshops were delivered by experts and specialists in the above-mentioned fields. The facilitators sought to tailor the content to the Wave Changers and their projects for social change. The workshops were delivered in a 'hands-on' manner, whereby the participants were given an opportunity to apply the knowledge and learning during the workshop through specific exercises and role play. At the end of each workshop, follow-up action points were developed with the facilitator, designed to ensure the participants applied their learning. The facilitators were available to support the participants to achieve their action points. While these workshops were open to all the Wave Changers in Year 2, a maximum of nine and a minimum of four attended (or an average of six participants across the six workshops).

Views of the Wave Changers and the Wave Change Team

Overall, very positive feedback was provided by the Wave Changers in Year 2 who attended the practical skills workshops, as seen in Figure 7.

Figure 6: Participants' satisfaction levels with the practical skills workshops

(n = number of respondents to questionnaire)



This positivity was also evident in the qualitative data. The participants reported that the workshops deepened their knowledge and understanding in the specific thematic areas and provided them with a set of practical skills which they could use for their social change project. The small group nature of the workshops facilitated this, and the feedback from both the professionals delivering the workshop and their peers was regarded as highly beneficial:

'I just feel the workshops were actually the best, developing your skills and these were skills that were very essential in developing your project, which was a part of Wave Change. So I think I probably would have scrapped maybe talking about your project. Do your skills workshop.' [Focus Group, Year 2]

'Everyone was buzzing about these workshops.' [Focus Group, Year 2]

The Wave Change Team also recognised the value of the focused, small group practical workshops. For example, the 'Communications and Media' workshop in Year 1 was identified as a success because it was very practical, clearly linked to the Wave Changers' ideas or projects for social change, and there was an identifiable outcome at the end of the session. Building on this observation, a decision was taken to hold more of these types of workshop in Year 2. The high quality of the content delivered during the workshops in Year 2, the option to opt in to attend the workshops of most relevance to the participants, and the efforts made to tailor them to the participants' needs – all these factors were considered by the Wave Change Team to have positively contributed to this component of the Wave Change Programme.

The main issue raised by the Wave Changers on the delivery of the workshops related to their scheduling, location and timing. A common view shared by the Wave Changers in Year 2 was that the workshops should have been incorporated into the programme weekends, since they were committed to attend these and given the relevance of some of the key workshops to all the participants. The workshop on 'Pitching' was mentioned by way of example: many wished to attend due to its importance, but were unable to do so, explaining that they had busy lives, working, studying, travelling and so on. Hence, while participants had committed to attending the programme weekends, it was difficult to also make time to attend the standalone workshops. It was also suggested that more of the workshops should have been held outside Dublin, to cater for those not living there:

'I felt like there was definitely enough time during the weekends to have skills workshops ... I think that it was very Dublin-based and I don't mind travelling to Dublin whatsoever for a weekend, but to travel for a ... workshop was asking a bit too much. That could have been incorporated in the weekend.' [Focus Group, Year 2]

A further suggestion was that perhaps the workshops could have been recorded and put on YouTube so that those who could not attend could access them. Timing was also an issue, with some of the Wave Changers in Year 2 dissatisfied with the concentration of the practical skills workshops during the summer months, not only because of the time commitment required during this short period of time, but also because it was felt that it would have been more beneficial to hold some of the workshops earlier so that participants could apply the knowledge and skills to their projects at an earlier stage in the programme.

In the interviews with the Wave Change Team, trying to achieve an appropriate balance of content was highlighted, whereby the main reason for holding the practical workshops outside of the weekends in Year 2 was the perception that the programme weekends were already highly intensive. Therefore, Team members considered it more appropriate to provide the intensive skills-based training to those who wanted to avail of it outside of the weekends, primarily during the summer months. Also, Team members felt that the summer period was the most appropriate time, since the participants were at a more advanced stage of their project and would appreciate the value of the workshops, as well as be in a position to apply the learning. Most members of the Team felt that holding the workshops mid-way through the programme lent itself to ensuring that they were tailored to the participants' needs. However, one member of the Team thought that more external speakers with expertise in the social entrepreneurial field should have been brought in to deliver content during the programme weekends (as was the case in Year 1), in order to bring more variety and energy to the content delivered during the weekends.

Wave Change Team members were disappointed that the numbers self-nominating to attend these workshops were not higher, and also that follow-up action points and other related tasks by participants after the workshops were not completed. One of the perceived reasons for the low participation rates was that, at the point of delivery of the workshops, so many opportunities for development had already been offered that the chance to attend further skills-based training was not widely realised. Another reason given for low attendance was that some of the participants were away during the summer months.

'There's so much going on. There are so many opportunities. There is so much stuff that people start to get blasé about it.' [Wave Change Team member]

4.1.5 External engagement

The external engagement aspect of the Wave Change initiative involved introducing Wave Changers to key influencers in the social and business fields, providing them with the possibility to attend key events and conferences and to visit organisations and programmes relevant to their project or area of social change interest. The objectives of this component of Wave Change were:

- to give the programme participants the opportunity for experiential learning;
- to support the Wave Changers to develop their networks of support.

Findings on the delivery of this component of the programme are based on observation; a review of the relevant documentation; interviews with the Wave Change Team; data obtained during the focus groups with the Wave Changers; and a short questionnaire on their external engagement opportunities.

Implementation

The external engagement activities primarily took place in between the programme weekends in Year 1 and Year 2. One change to the delivery of this aspect of Wave Change in Year 2 was that an external engagement workshop was scheduled for the first and second programme weekends. These workshops were intended to help the Wave Changers identify, in the early stages, their existing networks and to encourage them to build on these networks and share them with their fellow participants. These workshops were intended to complement the later meetings and networking opportunities as their ideas and projects matured.

Another difference between Year 1 and Year 2 was that in Year 1 the Wave Change Team member responsible for this aspect of the programme took a very proactive role in providing one-to-one support for the Wave Changers on engagement and networking. However, during Year 2 the onus was on the Wave Changers themselves to take the initiative to directly approach the relevant Wave Change Team member if they wanted a particular meeting to be set up or an invitation to a relevant event secured.

At the close of the programme in Year 1 and Year 2, the Wave Changers were asked to complete a short self-administered questionnaire on their external engagement opportunities. In 2012, 16 completed the questionnaire, and in 2013, 12 completed it. Of the 28 surveyed, 25 participated in external engagement activities relevant to their project or idea for social change, with most (n=19) stating that they had approximately one to three opportunities throughout the course of the programme, while six said they had approximately four or more opportunities.

The documentary data received from Wave Change indicates that almost all of the 2012 and 2013 Wave Changers were provided with and availed of the opportunity to connect with individuals and organisations, and attended a wide range of external engagement meetings and networking events. In addition, nine of the alumni from the 2012 group continued to be involved with the support of Wave Change in either one or two external engagement events during 2013. The participants had the opportunity to attend relevant events both in Ireland and abroad, to meet key stakeholders in the field of social entrepreneurship and business, as well as potential funders. In terms of communications, there was a high level of engagement by the Wave Changers in various forms of television, radio and print media. An overview of the types of external engagement activities the participants engaged in is provided in Appendix 3.

Views of the Wave Changers and the Wave Change Team

When asked to rate their overall level of satisfaction with the opportunities for external engagement, almost all (n=21) of the 25 Wave Changers surveyed who participated in external engagement activities were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the opportunities provided. The responses of the remaining participants (n=4), who were all Wave Changers of Year 2 of the programme, ranged from 'partially satisfied' to 'dissatisfied'.

The qualitative data revealed the high value that programme participants placed on this component of the programme. They especially valued the opportunities to meet with individuals who were directly relevant to their area of interest:

'External engagement was absolutely one of the most directly useful elements of the programme.' [Programme weekend questionnaire, Year 2]

Similarly, some Wave Change Team members suggested that the external engagement aspect of Wave Change was one of the key strengths of the initiative. It was pointed out that because of the expansive and influential networks that SEI has developed over the years, at the end of the programme the Wave Changers have a network across Ireland that can support them with their projects. It was also observed that these opportunities have provided the Wave Changers with

significant personal development opportunities, in the sense of building up their confidence and sense of autonomy. One of the perceived advantages of including workshops on external engagement in the early stages of Year 2 was that the various events and meetings organised were more meaningful to attendees as a result of this focus on external engagement and networking throughout the programme. Encouraging them to share their own established networks among their peers was also deemed to have worked well, giving them an awareness of the importance of respecting other people's contacts and relationships. The Wave Change Team were mindful of the importance of the Wave Changers respecting established relationships when opening the door to them to existing Wave Change and SEI networks.

However, not all the Wave Changers concurred that the programme had provided them with opportunities to build external support networks. In Year 2, the data also captured the disappointment of some of the participants that a number of opportunities for external engagement were not open or offered to the entire group. While it was acknowledged that selecting individuals for certain opportunities was appropriate, they would have preferred if the selection process was transparent. A small number of Wave Changers in Year 2 also spoke about how Wave Change was not able to open doors to people directly of relevance to their project at the time. However, it was also evident that the programme had given participants the confidence to pursue these opportunities in the future.

'I think I will actually partake in external engagement more after the programme as I now feel more confident.' [Programme weekend questionnaire, Year 2]

Some of the Wave Changers pointed out that in order to benefit from this aspect of the programme, one had to invest the time and effort in making the contacts and following up on the networks that were either provided through the Wave Change Team or were self-initiated. The data also revealed that some of the participants would have liked if there had been more opportunities for follow-up and discussion and sharing experiences on people's external engagement activities during the programme weekends.

4.1.6 Seed funding

Seed funding totalling €25,000 per annum was available for successful candidates. The aims of the seed funding component of Wave Change are:

- to support the Wave Changers to fund the development or delivery of a key aspect of their project/idea or to support participants to fund a specific personal development aim;
- to give applicants the opportunity to gain experience of participation in a funding round, as well as the opportunity to use skills and techniques developed through the programme.

The findings set out below on the implementation of the programme are based on a review of the relevant documentation and observation of the applicants pitching for funding in Year 2. The findings on how the seed funding process was experienced by the Wave Change Team, judging panel and the applicants are based on interviews with the Wave Change Team and Steering Group; findings from a questionnaire completed by members of the judging panel in Year 2; data obtained during the focus groups with the Wave Changers; and a short questionnaire.

Implementation

The seed funding process differed in Year 1 and Year 2. In Year 1, while two rounds of funding were planned, only one was held after the final programme weekend in September 2012. An award of approximately €1,000 was available per candidate, while they could put in a request for a sum greater than €1,000 if so required. In Year 2, there were two rounds of investment, in June and September 2013, comprising one investment of up to €2,500 and eight investments of up to €1,250 in each round. Following the submission of an application form to apply for the funding, the applicants were invited to make their pitch to a panel of judges and answer questions on their application. The panel of judges, which differed for each round of investment, comprised Wave Change supporters and associates with a track record in philanthropy or social entrepreneurship, and an alumni member from the 2012 Wave Change Programme (for the panels in Year 2). A member of the Wave Change Team was present during the pitching and deliberation process to chair the meetings and to ensure consistency across the panels.

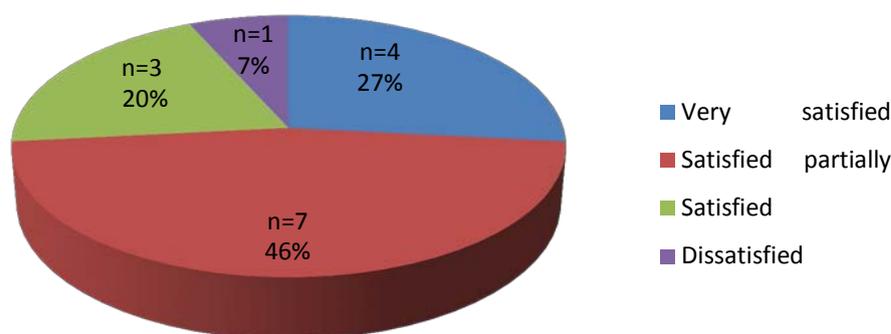
There were significant differences in the level of seed funding applications and awards made in Years 1 and 2. Only four participants applied for seed funding in Year 1: two pitched successfully for funding, with one receiving €2,500 and the other €1,500. In Year 2, significantly more participants applied for funding, in part reflecting the greater emphasis on project development and the fact that all the participants came to the programme in Year 2 with a specific idea for social change. In the first round (in June 2013) 12 applied for funding, and in the second round (in September 2013) 11 applied, with two receiving the award of €2,500 and the remaining successful applicants receiving €1,500 or less if the full amount was not requested.

The pitching process took place in a formal environment. Rigorous questioning by the judges followed the initial pitch. There were no pre-set questions; the judges were open to ask any questions of their choosing. It was documented that the applicants would be judged on the basis of the overall quality of their pitch, how well they addressed the questions and their written application. In practice, the judges sought to strike a balance between the quality of their pitch and the potential of their project. The evaluation form provided to the judges, to assist them in making their decision, ensured that they formed an opinion independently on each of the candidates before the wider discussions began on who would be the successful candidates. The judges were very open to meet or to be in e-mail contact with the participants to give them feedback directly on their projects and pitching.

Views of the Wave Changers, Wave Change Team and Judging Panel

In the short questionnaire administered to the Wave Changers at the close of the programme in Year 1 and Year 2, the respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the seed funding process. Of the 28 surveyed across Years 1 and 2, 15 had participated in the process. Almost three-quarters of the respondents were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the process (see Figure 8). A small number were 'partially satisfied' and one was 'dissatisfied'. As articulated by a Wave Changer in the qualitative data, they were '[delighted to have funding](#)' for their project, and others mentioned the opportunity it provided to practise their pitching skills.

Figure 7: Wave Changers' level of satisfaction with the seed funding process



The panel of judges were overall very satisfied with the process and were of the view that it compared favourably to other seed funding processes in which they had been involved. The 'double pitch' (i.e. the written application, followed by the oral presentation) was considered to be the correct approach by two of the judges, to enable them to form a rounded view and fair assessment of the candidates. The formal and challenging environment in which the candidates gave their pitch was noted by some of the judges, but it was considered by two to be a worthwhile learning experience for the candidates, who will need to learn how to sell their ideas in challenging environments as social entrepreneurs. While the data revealed that the Wave Changers did not have an issue with the challenging nature of the process, a number of the applicants said they were inadequately prepared for the pitching. They commented that this lack of preparation manifested itself in a number of ways, such as not knowing how to estimate project costs, or prepare a business plan:

'We were told we didn't need practical workshops on business plans because that is not what Wave Change is about, and a panellist from the seed fund asked me the question.'
 [Focus Group, Year 2]

A small number also perceived there to be an over-representation of panellists from the corporate sector. Some Wave Changers stated they would have liked to have received more feedback on the pitching process.

In the interviews with the Wave Change Team, the value of the seed funding component was highlighted. The interviewees explained that it offered the participants credibility for their project and the opportunity to make their idea a reality, while also demonstrating a serious commitment on the programme's part to their projects. It was also considered highly beneficial in terms of helping the participants to refine their ideas. Wave Change Team members noted that those who did better on the day in terms of making their seed funding pitch were those participants who had attended the 'Pitching' workshop. One of the Team members was of the view that the reason more Wave Changers did not apply for funding, particularly in Year 1, was that there was a lack of confidence to pursue the funding opportunities when their projects were in the early stages of development. However, this did not emerge in the data from the programme participants. In Year 1, some of the Wave Changers were critical of the small amount of funding on offer, and it was suggested that they should be involved in deciding the level of funding, with final decisions being based on the actual idea and the requirements of the applicant. They reckoned the best ideas should get the majority of funding.

4.1.7 Coaching and One-to-One Support

This component of Wave Change over the course of the two years comprised a number of different facets, including formal coaching delivered by experienced professionals and the provision of more semi-formal one-to-one support for Wave Changers by members of the Wave Change Team. The findings in this section are based on data obtained from the interviews with the Wave Change Team and the focus groups with the programme participants.

Implementation

Coaching: A mixture of both formal coaching (externally from coaches) and more semi-formal one-to-one support (internally from Wave Change Team members) was provided to Year 1 participants, while only one-to-one support was provided for Year 2 participants. As discussed below, a number of challenges were faced in implementing this aspect of the programme. These included sourcing an adequate pool of coaches who would be available across the country and also making suitable coach–client matches.

In Year 1, a formal coaching programme was provided, whereby the Wave Change Team partnered with Prospectus Consultancy and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council, in order to engage 10 experienced coaches to provide a minimum of four sessions to Wave Changers over a 4–6-month period on a pro bono basis. This coaching began in May 2012 and was ongoing until the end of the programme in Year 1. A total of three 2012 Wave Changers took part in this aspect of the programme. The coaching focused on a specific piece of action to be undertaken by the participant. The coaching was set up on the basis of providing a potentially ‘good experience’ for interested candidates and available coaches. One member of the Wave Change Team was responsible for making decisions regarding suitability: whether a particular coach–client match would work based on her knowledge of both parties. Furthermore, a strong emphasis was placed on face-to-face meetings and so geography was an important factor. Due to the logistics of demand and supply, geography and suitability criteria, a coach was not allocated to all Wave Changers.

‘So mainly it was geography and also what I felt would be a good potential match.’ [Wave Change Team member]

‘I had a limited number of people [coaches] and I was also aware that not everyone [Wave Change participants] was suitable.’ [Wave Change Team member]

The coaching sessions would entail receiving in-depth advice and guidance from the coach, and the participant being ‘challenged around “What are you going to do?”, “Have you done it?”, “If not, why not?”’ (Wave Change Team member). The specific content covered by coaches with clients was confidential. A member of the Wave Change Team checked in with each party as to whether they were satisfied and wished to continue.

In Year 2, the formal coaching aspect of the programme was not implemented. The reason given was the perception that too much had already been offered to Wave Changers throughout the year.

One-to-one support: Regarding the less formal aspect of support, some Wave Change Team members provided one-to-one support to the Wave Changers throughout the two years of the programme. This was done on a semi-formal basis, whereby Wave Changers had the opportunity to speak one-to-one with a member of the Team during or in between the programme weekends in order to discuss specific details of their projects. In Year 1, one Wave Change Team member was primarily responsible for this, while in Year 2 the expanded team shared the role. However, it was explained by some Team members that the responsibility and remuneration for this aspect of the programme was not formally established:

'We are not setting it up as "this is coaching", but what we say is "this is support for you outside of the programme to work towards your targets".' [Wave Change Team member]

Views of the Wave Changers and the Wave Change Team

Some of the Wave Changers in Year 1 who participated in this aspect of the programme found the formal coaching opportunities one of the most valuable aspects of the Wave Change programme:

'I was going to say that the value would be the coaching. The coaching I'm getting is massively valuable.' [Focus Group, Year 2]

In contrast, a number of the Wave Changers in Year 2 were unhappy that this aspect of the programme had not happened by the time the last programme weekend was held:

'...the mentors [coaches], I was really excited for that. That would have been a massive benefit.' [Focus Group, Year 2]

'I wish the coaching would have happened.' [Focus Group, Year 2]

Several of the Wave Changers in Year 2 said that they availed of the one-to-one support offered by members of the Wave Change Team and found it very useful for project and personal check-in and development purposes. Some who did not get or avail of more intensive one-to-one support would have liked it and said that they expected the Wave Change Team to provide this. Other Wave Changers, however, expressed the view that they would have preferred more directional feedback and specialist advice on where to take their projects, as opposed to the general conversations with the Wave Change Team members. The purpose of these conversations, it was said, was primarily an exercise to check where one was in relation to their project.

'... that one-to-one attention you just need sometimes. For them to just say, "You're doing this wrong, do it this way instead", or "You're doing this right, well done".' [Focus Group, Year 2]

From the perspective of a member of the Wave Change Team, the coaching aspect of the programme was more complex than originally envisaged. Suitability proved a significant factor, whereby some participants could more easily be matched with external coaches than others. As a result, similar coaching-type support was offered internally by some Team members to some participants outside of the programme weekends in order to help them progress their work and reach their targets. These one-to-one check-in sessions were viewed as very beneficial by staff for checking the status of Wave Changers' projects and finding out how they were faring more generally. However, for other Team members, while the value of one-to-one support was recognised, they highlighted a personal challenge in Year 2 to engage in providing this individualised support, since they were not resident in Ireland or it had not been formally agreed that they would provide this service. Furthermore, the qualitative data revealed a conscious shift in the ethos of the programme in Year 2, encouraging the participants to be less reliant on the Wave Change Team, in keeping with the greater emphasis on peer-to-peer learning and demonstrating self-reliance and autonomous leadership.

4.1.8 Internships

The opportunity to avail of an internship, related to a participant's particular area of social change interest, was an additional dimension of the Wave Change Programme in Year 1. The Year 1 Wave Changers explained during the focus groups that in order to be considered for an internship, one had to talk to a staff member of Wave Change about some area where they would specifically like to work. In Year 1, two participants completed internships.

A number of difficulties were faced in the delivery of the internship component of the programme. One Wave Change Team member explained that the Wave Changers are very high achievers and in the main are looking to do paid internships. However, currently in Ireland, many of the available internships are unpaid. The Team member was aware of unpaid internships where people were being exploited and overworked and which did not include professional development opportunities. For these reasons, it was considered that facilitating the Wave Change participants to undertake internships would require huge management and oversight:

'You would really need to be sitting down with the organisation, agreeing all these things, checking in on a weekly basis as to how the people are getting on and all of that. It kind of turns into another huge piece of work.' [Wave Change Team member]

The lack of capacity to deliver this component of Wave Change, and the potential costs, were also echoed by a second Team member in Year 1 and in the interviews with members of the Steering Group. The opportunity to avail of internships was not implemented in Year 2.

4.2 Wave Change outreach

This component of Wave Change was packaged in the design of the initiative as 'field development'. In essence, it was envisaged that Wave Change would connect and network young people who had an interest in youth civic action and provide a forum for adult 'allies' (e.g. practitioners, youth leaders and organisations) operating in the field to come together and share learning and experiences. Drawing on the qualitative and quantitative data collected during the course of the evaluation, this section of the chapter charts the implementation of the outreach activities of Wave Change, comprising an online presence and face-to-face engagement with like-minded youth and organisations working in the field.

4.2.1 The Wave Change online presence

The online presence comprises the Wave Change website, Facebook page and use of Twitter. At the outset, this section charts the evolving aims of the Wave Change website and social networking sites (Facebook and Twitter) over the 2-year period of the evaluation. Following an overview of the content of the website, Facebook page and Twitter account, quantitative data is presented to determine whether the online component of Wave Change was delivered as intended (in accordance with the revised set of intended aims developed in Year 2 of the programme) and reached the target audience. This is followed by qualitative findings, documenting the views of the Wave Change Team and participants on the implementation of this component of the programme and the barriers and challenges presented during implementation. The findings are based on an analysis of the Wave Change website, Facebook page and Twitter account; the statistical information available during the evaluation period; data obtained during the focus groups with the programme participants; and interviews with the Wave Change Team.

Implementation

Intended aims of the online presence

It was envisaged in the design of the programme that one of the core activities of Wave Change would be to develop a web-based portal for connecting and networking young people and adult allies who support youth civic action and social justice. The intention was to provide an online service to connect young people (aged 16–25) from across Ireland to each other and to inform them of opportunities to engage in youth civic action. It was intended that the portal would create an opportunity for the adult allies to network, share learning and generate opportunities for partnership. However, from an early stage it emerged that the online component of Wave Change would not be implemented as originally intended. The changes made and progress on this component of the initiative, as well as the reasons for lack of progress in implementation as outlined by the Wave Change Team and Steering Group, are set out below.

In Year 2, a revised and less ambitious strategy was produced, outlining the new intended aim of the Wave Change website, Facebook page and Twitter account. It clarified that the aim of the website was now to be an information point on the programme, which would provide information to young people (aged 18–25), potential future participants and other stakeholders on how the programme participants and alumni are making change happen on a local, regional and national basis. The aims of the Wave Change Facebook Page and Twitter account were to:

- increase the visibility of Wave Change, its programme, participants and alumni;
- communicate through youth voices (as resources permit);
- share inspirational and informational links relating to youth civic action, youth civic engagement, youth social innovation (and social innovation overall) and youth social entrepreneurship (and social entrepreneurship overall) in Ireland and abroad;
- engage key audiences (young people interested or active in social change, key stakeholders and other interested parties) and interest them in Wave Change;
- share key opportunities (events, competitions, etc.) with this audience;
- cultivate partnerships with similar organisations online with a view to converting them to ‘real life’ where relevant;
- offer a platform to interact directly with Wave Change.

Overview of the content of website, Facebook page and Twitter account

During the first two years of the Wave Change Programme, the website provided an introduction to Wave Change (in text and video format), details on who the programme was targeted at, a broad outline of the individual programme components and a blog. The blog comprised 13 posts submitted over the two years by Wave Change staff and participants. A small number of these blog posts profiled the 2012 Wave Change alumni and the 2013 Wave Changers and their projects.

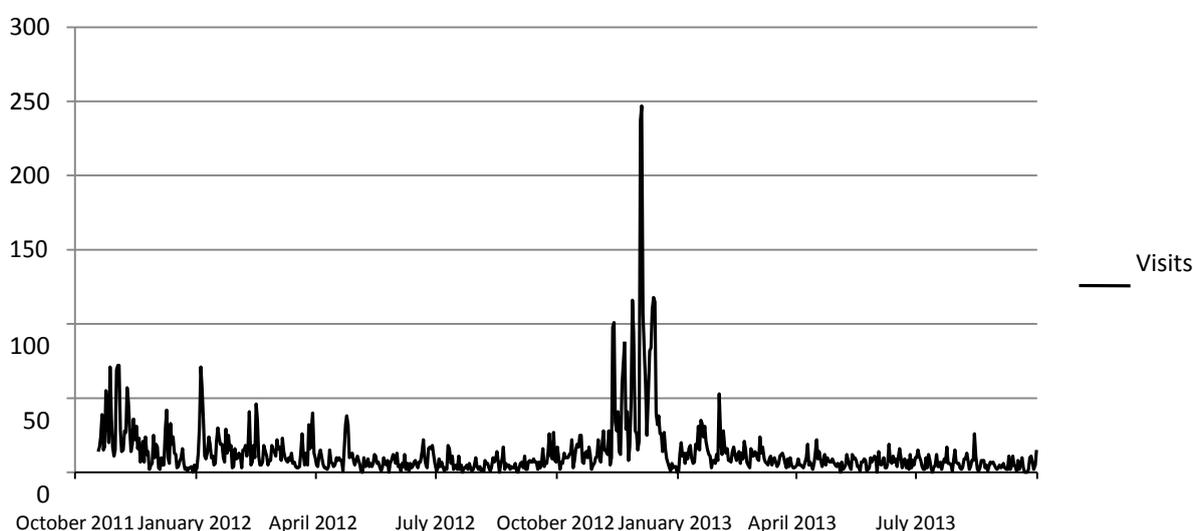
The Wave Change Facebook page was launched at the same time as the website. It provided a second interface for Wave Change to engage and share information with the public, and has been more active than the website. It shared posts on issues of interest to young people interested in social change, innovation and entrepreneurship, including potential funding opportunities, relevant upcoming events and inspirational comments. It provided updates on the Wave Changers and alumni in terms of significant personal and project achievements. It was also a forum for the Wave Changers and alumni to post messages on issues, campaigns and events potentially of interest to the wider target audience. Similar information and alerts are also shared by the Wave Change staff via Twitter. The Wave Change participants in 2012 and 2013 and the Bootcamp attendees also set up private Facebook groups. These private groups were used as a forum to link in with their peers; to share advice, events of interest, and fundraising opportunities; and to promote their projects. The Wave Change Team also posted relevant information related to the programme activities or external engagement opportunities.

Wave Change online reach and exposure

As set out above, it was intended that the online presence would increase the visibility of Wave Change. This section documents the online reach and exposure of Wave Change during the evaluation period.

From the time the Wave Change website was launched in October 2011 until the close of the second year of the Wave Change programme in September 2013, the website was visited by 9,578 people, with 5,733 of these being unique visitors. As seen in Figure 9, traffic levels to the website were at their highest during the recruitment phases, peaking in the final quarter of 2012. (The highest number of hits to the website was on 4th December 2012. This coincided with a tweet by Wave Change, on 3rd December, reminding interested parties to apply for Wave Change, which was subsequently re-tweeted by leading youth organisations and individuals in the field.) With the exception of this peak in the number of visitors to the website in the close of 2012, there was no steady progression in the number of people visiting the website.

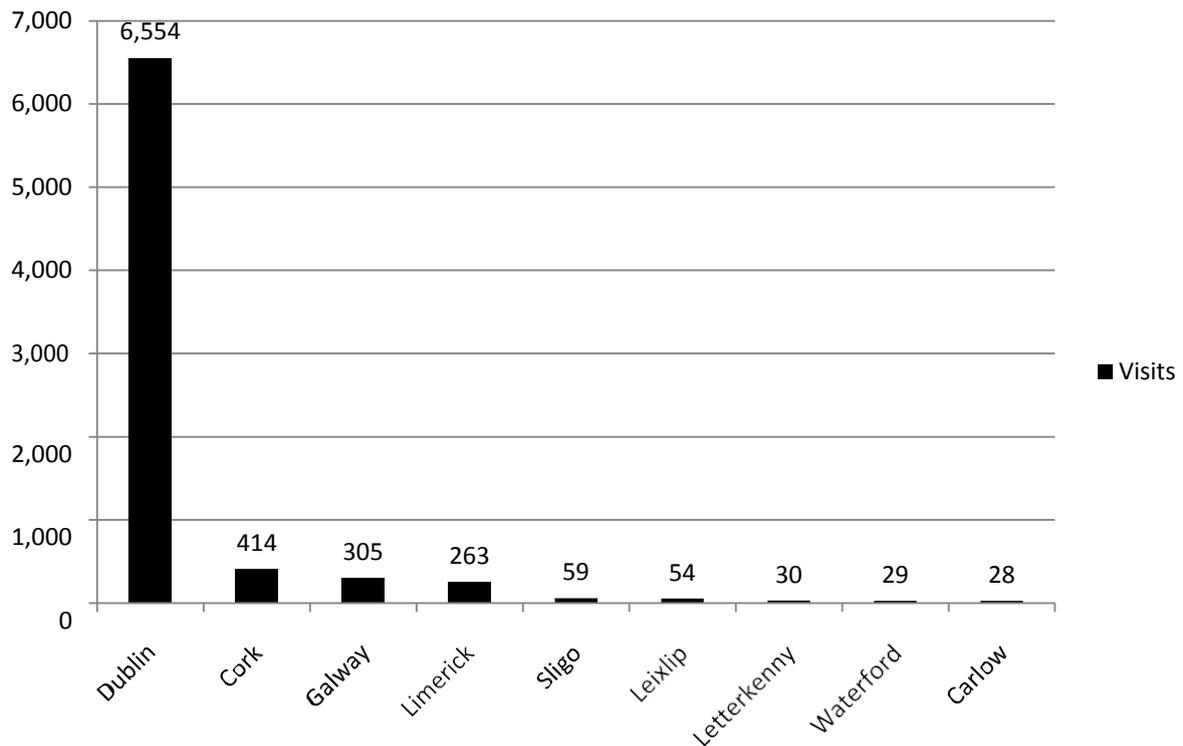
Figure 8: Number of visits to the Wave Change website from October 2011 to September 2013



Of the 9,578 people who visited the website between October 2011 and September 2013, 8,056 were based in Ireland, with the vast majority located in Dublin (see Figure 10).¹⁰

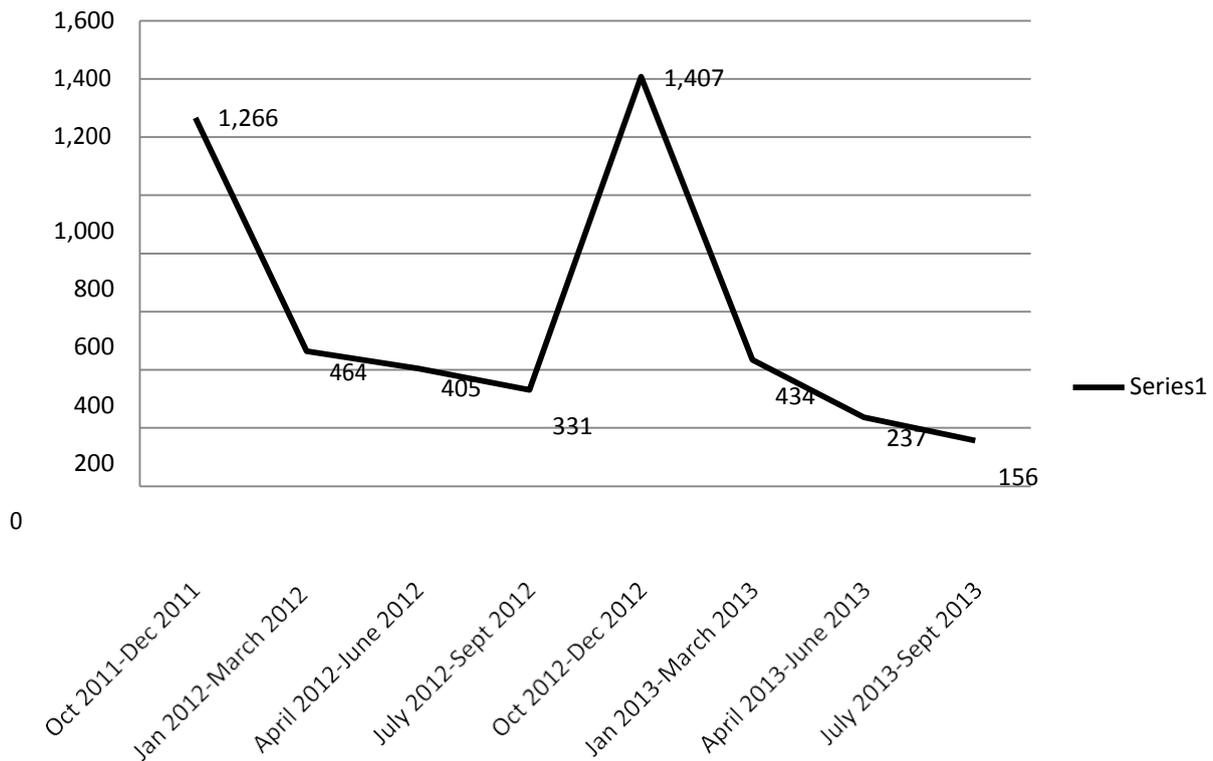
¹⁰ The Wave Change Google Analytics Account was not enabled to track additional demographic information on visitors to the website in terms of age and gender.

Figure 9: Geographical location of visitors to Wave Change website within Ireland



The Wave Change Facebook page, since its launch in October 2011 until September 2013, accumulated a supporter base of 1,064 unique people who 'like' the page (Facebook fans). Almost half of the Facebook fans are in the 18–24 age range (49.7%), and these are almost evenly divided between male (22.5%) and female (27.2%). For the most part, they are located in the four major cities in Ireland, with the highest number based in Dublin (n=462), followed by Cork (n=67), Galway (n=33) and Limerick (n=31). The remainder are spread across the country and internationally. Figure 11 shows the number of page views since the launch of the Facebook page until September 2013. The number of visitors to the Facebook page again peaked during the recruitment phase for the 2013 intake, but outside of this there was a decline in the number of visitors to the page.

Figure 10: Facebook Page views (unique visitors)



At the time of data collection (31st September 2013), the Wave Change Twitter account had 954 followers. Since its launch, it sent 755 tweets and was most active in the last quarter of 2012 – during the recruitment phase for the 2013 intake.

Extent to which the public are engaged

As set out above, it was intended that the Wave Change online presence would engage key audiences and offer a platform to interact with Wave Change. This section illustrates to what extent those viewing the Wave Change Facebook page and the Wave Change Twitter followers engaged with its content. Figure 12 provides details on the number of people talking about the Wave Change Facebook page. This means the number of unique users sharing stories about the page. These stories include: liking your Page; posting to your Page's timeline; liking, commenting on or sharing one of your Page posts; answering a question you posted; responding to one of your events; tagging your Page in a photo.

Figure 11: Number of people talking about the Wave Change Facebook page

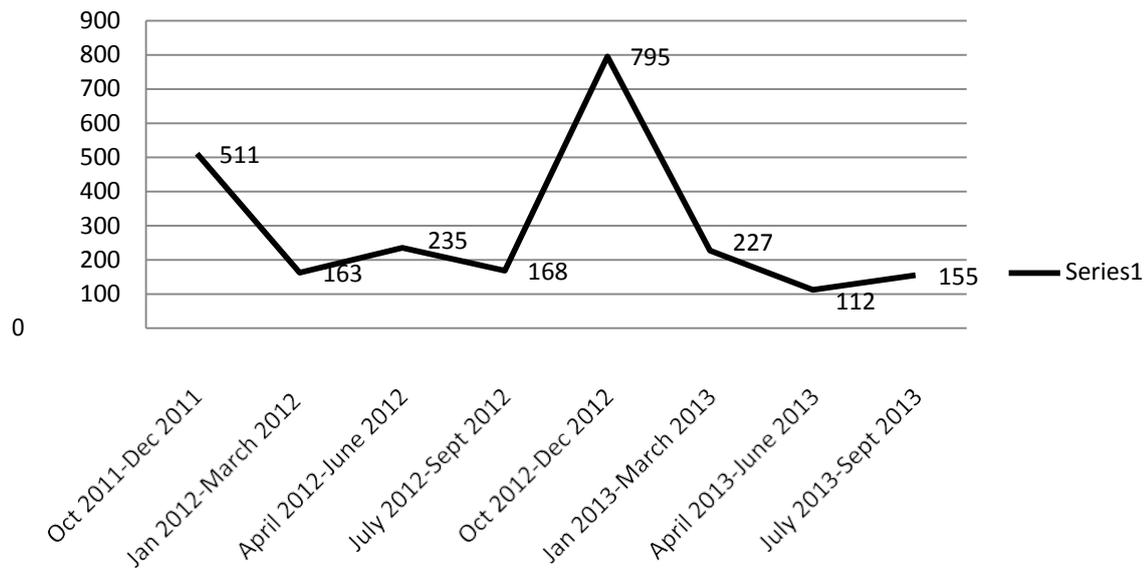
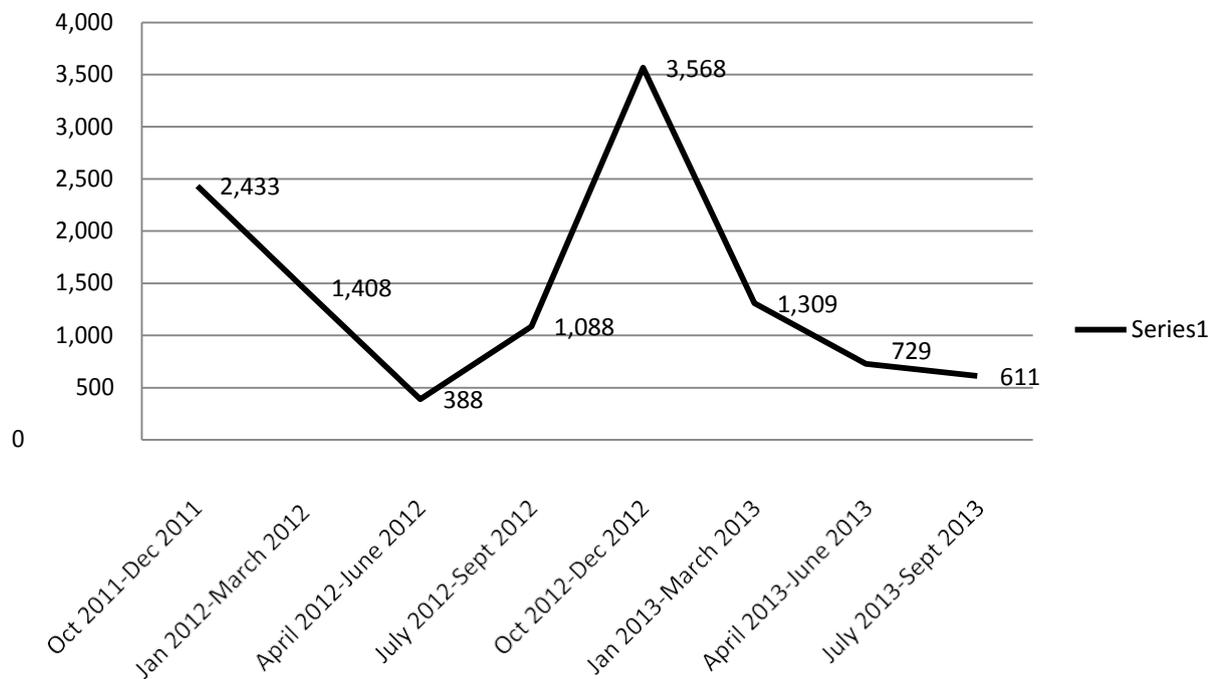


Figure 13 provides details on the number of engaged unique users during the period of the evaluation. 'Engagement' in this context includes clicking on a post or creating a story.

Figure 12: Number of engaged users



In relation to Twitter, during the most active period (the last quarter of 2012), Wave Change received on average 71 mentions per month. (A 'mention' is any tweet that contains @wavechange anywhere in the body of a tweet.) In contrast, during the last quarter in which data was collected, (July – September 2013), Wave Change received on average 18 mentions per month.

Communicating through Youth Voice

The Wave Change website, Facebook page and Twitter account were not widely used as a platform for youth to share their views and have their voice heard. In terms of contributions to the website, six of the 13 blog posts on the Wave Change website were authored by the Wave Change alumni and 2013 participants. The posting of messages by the alumni and 2013 Wave Changers on the Wave Change Facebook page has been sporadic; they primarily posted in their Facebook groups. Wave Change re-tweeted messages of their followers, which included messages initiated by their alumni, 2013 participants and other youth.

Views of the Wave Change Team, Steering Group and the Wave Changers

According to interviews with members of the Wave Change Team and Steering Group, the implementation of the online presence became a secondary priority to the delivery of the Wave Change Programme itself. Two key barriers impeding implementation were identified in Year 1. First, the lack of resources in staff time and capacity to develop the online component was a factor. As a member of the Steering Group noted, having two staff members running the initiative meant that the online activities necessarily became a secondary function. It was considered important that the available energy and resources be channelled into the delivery of the core programme in the early stages. According to the Wave Change Team in Year 1, if an extensive online community was to be created, it would become one person's full-time job. Interviewees explained that web development and use of social media demand a particular skill set, which the team did not have. The second challenge identified by the Wave Change Team and Steering Group was a lack of clarity regarding the identity and purpose of the online component. For these reasons, a revised and less ambitious set of aims was developed in Year 2 for the Wave Change website, Facebook page and Twitter (see above).

Notwithstanding these adjustments to Wave Change's online outreach efforts, interviews conducted with Team members at the end of Year 2 highlighted that the same challenges impeded implementation in the second year, specifically the lack of time and capacity. It was recognised that overall the website could have been more dynamic and up to date, with proper profiling of the programme participants. Failure to do this was considered a missed opportunity by the Wave Change Team.

While there was a clear set of intended aims in Year 2, the data continued to reveal uncertainty among the Team about the value and purpose of the website. One member was of the view that this could be partly attributed to the uncertainty about the future of the Wave Change Programme. Use of the website and social networking sites was considered to have worked well during the recruitment phase in the lead-up to Year 2, when there was a clear purpose behind the generation of content and when they had the support of an intern to drive the content. Outside of the recruitment phase, some of the Wave Changers offered to volunteer to support the Wave Change Team in their use of social media. However, according to a member of the Team, this was not put into action due a lack of time to monitor the content being generated.

It was evident from the data that the Wave Changers themselves found the private Facebook group pages very useful for staying in contact in between weekends and for sharing information. In contrast, during the focus groups with the Wave Changers in 2012 and 2013, the participants expressed disappointment with the Wave Change website and the official Facebook page. The Wave Changers in Year 1 and Year 2 observed that the content was not regularly updated and as a result did not accurately reflect what was happening with the overall programme. They said that they would have expected to have seen more profiling of them and their projects on the website. For these reasons, the participants revealed that they were 'uncomfortable' directing people to the website when networking and building external contacts:

'I just felt a bit disappointed because I don't like the way the website is, so I don't really want to be, like, "Oh, check out the Wave Change website". It says nothing about any of us on it.'
[Focus Group, Year 2]

The Wave Changers acknowledged that keeping the website and social networking sites regularly updated requires time. They were disappointed that their offers to help the Wave Change Team were not acted upon.

4.2.2 Face-to-face engagement with similar organisations

Outside of online engagement with individuals and similar organisations operating in the field, it was originally intended that Wave Change would develop a Youth Civic Action Network to connect and support organisations working in the field to each other and to act as a forum to share best practice. The programme model envisaged that workshops would be held biannually to provide the opportunities to connect and network in person and to share best practice. In terms of implementation, one workshop took place in May 2011 and involved the participation of approximately 30 representatives of organisations and young people leading various initiatives in the civic action field. Apart from this one workshop taking place in the very early stages of Wave Change, the Youth Civic Action Network did not proceed any further. The following section documents why it was not implemented as intended, based on interviews with the Wave Change Team and Steering Group.

Views of the Wave Change Team and Steering Group

The Wave Change Team and Steering Group highlighted several challenges to the implementation of the Youth Civic Action Network. There was a general consensus among members of the Steering Group that a lack of clarity of purpose, time and resources (in terms of staff) led to this component not being implemented as intended. Regarding the lack of clarity of purpose, one member of the Steering Group was of the view that, prior to this component of Wave Change being delivered, it requires an assessment of need in terms of 'what a network like that might look like and might achieve'.

According to a member of the Wave Change Team, there was a lack of confidence or sense of personal agency to deliver this component due to the 'opaqueness' around what the role of the Youth Civic Action Network was. According to this member, it was unclear to organisations whether this was being funder-driven and there was the potential of funding being made available to organisations, or whether it was being driven by a genuine interest to network organisations. However, the Wave Change Team and one member of the Steering Group suggested that as Wave Change becomes more established and develops relationships with more organisations, it could be possible to take this component forward in the future.

While acknowledging that the intention to engage in outreach with similar organisations had been 'scaled down', a member of the Steering Group highlighted that it had not been entirely lost and that Wave Change had been instrumental in initiating a conversation among other players in the field on social innovation among young people:

'It [Wave Change] has definitely opened up a conversation among certain other players in the sector on what we need to be doing around developing social innovation among young people.'

4.3 Summary

Wave Change Programme

Recruitment

- The recruitment strategy used to target potential candidates for the programme was based primarily on word of mouth with existing connections and networks in Year 1.
- In Year 2, the recruitment strategy was more extensive and involved widespread contact with community, education and youth organisations, including targeted social media and networking approaches.
- A face-to-face process was involved in selecting the potential candidates, with three regional recruitment weekends held in 2011–12 for the Year 1 cohort, while one Bootcamp was held in Dublin in 2013 for the Year 2 cohort.
- A total of 50 attended the recruitment weekends, while 43 attended the Bootcamp.
- An application form and interview process were used to make the final selection of Wave Change participants.
- Criteria for evaluating potential applicants was made more explicit in Year 2, with five core competencies identified.
- The importance of personal, one-to-one contact with potential candidates or relevant organisations in the recruitment phase, as well as social media, were highlighted by the Wave Change Team.
- Recruitment to the programme was viewed by the Team as a full-time job and needed a long-term strategy.
- A number of challenges were identified by Wave Change Team members, including:
 - assessing potential candidates' level of commitment to social change;
 - a lack of resources in the recruitment phase in terms of staff numbers and time needed;
 - recruiting a sufficiently diverse group, with high numbers of Irish participants, living in Dublin and attending third-level education.

The core programme

- A total of 47 Wave Changers participated in the initiative, comprising 22 participants in Year 1 and 25 in Year 2.
- The core programme involved the roll-out of five residential programme weekends each year. Based on feedback and learning from Year 1, the following change was implemented in Year 2:
 - There was more of a focus on balancing practical and personal skills, with two designated people recruited to work on the Wave Change Team in relation to these. The Programme Facilitator had responsibility for practical skills training, and the Programme Associate had responsibility for personal development sessions delivered during the programme weekends.
- In general, the programme weekends were well attended, with approximately three-quarters of participants attending, the exception being the final weekend in both years.
- Overall, a high level of satisfaction was found among both the participants and the deliverers of the programme. There was a high level of satisfaction with the programme content, with the exception of the final weekend in Year 2. Specifically, the peer-to-peer support and learning element was highly valued, as was the skills-sharing session in weekend 4, Year 1.
- Wave Changers were particularly interested in action-oriented sessions and practical, focused workshops, in order to apply the learning to their projects. In Year 2, there was a particular effort to focus on applied learning and practical tools.
- Tailored support for individuals at different stages of their projects was generally sought by Wave Changers.

- A number of challenges were identified by the Wave Change Team in terms of pitching and balancing the programme (in part arising from the diversity within the groups):
 - creating a supportive safe environment, while also creating one in which opportunities for constructive challenge and critical discussion could be offered;
 - having a high level of familiarity with the individual projects;
 - keeping track of the projects and relevant activities of the Wave Changers in between the programme weekends;
 - ensuring the content at programme weekends had a sufficient level of structure and detailed input, while also allowing unstructured time for recreation and reflection;
 - striking an appropriate balance between the personal development and project development parts of the programme so that they are relevant to all;
 - keeping the groups cohesive;
 - providing intensive one-to-one support, while also promoting independence and autonomous leadership on the part of participants.

Practical skills workshops

- Practical skills workshops, given by experts in the field, were mainly delivered within the programme weekends structure in Year 1, while in Year 2 they were provided as standalone additions, available to participants on a self-nominated basis.
- Attendees at the workshops were very satisfied with them, mentioning in particular the benefit of tailor-made, specialist, hands-on and small group components.
- Issues identified by Wave Changers with the workshops were timing, scheduling and location, resulting in low numbers attending in Year 2.

External engagement

- The vast majority of Wave Changers in Year 2 participated in external engagement activities, and almost half of the alumni (Year 1 participants) were also involved in these in Year 2.
- The participants generally viewed external engagement activities and workshops as being of high value and contributing to the growth of personal development.
- Some participants were dissatisfied with aspects of external engagement in terms of fairness regarding opportunities for this, and the lack of follow-up by the Wave Change Team with participants on external engagement during the programme weekends.

Seed funding

- There were two rounds of seed funding planned for Year 1; however, due to the low numbers applying, only one round was held. There were significantly more applications and awards of seed funding in Year 2. The pitching process was formal and rigorous. Overall, there was a high level of satisfaction by Wave Change Team members and the judges with the seed funding process, and it was considered by them to be a worthwhile experiential learning experience for participants interested in social entrepreneurship.
- A very small number of Wave Changers in Year 1 were dissatisfied with the amount of funding on offer and the decision-making process, while in Year 2 some felt inadequately prepared for the pitching process and were critical of the corporate focus.

Coaching/One-to-one support

- Formal coaching was provided by external experts to some Wave Changers in Year 1 based on what was considered by the Wave Change Team to be a suitable match between participant and coach. Those who participated were very happy with this coaching aspect of the programme.

- However, the coaching element was a lot more complex to implement than originally envisaged by the Wave Change Team. Several difficulties were encountered, including sourcing an adequate pool of coaches, getting a geographically dispersed pool of coaches, and making suitable matches between interested candidates and coaches.
- Based on problems with sourcing coaches and making appropriate matches, semi-formal one-to-one support systems were put in place for some Wave Changers in Year 2, based on the input of some members of the Wave Change Team. However, some of those on the Team highlighted difficulties with this in terms of lack of clarity around specific contractual remits and responsibilities, as well as geographic location based outside of Ireland.
- A number of Wave Changers in Year 2 were disappointed that they did not have the opportunity to work with a coach, and expressed their need for directional feedback and specialist input in order to move their projects forward.
- In contrast, the Wave Change Team referred to the change of ethos in Year 2 of the programme in terms of promoting more self-reliance and autonomous leadership on the part of participants.

Internships

- Internships were only implemented in Year 1, with two Wave Changers completing these. Internships were self-directed. The main challenge here, according to the Wave Change Team, was the need for resources to pay participants and also to supervise the internships to ensure that they were appropriately managed.

Wave Change outreach

- Referred to in the model as the ‘field development’ component of the Wave Change initiative.
- Concerned the establishment of an online presence for Wave Change, to develop a web-based portal for use by young people across Ireland and adult allies.
- The intention was to enable connections, networks and information-sharing between interested parties and to increase the visibility of Wave Change.
- This aspect of the initiative was not implemented as intended, and a revised set of aims was developed, primarily focused on the creation of an information point for Wave Change.
- The following interfaces were developed:
 - a website;
 - a public Facebook page;
 - a Twitter account.
- In general, these social media interfaces did not promote youth views and voices to any large extent, and their usage primarily peaked and worked well around the recruitment phases of the programme.
- Wave Changers were disappointed with the content of the official Wave Change website and offered to help the Team to improve this.
- The online presence development became a secondary priority of the Wave Change Team.
- Two sets of reasons were given for this: (a) the lack of resources in terms of staff, specialist expertise and time; and (b) the lack of clarity regarding the identity, purpose and value of this component of the initiative.
- The Youth Civic Action Network was another outreach component that was not implemented as intended. Similar reasons were given by the Wave Change Team for this: lack of clarity of purpose and lack of time and resources to establish such a network. It was viewed as an aspect which may have potential as the initiative becomes more established and networks are built with a larger number of organisations.

5. Outcomes achieved

The Wave Change Programme is designed to develop the knowledge, skills and networks of 18–25-year-olds from across Ireland to support them to take action for social change. This chapter presents the findings on whether the Wave Change Programme contributed to achieving its desired outcomes. The following are the five intended stated outcomes identified for the Wave Change Programme:

- The programme participants are inspired to engage in social change and make a difference.
- The participants have strong, resilient personal foundations to lead on change now and in the future, including enhanced self-awareness, sense of agency, self-efficacy and well-being.
- The participants have in-depth knowledge and practical experience of project management and social innovation, which can be applied to any work on social change they carry out now and in the future.
- The participants are part of a strong, diverse network of social change-makers aged 18–25 across Ireland.
- The participants are provided with the opportunity to develop and implement ideas for social change, and innovative, sustainable projects emerge from the programme.

The chapter is structured around a set of evaluation questions based on the intended outcomes for Wave Change. The data, generated by mixed methods, is presented under each of the questions posed to capture evidence of change and facilitate making an assessment of whether the programme contributed to achieving the desired outcomes. The evidence is based primarily on the qualitative data and thereby informed by the self-reported experiences of the Wave Change participants. The findings presented are drawn from the Wave Changers' self-reflection diaries, data obtained from the focus groups, the questionnaires completed by them following each programme weekend, a questionnaire completed by alumni of the Wave Change Programme (the Year 1 participants), and case studies. This qualitative data is supplemented by the quantitative data gathered from the baseline and follow-up questionnaires completed by the Wave Changers in Year 1 and Year 2.

5.1 Outcome 1: Were the participants inspired to engage in social change and make a difference?

Inspiring the participants to engage in social change and make a difference was an intended outcome of Year 1 of the programme. Since it was a requirement that the Wave Changers selected for the programme in Year 2 have an idea or project for social change, it was considered that these would be a set of participants already inspired to act. However, the quantitative data reveals that there was little difference between the Wave Changers in Year 1 and Year 2 and that the participants in Year 1 were, in fact, marginally more civically engaged at the time of starting the programme than those in Year 2. As the data reveals, the participants across both years were already socially engaged individuals at the time of joining Wave Change and had a strong sense of social responsibility.

An Independent-Samples T-Test was conducted to compare the level of the Wave Changers' civic involvement (assessed using the Youth Inventory of Involvement Scale) at the time of commencing the programme (Time 1) in Year 1 and Year 2. There was no statistically significant difference in scores for the participants in Year 1 ($M = 61.72$, $SD = 23.5$) and Year 2 ($M = 58.45$, $SD = 19.2$); $t(38) = .484$, $p = .631$ (two-tailed). This test was also conducted to compare the extent to which the

participants felt they had a responsibility to others in society (assessed using the Youth Social Responsibility Scale) at the time of commencing the programme in Year 1 and Year 2. There was almost no difference in scores for the participants in Year 1 ($M = 93.90$, $SD = 12.40$) and Year 2 ($M = 93.39$, $SD = 2.66$); $t(41) = .132$, $p = .896$ (two-tailed). These mean scores and information on the scales are set out in Table 5.

Table 5: Mean scores and scale information on Year 1 and Year 2 measures

Measure	No. of items	Range of possible	Mean (SD)		Alpha	
			Year 1 (Time 1)	Year 2 (Time 1)	Year 1 (Time 1)	Year 2 (Time 1)
Year 1 (Time 1)						
Youth Inventory of Involvement Scale	30	0–150	61.72 (23.5)	58.45 (19.2)	.88	.81
Youth Social Responsibility Scale	29	0–116	93.90 (12.40)	93.39 (2.66)	.81	.81

A Paired-Samples T-Test was conducted on the Youth Inventory of Involvement Scale to evaluate the impact of Wave Change on the participants' scores (including both Year 1 and Year 2). There was no statistically significant difference in scores from Time 1 ($M = 62.09$, $SD = 23.75$) and Time 2 ($M = 64.81$, $SD = 30.26$), $t(20) = -.598$, Cohen's $d = 0.19$, $p > .05$ (two-tailed). Although the result was not statistically significant, the Cohen's d value indicates a small positive effect.¹¹ The same test was also conducted to evaluate the impact of Wave Change on the participants' scores on the Youth Social Responsibility Scale. There was no statistically significant difference in scores from Time 1 ($M = 94.96$, $SD = 13.32$) and Time 2 ($M = 94.44$, $SD = 13.04$), $t(24) = .194$, Cohen's $d = 0.06$, $p > .05$ (two-tailed).

The qualitative data reveal that from their involvement in the Wave Change Programme, the Wave Changers did draw inspiration to engage in social change from their peers and from the content delivered during the programme. Several of the diary reflections written by the Wave Changers emphasised the inspiration they received from joining a group of 'like-minded', 'passionate', 'enthusiastic' and 'motivated' people. The programme weekends were generally described positively in terms of creating an 'inspiring atmosphere' through the peer interaction and bonding with others on the programme. During the early stages of the initiative in particular, some of the Wave Changers explained that they no longer felt isolated or alone in their interest in pursuing social issues or social change ideas:

- 'For me, the inspiration is people. I've always been motivated and encouraged, but I think meeting people my own age who are actively making a difference makes a huge difference to me.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]
- '21 enthusiastic motivated people in one room (22 including myself), all sharing the ultimate goal of achieving a positive social change in Ireland. This challenges one to step up to the play [sic] so to speak. I gained insight into their passions and problems they see in society, some of which I never gave much thought to.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]
- 'Getting young enthusiastic people together who all want to work to make Ireland a better place is an incredibly inspiring thing to be part of.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

In addition to the inspiration drawn from their peers, many Wave Changers outlined how the guest or inspirational speakers at the various weekends and workshops delivered during the course of the programme inspired them to engage in social change. In some cases, the content of the workshops

¹¹ As set out in the methodology section of the report, the convention recommended for the interpretation of Cohen's d values is that 0.2 is a small, 0.5 is a medium and 0.8 is a large effect size (see Section 1.4.2).

inspired the participants, while in other cases the personal experience of the presenters, working as agents of social change, was influential:

‘From attending [X’s] workshop, I was inspired to make a difference and get a campaign up and running ... I was very impressed with [X’s] drive, you could even say inspired. I came away from his workshop with enthusiasm and drive to get up and make a difference.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

‘I was inspired to become more involved in campaigning and activism throughout the weekend because these social issues/changes we are campaigning for affect us and we are striving to achieve a better Ireland.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

‘[X’s] talk was hugely inspirational.’ [Programme weekend questionnaire, Year 2]

5.2 Outcome 2: Did the programme equip the participants with strong, resilient personal foundations to lead on change now and in the future, including enhanced self-awareness, sense of agency, self-efficacy and well-being?

The core elements of building strong and resilient personal foundations to work in the area of social change that were analysed were agency, self-awareness, self-efficacy and well-being. While the Paired-Samples T-tests that were run on the quantitative data revealed no statistically significant difference in the participants’ self-awareness, sense of agency and self-efficacy from the time they started the Wave Change Programme to its completion (p ’s $>.05$), the qualitative data revealed strong evidence that the programme contributed to building the participants’ personal foundations to lead on change. Many of the Wave Changers expressed a positive sense of being better able to lead on social change due to their participation in Wave Change, primarily as a result of their interaction with their Wave Change peers and the Wave Change Team, the enhanced skill set they acquired and the contacts they made. Only a very small number were of the opinion that their personal development skills had not been enhanced during their time in Wave Change. For those who had this experience, some said that they had already learned much of what was being covered in the personal development sessions, but acknowledged that it is difficult to cater for all levels in such a programme. Some expressed the desire for more of a focus on the emotional element ‘minding your mind’ in relation to personal foundation content.

5.2.1 Agency

Agency was understood for the purpose of this evaluation report as empowering and building the Wave Changers’ capacity to lead on social change. Analysis was conducted to determine if there was any difference in the Wave Changers’ mean scores between Time 1 and Time 2 in the Competence for Civic Action measure. There was no statistically significant difference in the scores from Time 1 ($M = 39.12$, $SD = 5.10$) to Time 2 ($M = 39.88$, $SD = 4.27$), $t(24) = -.707$, Cohen’s $d = 0.20$, $p > .05$ (two-tailed). However, the Cohen’s d value indicates a small positive effect.

Strong evidence emerges from the qualitative data to suggest that the Wave Change Programme contributed to achieving this outcome. In particular, the main contributing factors highlighted by the Wave Changers were the training and skills they acquired through the various workshops, the talks by guest and keynote speakers, and the discussions with fellow programme participants and members of the Wave Change Team. As a result of these factors, participants explained how they felt inspired or rejuvenated and were given the self-belief and confidence to take action or to continue with their social change interest or project:

'I really enjoyed the weekend. It made me feel like my project is something I can actually do rather than just something I may be able to do some day. It helped me take it from an up-in-the-air idea and bring it down to earth and make the individual steps more solid.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

'Yeah, it [Wave Change] broke the steps down more easily. Before I was, like ... Oh ... there are so many problems and so many things that I have a genuine passion for. But now I know ... what I could actually do and what would be the best way to like channel my energy and actually make effective change rather than just being overwhelmed and kind of upset about the world.' [Focus Group, Year 1]

'Generally just being selected though just means some person thinks that your idea is worth something, and I think that's a massive thing ... Most people are just doing it on their own and trying ... It's really ... when you start talking to people and they're in the same boat; it's nice to have that.' [Focus Group, Year 2]

Many Wave Changers also mentioned the value of Wave Change as being a conduit in which to have the opportunity to reflect on their particular idea or project in an empathetic environment of like-minded individuals with a similar passion for change. Several said that becoming involved in Wave Change helped them realise that they were not alone in their pursuit of social change and that there were many other young people attempting to do similar things. This, in turn, fuelled their sense of motivation, inspiration and support to lead on social change and take action. Linked to this, some pointed out that the fear of taking risks with their project or idea lessened due to participation in Wave Change:

'This first weekend helped me realise that there are a lot of people passionate about change like myself, which has in turn motivated me even more and given me a chance to discuss my idea and follow through with mine.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

'There are times when it can feel like you're working [alone] and there is nobody around you that gets it. That sense of identification was really empowering for me.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

'I have learned to not be afraid of taking a risk and having everything perfect before setting out on a project.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

Another important finding was the provision of a 'safe place' for Wave Changers in which to discuss, seek advice or help, challenge and be challenged on their ideas and projects. Several of the Wave Changers explained that up to this point they were very reluctant to openly discuss and share their ideas and projects with others because they experienced, or feared experiencing, a lack of understanding or genuine interest and encouragement. The space that Wave Change provided for young people interested in social change is now meeting this need.

'It might have been the first time you shared your idea because we were given a safe place, free from ridicule.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

'It [Wave Change] has supported me to take action because many of them were open and willing to give me advice and suggestions when I told them about problems I was having, but in a non-judgemental way.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

'I have learnt to not be afraid to ask for help when I need it. I was going through a low period with regards to enthusiasm for my project, but pulled my socks up and asked for help. I allowed myself to be vulnerable.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

5.2.2 Self-awareness

The data was analysed for evidence of Wave Change contributing to a positive awareness of personal identity and sense of self among the Wave Changers. The impact of the programme on the Wave Changers' scores on the items included in the baseline and follow-up questionnaire on their perceived sense of self-awareness was evaluated. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test revealed no statistically significant difference in the respondents' scores, following their participation in the programme, in relation to the first¹² ($z = .000, p > .05$) and second item¹³ ($z = -.758, p > .05$) on self-awareness. The median score for both items remained the same from pre-programme to post-programme (Item 1 $Md = 4$ and Item 2 $Md = 3$).

Nevertheless, evidence emerged in the qualitative data of the Wave Change Programme contributing to enhanced positive awareness of identity and sense of self among the Wave Changers. Many of the participants explained how Wave Change had provided valuable time and space for personal reflection, making them more conscious of themselves, of their own and other people's values, and of their relationships, how they interact with others, how they present themselves, the networks and supports they have, and their skills. Several spoke directly about developing a deepened understanding of themselves as a result of the programme. A number of them also stated that they reflected on their goals with regard to the social change journey they were on during their time in Wave Change. These changes were particularly facilitated through some of the personal development workshops in Year 1 and Year 2, and by some of the inspirational speakers in Year 1:

'I feel like it has been very kind of formative for me, and I just feel that I just look at a lot of things differently ... I just feel like my understanding of a lot of things in terms of how you work with people has kind of changed a lot.' [Focus Group, Year 1]

'The weekends also ensured I had the time and space to reflect on my goals ... The weekends also allowed me to think about what skills I could develop in order to enhance my ability to carry out this project.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

'It was more a chance to think about myself and who I am, which I guess is useful. How can I understand others if I don't understand myself?' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

An increased awareness of one's value base and that of others strongly featured in the responses to what the Wave Changers perceived they learnt, in particular from some of the personal development workshops in Years 1 and 2. Also, some of the Year 1 Wave Changers highlighted the emphasis that some of the keynote speakers at the workshops placed on having and maintaining a strong value base and passion for their idea for change in order to put it into action, regardless of obstacles and challenges encountered, which in turn leads to action:

'I gained a lot from the personal development workshops. It allowed me to re-evaluate my values and how I can develop and use them moving forward.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

'I have learned I must stay true and fully believe in what I/we are creating, even if someone puts problems in front of you on your journey.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

'All the activists and campaigners that we met at the [programme] weekend were really passionate and they don't listen to people telling them that they're wasting their time or why do they want to do that. They just go and do it.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

Some Wave Changers pointed out that this personal development and deepening understanding of oneself in turn helped them to critically reflect on their social change ideas or projects, what these entail, and why they are pursuing their particular ideas or projects:

¹² Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a scale of 0–4 (0 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = strongly agree) with the statement 'I have ideas about what I would like to do in the future'.

¹³ Using the same scale, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement 'I know my strengths and weaknesses'.

- 'The weekend made me think more about the big problem that I'm trying to address. It made me think in a wider scale.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]
- 'I have again taken another step back due to this weekend, further away from my project to see the bigger picture, helping with the strength in the future for its sustainability and my own identity.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

5.2.3 Self-efficacy

The data was also explored for evidence of Wave Change contributing to providing the participants with the confidence to pursue their aspirations. In relation to the quantitative data, the impact of the programme on the Wave Changers' scores on the Self-Efficacy Measure was analysed. There was a small decrease, but not a statistically significant one, in the scores from Time 1 ($M = 27.54, SD = 2.37$) to Time 2 ($M = 26.96, SD = 3.45$), $t(25) = .866$, Cohen's $d = 0.25$, $p > .05$ (two-tailed). The Cohen's d value reveals a small effect size. However, in the qualitative data there was strong evidence that the programme provided the Wave Changers with the confidence to pursue their aspirations. Several Wave Changers emphasised the importance of having a belief that change *can* happen and of beginning this process through taking action, either individually or collectively. Some Wave Changers explained that initially they felt rather daunted at the start of the programme and thought that they were not as capable as many of their fellow participants to undertake action for social change. However, throughout the course of the programme, Wave Changers reflected that gradually, as they got to know one another better and gained skills, they realised that their ideas or projects were worthwhile and their self-confidence increased, enabling them to pursue their aspirations. They explained how the interaction with others on the programme validated and legitimised their own social change ideas, which, in turn, helped to build their confidence:

- 'I remember at the start these people were so impressive, you know, could do amazing things. But then to realise that everyone else was also struggling at times as well.' [Focus Group, Year 2]
- 'At this point in the Wave Change Programme I am making relatively good progress on my individual project. The biggest thing Wave Change has done for me so far is to imbue me with the confidence to turn my rhetoric and good intentions into action.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]
- 'I think Wave Change has given me the self-belief and confidence I need to lead and run projects on my own. Before now I was very reluctant to manage whole social projects, but Wave Change has made me realise that small projects can have a big impact when run well.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]
- 'Also, the interest I got within the group gave me a great ego boost and raised my self-esteem, and I realised I have so much more to give and kind of ... affirmed within me that my idea is good and it will benefit people.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

A variety of ways in which the Wave Changers' self-efficacy was enhanced were outlined, including engaging with fellow participants and members of the Wave Change Team, a wider set of people connected to the initiative, and the general public. Participants explained how they have become clearer about what they want to achieve, and why and how they want to do this during their time on Wave Change. Specifically, they highlighted the time and space for reflection as a positive aspect of the initiative. They also stated that they have acquired new skills in communicating and presenting their ideas or projects to others and how such interaction provided them with the courage, confidence and motivation to pursue their social change ideas and projects:

- 'I just decided to take a step back ... Wave Change gave me the space and confidence to be able to do that.' [Focus Group, Year 1]
- 'By engaging with the public, I've become more confident. Seeing how much people appreciated someone going out of their way to do something nice reinforced that my

ideas and my work as a social entrepreneur are valid, wanted and needed.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

Related to an improved sense of self-efficacy, several Wave Changers referred to the external engagement element of Wave Change. They stated that the advice, knowledge and skills they received from the Wave Change Team about networking has given them a greater sense of confidence to approach people to ask for advice, help and funding for their projects:

‘The weekend has widened my networks and contacts and has given me the encouragement I needed to pursue people that I think would benefit my project and me. The weekend has given me the incentive to just approach people and ask for advice, help or feedback.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

‘I have learned to be more confident when contacting people who can help me with my project.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

‘Since [X’s] networking exercise, I feel confident enough to drop an e-mail to anyone asking to meet up for a coffee to chat about my ideas. It was interesting to hear [X] say that you could be “the most interesting person they meet that week”, which is a positive way to look at networking as it can be daunting at times.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

‘I think it ... makes you more yourself or something ... So I think it is kind of a confidence thing, made you feel like it is OK to be you.’ [Focus Group, Year 1]

5.2.4 Well-being

While changes in the Wave Changers’ overall sense of well-being were not measured quantitatively, interwoven through the qualitative data was some evidence of the Wave Change Programme contributing to enhancing their overall well-being, with personal well-being and taking care of oneself highlighted as important aspects of self-learning for the participants. The Wave Changers spoke about the helpful support they received from the Wave Change Team and from the group discussions during the programme weekends, which aided their sense of taking care of themselves and being able to deal with various problems or difficulties they were facing. Particularly commented upon was the important advice given by some of the guest or inspirational speakers in Year 1 (in the ‘Campaigning and Activism’ workshop) and the personal development sessions held in Year 2 on taking care of oneself physically and mentally. This was based on the premise that working on social change has a significant impact on one’s personal life and can at times be a difficult journey and experience:

‘I’ve also learned that taking action for social change has many ups and downs and that the personal well-being of the social entrepreneur is of [utmost] importance.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

‘It has made me more conscious that I need to take care of myself before jumping into my project.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

5.3 Outcome 3: Did the programme equip the participants with in-depth knowledge and practical experience of project management and social innovation, which can be applied to any work on social change they carry out now and in the future?

This section presents an analysis of the data in relation to whether Wave Change strengthened the capacity of the programme participants to work on social change in terms of its contribution to building the capacity of the Wave Changers in the area of project management and social innovation. The focus is on the knowledge the Wave Changers acquired, as well as whether the programme contributed to providing them with practical experience of applying their learning.

5.3.1 Project management

Both the quantitative and the qualitative data reveal that the Wave Change Programme contributed to developing the Wave Changers' project management skills. In relation to the quantitative data, the impact of Wave Change on the participants' scores on the Project Management Measure was evaluated. There was a statistically significant increase in the scores from Time 1 ($M = 28.71$, $SD = 5.82$) to Time 2 ($M = 31.21$, $SD = 3.07$), $t(27) = -2.32$, Cohen's $d = 0.54$ $p < .05$ (two-tailed), and the Cohen's d value reveals a medium positive effect.

Further evidence is provided in the qualitative data that the programme enhanced the Wave Changers' communication and presentation skills, equipped them with practical tools for project planning and, particularly in Year 2, provided them with the opportunity to apply their learning in practice. However, conversely, some Wave Changers in Year 2 reported in the qualitative data that the programme had not equipped them with the knowledge to improve their project management skills.

Communication and presentation skills: The contribution the Wave Change Programme made to improving the Wave Changers' communication and presentation skills featured strongly in the data. These skills were primarily acquired through their participation in skills workshops and masterclasses, delivered mainly during the programme weekends in Year 1 and in the practical skills workshops delivered outside the programme weekends in Year 2. The Wave Changers reflected on how they learnt to communicate a message effectively or to pitch their idea:

'One of the most important things I learnt this weekend was how to deliver simple and effective messages. He [facilitator of a communications masterclass] also taught us about the ways messages can inspire people to take action.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

'I feel since my pitching class [workshop] ... I now have the skill necessary to grab someone's attention and keep them interested in my pitch about my project.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

There was further evidence of the Wave Changers learning effective listening skills, improving their knowledge and grasp of different methods of communication (including presenting one's message through writing, using video/film and social media), acquiring public speaking skills and learning how to engage and interact effectively with the media:

'He [facilitator of a workshop on social media tools for online campaigning] went through very practical skills that we would require when putting together a social media campaigning strategy, and also just when dealing with the media, coming at it from a social justice perspective.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

The data revealed that the Wave Changers both in Year 1 and Year 2 were provided with the opportunities to apply their communication and presentation skills in practice. The interactive nature of the workshops provided the opportunity for the skills acquired to be practised through role play. Reflecting on a communications masterclass in Year 1, one participant commented how he ‘took many useful tips and ideas with me ... I have since used some of this learning during my campaign and I am always aware of what I learnt in that session’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]. In Year 2, some reflected on how the opportunities to present and speak about their project to their fellow participants provided them with the opening to apply their skills in practice: ‘The numerous opportunities to explain my idea helped me to refine my “pitch” and improve my pitching skills in general’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 2].

The seed funding process, in which many of the Year 2 Wave Changers took part, provided further opportunities for them to refine their communication and presentation skills in making an application, pitching their idea or project and participating in an interview. There was also evidence across Years 1 and 2 of the participants directly applying their learning to situations arising as they progressed their projects and ideas for social change:

‘It [Wave Change] really opened your eyes ... no matter who you may be meeting, it really grounded me with ideas of how to approach those meetings or what to say, what works or what angles to come from ... I really learnt a lot about that, which actually really benefited me in meetings in the past few months with key stakeholders, councillors, youth work services, youth workers.’ [Video reflection, Year 2]

Knowledge and tools for project planning and implementation: Equipping the Wave Changers with resources for project planning was a particular focus of the initiative in Year 2, as all the participants began Wave Change with a specific project, in contrast to Year 1, where several were at the ‘ideas stage’. There was evidence that the programme contributed to enhancing the Wave Changers’ knowledge and equipping them with the tools needed for project planning and implementation. In Year 2, particularly in the early stages of the programme, some of the Wave Changers reflected on how the programme had contributed to giving them a greater awareness and understanding of their project and its intended aims and how to effectively plan and deliver on their idea for social change:

‘The weekend did help in offering a framework for thinking about my project – What are my assumptions? Who are the actors? Other stakeholders?’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

A common observation across Years 1 and 2 was the value of learning how to identify and map the stakeholders relevant to their ideas for social change. In Year 1, following the skills and learning Bootcamp focusing on research and evaluation in weekend 3, a number of the Wave Changers highlighted the insight they gained on how to engage in research and conduct an evaluation, and the value of these skills in justifying and progressing their ideas for social change. There was also some evidence that the Wave Changers in Year 2 benefited from learning about the importance of understanding their target audience and testing their project or idea for social change. This knowledge was acquired in the workshops delivered during the programme weekends, designed to equip the participants with practical tools and resources to progress their projects.

‘I learned how to evaluate the social impact my project is having and whether it is meeting the needs of the community. I learned to draw out an action plan and theory-of-change diagram to help put things in perspective, which has proven to be one really practical thing I have taken away from Wave Change.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

There was evidence that the Wave Changers often acquired knowledge relevant to planning their projects or ideas for social change from their fellow participants. Across Years 1 and 2, they remarked on the value of being able to utilise and tap into the knowledge and skill sets of their peers. This was facilitated by meeting informally during the programme weekends, through their private Facebook group and specifically through the participant-led skill-share workshop and session delivered in the

fourth programme weekend in Year 1 and the skill-share session during the first programme weekend in Year 2:

‘I was sceptical before the weekend, wondering if it was even possible to learn anything new from our peers. But it turned out to be the most insightful and informative.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

‘As well as finding them [fellow-participants] inspirational and motivational, it was useful to find out the various skills that each of them have ... I imagine that I will make use of this information at some point, perhaps when I come to develop a website for my project.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

In Year 2, many of the Wave Changers applied their learning in practice. While some mentioned utilising the practical resources they received, for example, to identify their stakeholders and test their product effectiveness, others spoke more generally about how Wave Change helped them to plan and progress their ideas for social change:

‘It is the little things, like the little advice, the little pointers that you are given, they all add up and they are huge and so instrumental in what you want to do. It makes everything so much easier and less hassle and less scary because you know what you are doing.’ [Video reflection, Year 2]

There were a small number of Wave Changers who reflected in their diaries that they did not acquire any new skills or knowledge to support them taking action for social change. This featured more prominently in the focus groups with the participants in Year 2, when the Wave Changers reflected overall on how the programme contributed to planning and progressing their work on social change:

‘For me personally, I felt I could get the strong project management things from another place. So I wasn’t really expecting that here, but like just in terms of things like strategy planning, for each of us to have that would have been great.’ [Focus Group, Year 2]

‘You just kept being told, you can do it, you can do it. Like, yes we can, kind of Obama-style stuff. But when it actually came down to it, we weren’t equipped with the skills.’ [Focus Group, Year 2]

Business and financial management skills: While the issue of acquiring business and financial management skills did not feature in the data collected from the participants in Year 1, it was an issue that arose in Year 2. In Year 2, there was evidence that some of the Wave Changers were interested in developing their projects or ideas for social change into social enterprises and in making a career from their area of interest. As a result, value was placed on acquiring business and financial management skills, as well as knowledge on how to access funding. However, this was not a consensus view; two of the Wave Changers in Year 2 specifically spoke about how their interest lay in the social dividend their projects offered and were not interested in the business aspects or Wave Change offering them skills in this regard.

A small number of the Wave Changers did mention that the programme helped them to plan and further develop their projects through enhancing their business and financial management skills. In total, five Wave Changers (who were graduates of Trinity College, Dublin) were provided with the opportunity to work with a team of students studying social enterprise as part of their Masters in Business Management at Trinity College, Dublin, for a 2-month period. This was viewed as a very positive experience by these Wave Changers, who had the opportunity to engage the students from the perspective of understanding and exploring the business aspects of their projects. They explained how it provided them with the opportunity to reflect on the business model underpinning

their project and learning how to develop business and marketing plans. One Wave Changer mentioned the 'Making it as a Social Innovator' workshop as useful in this regard, and one observed that the allocation of seed funding was 'sort of like getting training for money' [Focus Group, Year 2] in terms of providing them with experience of budget allocation and financial management. Some Wave Changers stated that the Wave Change Programme had provided them with information on possible sources of funding, with the Facebook page being considered a good source of information on funding opportunities.

However, a common view expressed by the Wave Changers in Year 2, whose project status ranged from starting block to up-and-running, was the expectation that there would have been more of a focus on practical learning, comprising business and financial management skills, during the course of the programme.

'The business side of things is lacking for me in Wave Change.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

'I'm starting a business course, just evening or whatever, because Wave Change has not done that for me.' [Focus Group, Year 2]

A lack of knowledge and the ability to access funding was also viewed as a barrier to their ongoing work on social change. The Wave Changers in Year 1 were asked the question 'What did you consider to be a barrier to your ongoing work?' a year after completing the programme. The most common responses were access to funding and financial security:

'I could not get paid a sustainable wage from my work [social change work] and had to look for alternative work.' [Alumni questionnaire]

At the end of Year 2, the Wave Changers were asked during the focus group: 'What would you perceive to be the barriers to your ongoing work on social change?' Knowledge of funding sources and how to write a funding application were again commonly mentioned by the Wave Changers.

5.3.2 Social innovation

There is some evidence that Wave Change contributed to building the programme participants' capacity to be social innovators, by helping them to develop solutions designed to address a social need. The Wave Changers reflected on the opportunities provided for creative thinking, as well as opportunities to brainstorm and generate ideas and to solve problems. This is primarily evident in the reflection diaries written by the Wave Changers in the aftermath of the first and second programme weekends in Year 2. In particular, the Wave Changers highlighted that useful techniques were acquired through the workshops 'Sandbox Idea Generation' and '101 Ways to have Ideas' during the second programme weekend of Year 2. In addition, learning, and opportunities to apply their learning, were further facilitated by providing the Wave Changers across both years with the opportunity to interact with their peers and to generate solutions collectively to address the social problems of interest to them:

'I also learnt [in weekend 2] practical ways of generating ideas and also tackling problems/ coming up with solutions to problems or questions that might be hindering my project development.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

'This was the best thing about the weekend, I think. The chance to talk with other young people and discuss possible ways to solve social problems.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

'Plenty of small group work and informal chats led to a fruitful exchange of ideas. I lost count of the number of sentences which began with "How about ...?" or "Could you ...?" The range of actors in the group, the diversity of backgrounds and the creativity of ideas facilitated this and was perhaps the most enjoyable/useful feature of the Wave Change weekend.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

5.4 Outcome 4: Did the programme facilitate the participants to be part of a strong, diverse network of social change-makers aged 18–25 across Ireland?

Another intended outcome associated with the programme was that the Wave Changers' support networks would be developed and enhanced through their participation in Wave Change. The quantitative data was analysed to evaluate the impact of Wave Change on the respondents' scores on the Networks of Support Measure. While there was a medium positive effect between Time 1 and Time 2, there was no statistical difference in the scores from Time 1 ($M = 13.52$, $SD = 2.59$) to Time 2 ($M = 14.44$, $SD = 1.95$), $t(26) = -1.64$, Cohen's $d = .66$, $p > .05$ (two-tailed). The qualitative data pertaining to this outcome indicates that the Wave Changers benefited greatly through the networks they made with each other (i.e. peer network). In addition to this, the formation of other significant networks, which were outlined by Wave Changers, included the Wave Change Team and a wider set of individuals and key contacts working on projects and in organisations and settings associated with social change and social entrepreneurship. The peer network and the wider external network developed are examined below.

5.4.1 Peer network

There is a large set of qualitative evidence pertaining to the formation of a strong peer network of social change-makers through Wave Change. Both cohorts of Wave Changers spoke extensively about the huge benefit of the programme in terms of providing them with a support network of fellow participants also interested in the area of social change. Some referred to this as a 'community of like-minded people' who are 'passionate about social change' and 'aware of the issues in society and doing things to address them'. The data indicated that being part of the Wave Change Programme provided the participants with a significant opportunity to enhance mutual learning. Many described how they helped each other in the area of social change through sharing personal knowledge, experience, contacts and practical information. Indeed, many felt that meeting 'other Wave Changers' – and being able to tap into them for support, advice, skills and contacts and to work with them on social change issues – has been the most beneficial aspect of the initiative:

'The other Wave Changers showed so much support. Through them, I also found suitable links and contacts.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

'The most beneficial aspect of this programme for me is that it feels as if the 25 participants are a team. That it isn't simply one-on-one training or mentorship, but that we are all part of the process and are willing to support and provide ideas for each other's projects. It is one of the most rewarding and sustaining forms of support the programme offers.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

'Yes, it is often difficult to tap in to a community of like-minded people who are passionate about social change. The weekend really helped in that regard, in building up a group of friends and peers with similar motivations and aspirations, some of which can help/offer advice and insights that are directly applicable to my idea.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

In addition, several of the reflections by participants outlined that the friendships and social bonds that have developed and deepened throughout the course of the programme have also been very valuable in furthering their ideas, topics and projects for social change. The culmination of such peer contact resulted in a strong network of support for the Wave Changers:

'The opportunity to deepen our networks with the other participants was really excellent. I felt I made lasting friendships with people who will hopefully one day become my colleagues.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

'I think I've made friends for life from Wave Change.' [Focus Group, Year 2]

'The camaraderie, cross-pollination and common goals created a genuinely productive atmosphere, where we all wanted to get down to work and help each other with all of our initiatives.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

'By this stage, many of us have met up independently of the programme and it is very clear that friendships and networks are being created that will last well beyond the programme.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

Various forms of social media, including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, were highlighted as important tools enabling the Wave Changers to stay in contact with and support each other outside of the programme weekends and also for sharing information on upcoming events and relevant organisations:

'We all got to know each other and then as soon as I came back home ... we hooked up on Facebook, on LinkedIn, Twitter. We follow each other. And then I looked up some of the organisations that other group members recommended and from here I've found so many other things in the last three days. So probably the Internet is the largest network where that has changed.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

'My existing network is Facebook and I have been inundated with Facebook friend requests from people on the programme ... And we [Wave Change group] have set up a page on Facebook where we are discussing our own ideas and sharing ideas, giving perspectives. So I have 21 new contacts. And on Facebook again I've been linking some new pages that have been suggested to me, inundated with information.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

The data from the Alumni questionnaire shows that the first cohort of Wave Changers continued to support and maintain links with each other and benefit from building and maintaining networks and contacts made through Wave Change one year after finishing the initiative. The majority of respondents to the questionnaire (87%) stated that they continued to maintain contact with their Wave Change peers, describing a mixture of social and professional or project-related contact in both face-to-face and online formats. The following are some quotations from the questionnaires, highlighting the beneficial networking element of Wave Change:

'Wave Change introduced me to a group of people who are working on a variety of projects. Being connected with these people is very beneficial.'

'I built connections within the programme which opened doors to new opportunities to be involved in social change.'

'I have benefited hugely from the network that Wave Change has provided.'

'I am thoroughly grateful to both Wave Change employees and the broad network I have been invited into. It has helped me connect with many relevant people.'

Diverse Peer Network

Regarding diversity, the peer network developed among the Wave Changers was varied in terms of areas of interest. Therefore, participants were also able to broaden their understanding of and learn more about different social justice issues. In that sense, they had the opportunity to tap into the experiences of peers working across a wide spectrum of social issues:

'The team is diverse, but everyone has something to offer. Everyone has something to give and if there is something that I need or they need from me, then we know we can reciprocate.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

'I have no doubt that being linked into such a diverse and stimulating group will boost my capacity and proclivity for social change activities.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

'I also thought that meeting so many different and interesting people ... encouraged me to gain education and knowledge about topics I previously knew little about.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

'The first weekend allowed me to gain more insight into other issues that affect our society. These included everything from LGBT rights to sustainable energy.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

Some Wave Changers referred to the ethnic diversity mix within the group. However, a small number in Year 1 would have liked to have seen a more diverse grouping in terms of social background, stating that it would have been good for the initiative to have included people from Gaeltacht regions, the Traveller community and Northern Ireland, as well as having more 'new Irish'. Some of the Wave Changers in Year 1 were also critical about the lack of an ideological mix in the programme, which they felt was primarily of a liberal-left orientation. It was explained that this left little room for challenge, debate, structured conflict and learning in terms of other perspectives and backgrounds. This issue did not arise in the data obtained in Year 2.

5.4.2 Wider external network

While not an explicit intended outcome, the professional experience of the members of the Wave Change Team and the connections which SEI have in the social entrepreneurship field were noteworthy benefits for Wave Changers in terms of networking more broadly. A number of their reflections highlighted the value of the support they received from the Wave Change Team through one-to-one discussions on their specific ideas and projects. In addition, possibilities for progressing their social change ideas and projects through wider support, networking opportunities, contacts shared and recommendations made by the Wave Change Team were highlighted as very informative and facilitative. The Wave Change Team organised individual meetings and networking opportunities with contacts who had a particular expertise and interest in a specific area or field relevant to the Wave Changers. Furthermore, a range of events, seminars and talks were recommended by Wave Change to help Wave Changers progress their ideas and projects. Several participants who attended these spoke very positively about their value. Overall, the meetings, contacts and events were viewed by Wave Changers as a particularly useful resource in providing focus, direction and advice in progressing their various projects:

'[Wave Change Team members] outlined that they were there to help us and support us, and that through their contacts they'll be able to get us in touch with people they think will be able to give input into our own projects.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

'The Wave Change organisers also have a wealth of links and contacts for various aspects of my project. The weekend revealed some of them through chats with [Wave Change Team members].' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

'My contacts have expanded as a result and I find myself in contact with people that I wouldn't have originally thought could have assisted me, which is great. I have found it great to have different avenues opened up as a result of the contacts I have gained.' [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

The vast majority of Wave Changers also explained that their support networks were expanded through meeting and discussing their ideas and projects with external contacts, including guest or inspirational speakers and workshop hosts during the residential programme weekends. Through this process, the Wave Changers had access to a broad range of contacts in the fields of communications and media, social activism, campaigning, academia, arts, youth engagement and social entrepreneurship. Some of the Wave Changers had a chance to talk to the speakers and presenters on a one-to-one basis, which they found very beneficial. In Year 2, an 'External Engagement' workshop was highlighted by many Wave Changers as being of significant value in demonstrating to them their existing support network and personal contacts and also sharing this with others:

‘But I think I’ll be doing a lot more media this year and I knew I could pick up the phone and at the other end I could have a meeting or a phone call with [name of workshop presenter]. Quick – in an hour I could have this done.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

‘The more of this sort of person [guest speakers/presenters] I get the chance to meet and build relationships with, the better my social reach will be and as such the impact my work can have in the greater scheme of things. Wave Change in general has shown me the importance of networking and beyond these weekends the amount of networking I do in general has grown vastly.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

‘It was great to meet some experienced social changers from Limerick and I think I would be comfortable contacting them in the future and mentioning I met them at the weekend if I needed advice on one of their areas of specialisation.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

‘The fundraising workshop with [X] encouraged me to pursue my own contacts and develop them better, which I have done.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

A very small number of participants were of the view that Wave Change did not enhance the network of people or organisations relevant to their social change idea or project to date. Of these, some pointed out that they had not networked with people who were relevant to the specific idea, topic or issue they were working on during their time in Wave Change:

‘Nonetheless, it [Wave Change] hasn’t delivered much in the way of added value from the perspective of formal contacts.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 2]

Some Wave Changers who lived outside Dublin were of the view that the programme was very Dublin-centric and therefore they felt somewhat isolated from their peers, Wave Change staff, contacts in other organisations and relevant events:

‘That was the most difficult thing for me. I sort of felt detached from everybody really.’ [Focus Group, Year 2]

Finally, others who were of this view acknowledged that this lack of progress in making contact with relevant external networks for their projects was due to a lack of input into this engagement aspect of the programme on their part.

5.5 Outcome 5: Were the participants provided with the opportunity to develop and implement ideas for social change, and did innovative, sustainable projects emerge from the programme?

5.5.1 Opportunities to develop and implement ideas for social change

For the Year 1 cohort of Wave Changers, an expected outcome was that participants would be provided with the opportunity to develop and implement ideas for social change. By and large, the evaluation concludes that participants were indeed provided with such opportunities. At a general level, the achievement of this outcome was met during the course of the programme through the interaction between the participants, whereby they discussed and shared information on the progress, challenges and stage of development of their various individual social change ideas and projects with one another:

‘Getting others’ perspectives and their experiences and being able to collate those with my own was tremendously valuable as an exercise in idea generation ... Taking action is not something that comes easily to me, but I do see that the only way things can change is if someone gives change its initial impetus.’ [Self-reflection diary, Year 1]

The reflective diary entries of a number of participants contained descriptions of developments in their own individual ideas or projects following on from programme weekend 2 in Year 1:

- targeting socially excluded young people;
- recording short videos of community-based projects, led by individuals across the country, which have made a difference as a way of inspiring and empowering young people to take similar action;
- tackling youth unemployment through entrepreneurialism by renting a house for young people or early entrepreneurs to live and work together on their start-up companies or projects;
- challenging Ireland's drinking culture with an alternative option;
- tackling youth mental health and pressures on young people.

During programme weekend 4 in Year 1 (which represented a three-quarters-way point in the programme), Wave Changers were asked to reflect on their progress regarding developing or implementing their individual or group ideas and projects. Several described progress on their specific projects, indicating the benefit that Wave Change has been in this regard. The following is a brief summation of progress made by those who outlined the status of their projects:

- One participant explained that she has established a youth mental health campaign consisting of hosting various events, seminars and meetings and now has a team of 10 people working on this with her.
- Another participant explained that he has now set up a local community-based group called LOCAL ('Looking On, Community, Aspiration, Leadership'), which is engaging young adults from Dublin's North Inner City in discussions about the area's needs and linking with relevant professional organisations and youth groups around taking action.
- A third participant outlined her progress in setting up a literacy project through the use of musical theatre in the Ballymun area of Dublin.
- A fourth participant described his continuing work on the LiveStyles Festival, which he started in 2010, the main goal of which is to promote a community of artists by getting them to share their knowledge, skill sets and networks with one another.

There was also an opportunity provided during the weekends to develop and progress a group-based social change idea that originated during the second programme weekend. Called 'Ordinary Decent Citizen', this idea evolved into a group project involving about five of the Wave Changers and was generally viewed by those involved as progressing well. The Wave Change participant who took on the role of leading this project described its purpose as finding and highlighting ['the ordinary citizens in our society who are doing extraordinary things and inspiring people to do great things in their own lives, and to show how every little change makes a positive reflection on society'](#).

The Alumni questionnaires provided evidence of continuing progress in civic engagement activity by the Year 1 participants a year after they finished Wave Change. Data showed that 88% of Wave Change graduates were still either leading or involved in social change projects or roles. Moreover, 80% agreed that the Wave Change Programme had improved their capacity to be involved in activities intended to bring about social change through, for example, skills training, internal and external engagement, network support, and exposure to the social change and social enterprise and innovation fields.

5.5.2 The emergence of innovative, sustainable projects from Wave Change

While opportunities for the development of innovative, sustainable projects were relevant to Wave Changers in both years of the programme, this was particularly associated with Year 2 participants. This was because during Year 2 there was a much stronger focus on project development, whereas in Year 1 there was a greater focus on inspiring social change ideas. This was considered a bonus outcome, since the main intention was that projects would be used as a vehicle for participants to

apply their learning. The vast majority of Wave Changers in Year 2 and a small number in Year 1 developed innovative and potentially sustainable projects during their time in Wave Change.

In order to write up this outcome, a decision was taken by the Research Team, in conjunction with the Wave Change Team, to showcase a small number of individual projects across both years of the programme. This was done by selecting a total of six case studies – three from Year 1 and three from Year 2. Of the six originally chosen, one was not featured because the participant's project had not further developed during the course of the year subsequent to completing Wave Change, while consent from another on the final wording of the text was not obtained, hence four are presented below.

The cases below demonstrate how Wave Change successfully achieved the bonus outcome of supporting the emergence of innovative, sustainable social change projects through a variety of means, including providing participants with opportunities for discussion, support, personal development, practical skills training, reflection, networking and engagement. The individual cases demonstrate how participants progressed their ideas or projects and highlight the significance of the programme in helping participants to action these.

5.5.3 WAVE CHANGE CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1

Demographic profile at the time of commencing Wave Change: Male, Irish, age 25, third-level education completed, lived in Dublin, in further education and part-time employment.

Gary's idea for social change when he joined Wave Change was to present an alternative perspective of living in North Inner City Dublin. As someone who grew up in this area, the problem he noticed and wished to change was the very negative picture that dominated any discussion about the area, focusing on issues such as addiction and anti-social behaviour. Gary wanted to change this by highlighting the many advantages of living in the North Inner City: *'My goal was to shine a light on the positives and success stories of the North Inner City.'*

He explained that this idea matters because negativity and a constant focus on the negative enforces a negative mindset. He wanted to get the message out that the majority of people in the area are making a great contribution to their society. His idea was to *'normalise'* success and present an alternative positive view of the area which was more than just about disadvantage.

He explained that when he joined Wave Change, *'All I had were good intentions'*. While participating in the programme, he successfully turned his social change idea into action by developing a community group of young people from the North Inner City. These were people who wanted to give back to their local community and were civically engaged in the area. The group was called LOCAL (*'Looking On, Community, Aspiration and Leadership'*). The *'Looking On'* part was inspired by a gig held 30 years ago by U2, where they performed on the roof of a flat in Sheriff Street. Inspired by this, the group set about organising events that would celebrate the community and reinvigorate a spirit of unity and togetherness in the area. LOCAL was the vehicle through which public events were planned and developed. The first event organised by LOCAL was *'The Inner City's Got Talent'*, held in September 2012. This was a large-scale event supported by artists and Dublin City Council, and attended by over 2,000 local people. Other successful events included the *'Inner City Assembly'*, held in the Abbey Theatre, and a community gathering event in Mountjoy Square in 2013, both of which were well attended by people from the North Inner City.

He described the value of Wave Change in providing a space in which to meet and discuss with like-minded peers what contribution they wanted to make to society and how this could be achieved. He

said that the significance of Wave Change for him was that it ‘got us to think about “why” and the best possible route to this. It gave us a bit of clarity of mind.’

Gary stated that Wave Change provided him with a set of tools to help him turn his idea into a real project. The learning on the programme is still guiding and helping him in continuing his social change work, two years later. He described these skills as ‘how to get your message across, how to negotiate, how to convince people of your idea, how to build a structure, how to link in with others, how to manage your volunteers, how to develop a business plan ... The skills I picked up have been the starting point for a lot of things that have happened and will happen in the future.’

Since its inception, LOCAL has evolved and become an established network of young people who are actively involved in events and activities that contribute positively to their community. Gary has built up a strong support network of relevant contacts in order to progress his project. Members of LOCAL have networked and engaged with relevant contacts through joining several boards of local community groups and organisations, and being involved at a managerial level with several community-based projects. Gary has successfully fundraised for the various events and activities organised by LOCAL. In addition, Wave Change is an important support and friendship network for Gary, and he continues to have regular contact with many of his fellow Wave Changers and also Wave Change staff: ‘I still talk [to] 15 or 20 of the Wave Changers through social media or in person. I still link in and ask for advice from Wave Change. Wave Change hasn’t stopped in that sense.’

Postscript: Gary’s participation in the Trinity Access Programme and the Wave Change Programme were influencing factors in his strong interest in promoting youth social activism and social change. In May 2014, he ran as an Independent Community Candidate in the Local Election for Dublin’s North Inner City. He was successfully elected and is now a member of Dublin City Council.

Case Study 2

Demographic profile at the time of commencing Wave Change: Female, Irish, age 25, second-level education completed and in full-time third-level education, lived in Killarney, Co. Kerry.

Jessie’s social change area of interest is education and experiential learning. She explains that while education pedagogy emphasises the value of learning and teaching through group work, most learning in second-level education is individual-based sole learning, with very few opportunities to learn in a group or to do teamwork: ‘When I was in secondary school, it was all individual, solo and rote learning. I found that when I had the opportunity to learn with my friends in groups, I learned much better ... so my learning style was not individual learning, but collaborative group learning.’

When Jessie went on to third-level education, she had a very different learning experience. She notes, ‘it was often group-based learning’, both in the institute of technology and in the university she attended. Therefore one had to learn how to get on in a group, how to participate, to accept people, create a balance in the group, learn how to act and how not to act, among other things. She said this was difficult because she had not experienced or been taught this type of group- or team-based education in second-level education.

While participating in Wave Change, Jessie came up with an idea to address this issue and turned her idea into a project called 'Teen Tasks'. Teen Tasks takes young people through an experiential learning process which allows them to grow and learn through participation in team-building activities. They learn the art of decision-making, challenge themselves, work together as a team and eventually reflect on their experience in a collaborative group format. Her project was based on a gap she had found in particular in second-level education regarding group and teamwork. Jessie's idea was to introduce this group/team way of learning and working to secondary school students so that they would have this set of skills to draw upon when making the transition to third-level education. Her aim is that 'students leave school not just qualified, but with confidence, positive self-esteem and an awareness of their strengths'. She had had experience of group and team-based problem-solving and activities from her summer work in an adventure centre for the corporate sector.

In terms of the value of Wave Change, she highlighted the learning on the programme and how it influenced her both in coming up with her social change idea and in developing it into a project which she went on to implement successfully. She said that she 'got lots of encouragement, mentoring and feedback' while on the programme. Wave Change instilled her with a sense of self-confidence and she acquired various new skills, such as not being afraid of taking risks, learning from mistakes and pitching for funding. She stressed the importance of the professional and peer support network she got through the programme: 'Support, funding, encouragement, motivation, praising – all the things you need to get on. They were excellent, I couldn't fault them and I knew they were always at the other end of the phone. Not only did I have the people who ran Wave Change, but I also had the team [of peers] around me.'

Jessie successfully applied for seed funding and used this to purchase equipment for her project. She also used the funding to create a logo, business cards and leaflets to market Teen Tasks: 'That gave me a huge boost, to be able to buy equipment and travel to schools to promote myself. I was on the dole, so it was a huge help.' She also got a partner on board to work with her on the project. She said she would not have had the confidence to do this if she had not heard about the importance of 'sharing your workload' from keynote speakers in Wave Change.

Regarding implementing her project, based on her knowledge from working in an adventure centre, the skills she learned in Wave Change and the relevant equipment she purchased with the seed funding, Jessie has run a series of pilot team-building sessions in a number of secondary schools and youth groups throughout the country. As well as using it in schools, Jessie states that Teen Tasks can also be used as an ice-breaker and bonding exercise for groups of adults. She has also run sessions with teachers and adults working in the arts sector. She explained that she mainly set up these sessions through word of mouth and that two Wave Changers got her work in the Limerick and Galway City Art Galleries with groups of young curators.

After completing Wave Change, Jessie did an internship with Wave Change, where her role was Assistant Facilitator for Year 2 of the programme. In her role as intern, she was responsible for the team-building activities, games and so on. She states that she also learned a lot in this capacity: 'I got mentoring, feedback and learned so much by being around other facilitators. The whole experience opened my eyes. I became so much more aware of the nuances of facilitation and my role as an educator ... Overall it changed my attitude to being educated and being an educator and how I like to learn and how I like to teach.'

She points out that Wave Change instilled her with personal and practical skills that benefited her when setting up Teen Tasks and that have continued to help her in her current teaching career. In the future, she hopes to take Teen Tasks to the next level, by including more personal development and self-esteem facilitation and reflection within groups.

Case Study 3

Demographic profile at the time of commencing Wave Change: Female, Irish, age 24, third-level education completed, lived in Dublin, in part-time employment.

Project stage: Up and Running

Avril's passion for social change is focused on improving food education for students and young people in Ireland. She was inspired to address this issue given the negative impact of poor nutrition. She decided action was necessary to try to address the problem on the basis of a gap that she identified in targeted healthy eating campaigns for young people in college. In order to address this problem, she has developed a website for students and young people called 'Better than Noodles', which consists of three sections: food, mental health and physical health.

Wave Change has been valuable in supporting and helping Avril in her social change journey by providing her with practical advice and support, up-skilling, financial help and extending her networks and contacts in the field. Participating in Wave Change came at an important juncture in her project because, as she states, 'My project is already established, but I was feeling uninspired and was about to give up on the whole idea because of little interest from my target audience.'

Initially, the major benefit of Wave Change for Avril was the non-judgemental advice and support offered in changing some of her approach and taking her project forward. Another significant benefit was the positive outlook, confidence and motivation gained through discussing her project with fellow-Wave Changers. As Avril recalls: 'The interest I got within the group gave me a great ego boost and raised my self-esteem, and I realised I have so much more to give and kind of affirmed within me that my idea is good and it will benefit people ... Now, I'm more proactive and much more proud of my project and want to make it the best I can. I'm looking at any problems I have and looking at them as a "challenge" rather than a "problem".'

Subsequent benefits of the Wave Change Programme for Avril's social change project were the provision of a 'safe environment' to ask for help and discuss problems encountered, learning about social entrepreneurship, personal development and widening her network and contacts. The practical sessions and workshops delivered by the Programme Facilitator, and providing useful tools and resources for the Wave Changers to progress their projects, were identified as being of significant value to Avril.

Since joining Wave Change, Avril has focused her project on developing the food section of the website based on video demonstrations of how to shop for and cook healthy, affordable meals. She is getting professional advice and help regarding the input of the other two sections, which will contain information and links on the association between food and nutrition and mental and physical health.

Avril was successful in gaining Wave Change seed funding on two occasions. She has also been involved in making successful funding pitches to further develop her social change project to the O2 ThinkBig Fund and SEI Mini-innovation Fund. She has formed a large support network of relevant contacts who are assisting her in her endeavour. These include Student Union and Welfare Officers in third-level institutions; food and nutrition experts working in organisations such Safefood.eu, eatwell.ie and the Nutrition and Health Foundation; and staff working in Spunout.ie, a well-being and healthy living organisation designed to give young people information and advice. She has also

become a Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution Ambassador for Dublin.

Case Study 4

Demographic profile at the time of commencing Wave Change: Female, Iranian-Irish, age 21, second-level education completed, in third-level education and part-time employment, lived in Dublin.

Sheelan's passion for social change is based on promoting cultural diversity in Ireland. She was inspired to work on this idea based on the increasing level of diversity in Irish society, with the 2011 Census showing that 12% of the population were immigrants who had come to work, live or study in Ireland. Sheelan explains that harnessing and managing this diversity for cultural integration is 'a key opportunity and a key challenge for everyone living in Ireland ... We need to foster mutual respect and cooperation among people of different cultures now in order to ensure that discrimination, racism, stereotyping and cultural misunderstandings towards different religious, ethnic or cultural backgrounds are avoided in the future.'

She points out that, over the past number of years, various persons in Dublin and members of Dublin City Council have been actively working towards integration in the city by organising various cultural festivals, such as Africa Week, Experience Japan, Chinese New Year and Diwali, among many others. However, she states that due to the complex political and religious status of the Middle East, there are currently no cultural events held for the people of these communities, and therefore general knowledge about these cultures is very poor.

In order to address this problem, Sheelan's idea for social change is to promote an appreciation of cultural diversity by organising cultural events, with the aim of 'fostering mutual respect and cooperation among people of different cultures and in doing so promote better understanding of each other and their cultures'. She explains that through cultural celebrations, barriers can be broken down and stereotypes tackled.

Wave Change has been of significant value to Sheelan in developing her idea into an actual project. Since joining the programme, she has successfully run her first event – the Nowruz, The Festival of Spring celebration – held in Dublin City Hall in March 2013. This was a pilot event to see if Middle Eastern and Central Asian communities can collaborate and work together and also to see if there is a need for such an event or community organisation currently in Ireland. The event proved to be a great success, demonstrating that there is both a need for this sort of community organisation and an interest in these cultures from the community at large. After organising the first event, Sheelan established the Bahar Foundation (Bahar meaning 'Spring'). This is an umbrella organisation under which Middle Eastern and Central Asian communities can work together on a range of cultural events in a non-religious and non-political environment, dedicated to celebrating and promoting the art and culture of their communities for the benefit of the community at large. These events include language classes, poetry evenings, movie nights, concerts and food festivals, to name but a few. As Sheelan recalls: 'Through the Wave Change Programme, I have been able to develop the skills I need to be a leader in my community and lead the establishment of the Bahar Foundation, and the success of the Nowruz celebration has been a reflection of my abilities in governance, management and operation of such events.'

Sheelan also highlights the value of the support network she acquired through Wave Change. Some of her fellow-Wave Changers from Years 1 and 2 were involved in her project. Based on her experience of setting up the pilot festival, she has also made some important networks and contacts through engagement with stakeholders from a range of ethnic communities (Iranian, Turkish, Kurdish, Baha'i, Afghan, Azeri and Kazakh), Dublin City Council, migrant-owned businesses, university departments, artists and cultural institutions such as the Chester Beatty Library.

Sheelan was successful in her pitch for seed funding to further develop the Bahar Foundation. This funding was primarily spent on establishing the organisation's identity, which includes its brand, website, social media page, promotional material and administrative costs. It has now been renamed Bahar – Centre for Intercultural Collaboration. She continues to work on this, with planning for Bahar's first official event (the second celebration of Nowruz), currently being organised.

5.6 Summary

Intended outcomes were examined using a mixed-methods approach based on quantitative and qualitative data. In the main, the quantitative data from baseline and follow-up surveys did not reveal any major differences among the participants in the achievement of outcomes before and after Wave Change. However, there is a strong set of evidence from the qualitative data showing that the programme achieved its intended outcomes based on what participants reported through self-reflection diary entries, focus group discussions and case studies.

Outcome 1: Inspiration to engage in social change and make a difference

- While primarily intended for Year 1 participants (since Year 2 participants were already socially active), the quantitative data showed that both groups had a strong sense of social responsibility and were civically inspired to engage and make a difference at the beginning of the programme.
- Qualitative data showed that Wave Changers drew much inspiration from their peers on the programme and also from the programme content, such as some of the guest or keynote speakers and workshops.
- Quantitative data reveal no significant difference in levels of civic involvement and social responsibility by participants at the beginning and end of the programme.

Outcome 2: Personal foundations to lead on change

- Core components of this outcome on personal foundations were examined in terms of agency, self-awareness, self-efficacy and well-being.
- While the quantitative data did not show any statistically significant difference in the Wave Changers' personal foundation skills from the beginning to the end of the programme, qualitative data show that many participants reported an enhanced set of personal skills as a result of engagement with peers, the Wave Change Team, skills learned and enhanced, and contacts made while participating in the programme.
 - ✓ **Agency:** Wave Changers reported an enhanced sense of self-belief, inspiration and motivation to take social action based on their interaction with like-minded individuals on the programme and the empathetic, safe environment that Wave Change provided to discuss and help with their social change ideas and projects.
 - ✓ **Self-awareness:** Participants gained a greater understanding across a broad range of facets, including values, relationships, personal interactions, personal presentation, networks and supports, personal skills, goals and critical reflection. These skills were

learned particularly through some of the personal development workshops and talks by keynote presenters.

- ✓ **Self-efficacy:** Participants discussed an enhanced sense of confidence and belief in their social change ambitions based on interaction with fellow participants and others involved in the programme, new communication and presentation skills acquired, and external engagement activities.
- ✓ **Well-being:** The programme made a positive contribution to the participants' personal well-being in terms of the support they received, as well as discussions and advice on self-care.

Outcome 3: Knowledge and experience of project management and social innovation

- Both quantitative and qualitative data show that according to most participants, their project management skills were enhanced through the Wave Change Programme. Skills acquired included practical skills, in particular, in the area of communications and presentation in both Years 1 and 2, and project management, implementation skills and business and financial management skills in Year 2.
- While there is no quantitative data on social innovation, the relevant qualitative data show that the programme provided opportunities for Wave Changers to enhance their skills in this regard by facilitating creative thinking, brainstorming, ideas and solutions generation, and problem-solving.

Outcome 4: Support network of social change-makers

- While no statistically significant difference was found in the quantitative scores on participants' networks of supports, the qualitative data revealed that important peer and wider external networks were developed during the Wave Change Programme in Years 1 and 2.
- There is a large amount of qualitative data demonstrating the importance of the peer network for Wave Changers in terms of a community of like-minded individuals, mutual learning and help, friendship and social bonding. Diversity – in terms of social change issues and projects, and backgrounds and levels of experiences – was also referred to by the Wave Changers. A small number would have liked to have seen more diversity of background and thinking on the programme.
- The peer network that developed during the course of the programme continued to be beneficial after the participants completed Wave Change, as the Alumni survey data indicate.
- While not an explicit outcome, the value of support received through the wider external network of contacts made by participants is noteworthy. This was primarily facilitated through the Wave Change Team members and the contacts, skills training and expertise they imparted to participants during the course of the programme.

Outcome 5: Opportunity to develop and implement ideas for social change

- This was relevant to Year 1 participants, who reported on how their individual ideas had developed during the course of the programme with the opportunities provided. Several described developing their social change ideas into specific projects and taking action on them during the programme.
- A group-based social change idea also developed into a project during the course of the programme.
- Continuing progress on taking social action was made by Wave Changers after completing the programme, as the Alumni survey data reveals.

Emergence of innovative, sustainable projects

- This was a bonus outcome relevant to Year 2 participants in particular, given the focus on projects. But it was also relevant to some participants in Year 1 who made significant progress on their projects. The four case studies featured in this report demonstrate this.

6. Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together the main findings of the evaluation study on the implementation and delivery of Wave Change over the course of two years (2012–2013) and assesses whether the programme met its intended outcomes. In describing and assessing the initiative, this evaluation report draws on a set of triangulated data gathered from relevant documentary sources, as well as empirical data gathered through qualitative and quantitative methods, including questionnaires, interviews and focus groups with programme participants, and members of the Wave Change Team and Steering Group.

Wave Change is a programme that has met a gap in service provision for youth interested in being civically active and pursuing their social change ideas and projects. The following discussion shall describe how the programme provided important youth development components (Funders Collaborative on Youth Organising, 2011), including:

1. the provision of services, supports, access to caring adults and safe spaces;
2. opportunities for personal growth and development;
3. meeting young people where they are;
4. building young people's individual capacity;
5. emphasising positive self-identity;
6. supporting youth–adult partnerships.

In a similar manner to the much-discussed range of individual-level psycho-social benefits in the relevant literature on civic engagement activity, participation in Wave Change was found to be associated with positive identity and development, enhanced self-confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy, improved social, communication, leadership and critical thinking skills, and improved or wider levels of social support. At the community level, benefits were linked to helping the Wave Changers to implement novel solutions to a wide range of social issues, problems or inequalities which they brought to the programme or developed while participating in it.

This chapter begins by discussing the conceptual basis of the Wave Change initiative in terms of the original model and the changes to this as the initiative developed and was implemented. It goes on to focus on two specific components in discussing the overall assessment of the implementation of Wave Change. These are the Wave Change Programme and the outreach presence. Finally, the overall outcomes achieved by Wave Change are addressed.

6.2 Assessment of the Wave Change model – Original and evolved

Wave Change represents a novel service in Ireland designed to meet an identified gap by SEI in support of the cohort of youth in the age group 18–25 who are interested in changing Ireland and having their voices heard. In particular, those with ideas and projects addressing social issues or problems in Irish society were targeted, with the intention of supporting them and providing them with some of the necessary skills and networks to take action. An evolving or organic approach was taken to the Wave Change model whereby it was altered over the development and implementation phases. Key factors influencing these changes were advice and input from the Steering Group, the findings of the Interim Evaluation Report, and the experiential learning of the Wave Change Team. By and large, the core programme model remained the same as originally set out. However, there were some differences and changes regarding the target group and ethos, which are discussed below.

First, the group of young people being targeted by Wave Change shifted over the course of the two years. In Year 1, the initiative was focused on young people who were interested in social change and may or may not have had ideas and possibly projects regarding such. In Year 2, focus shifted to those who had actual experience of taking action for social change and had a specific social change idea that they would develop into a specific project or were currently working on a specific project when they joined Wave Change. Basically, this shift in focus meant that most of those who joined Wave Change in Year 1 were at the 'ideas stage' and most were not actively pursuing a social change project, whereas those in Year 2 were already socially active, working on a social change issue or topic and were considered 'high-potential social actors, social entrepreneurs or change-makers'. This difference is reflected in the altered description of Wave Change and revised criteria used to recruit participants in Year 2, and in the emphasis not only on social change but on innovation and on experience of taking action.

This change in the model could be attributed to the learning from the first year of implementation, when many of the participants did not have specific projects to focus on and therefore were not in a position to directly apply the knowledge and skills learnt on the programme. In order to maximise the learning, the Wave Change Team and Steering Group reframed the model so that experiential learning and action were prioritised. This was more in line with the original intention of the funders, who were interested in youth demonstrating action in the civic engagement field, and SEI, who were interested in supporting activism among this age group.

Second, the type of diversity characteristics of the target group of participants for Wave Change differed from that originally envisaged during the early planning stage of the initiative with the funders, whereby the focus was on youth from marginalised communities or disadvantaged young people experiencing adversity. While such young people were not excluded from participating in Wave Change, it transpired that the vast majority of young people who attended the recruitment phases and joined Wave Change were not from such backgrounds. Diversity was reframed by SEI prior to the recruitment phase to include a broader set of socio-cultural characteristics, including education, employment, ethnicity, geography, social issue or idea, and minority group membership. Wave Change did achieve a relatively diverse group on this broader basis; nonetheless, some members of the Wave Change Team, Steering Group and a small number of Wave Changers themselves acknowledged that, overall, it was quite a homogeneous group of participants. A challenge for the future is how to reach out to a broader set of youth.

A third, more subtle change in the model was in the learning and support ethos of the initiative. Learning and support were emphasised in both years, through the structured programme environment which formed a core part of Wave Change (in the form of programme weekends and skills workshops) and peer learning and support (in the form of networking during and outside the programme weekends). In Year 2 in particular, there was a shift in the ethos of Wave Change, with a greater emphasis on youth leadership, with a focus on agency regarding decision-making and problem-solving skills and participants taking on more responsibility and ownership. For example, there was a stronger focus on peer learning and support in Year 2, with a shift away from reliance on the one-to-one support system from members of the Wave Change Team, which featured more strongly in Year 1. More self-initiation was expected of participants in Year 2, if they sought such support. This was based on the 'high-potential' target group in Year 2 who, given their background and experience, were expected to become autonomous social change leaders and social innovators. There was also a shift in Year 2 towards youth civic engagement, with the participants becoming social change agents through more emphasis on experiential learning and action orientation, with a strong focus on developing social change projects. In implementing the programme, achieving the required balance – between the Wave Change Team's desire for the participants to possess these entrepreneurial characteristics and the participants' expressed need for one-to-one support from professionals and experts in the field – was a difficult task for the Team.

6.3 Implementation of the core inputs in the Wave Change model

The Wave Change model that was implemented centred on the Wave Change Programme component, made up of the following core inputs: programme weekends, external engagement, internships, seed funding, practical skills workshops, coaching and one-to one-support. This corresponds with the youth civic action programme outlined in the original Wave Change model that was designed to provide support, networking and training to Wave Change participants. The vast majority of resources in terms of personnel, time and finance were allocated to this component.

The other two components of the original model were field development and knowledge generation and dissemination. The former was intended to consist of a web-based portal to connect young people, and also adult allies, in the fields of youth civic engagement and social justice (see Section 4.2 on 'Wave Change outreach'). The purpose of the latter was to guide programme improvements and influence youth civic engagement policy and practice more broadly. Below, we shall discuss the minimal implementation of the outreach aspect over the 2-year period during which Wave Change was evaluated. The evaluation by NUI Galway of Wave Change in terms of the Interim Evaluation Report at the end of Year 1 and this Final Evaluation Report (which merges the overall findings from both implementation years and draws together the main successes and challenges faced by the initiative) forms the essence of the knowledge generation and dissemination input.

6.3.1 The Wave Change Programme

Key successes in programme implementation

Through the delivery of the Wave Change Programme, the Wave Changers were supported and up-skilled and had opportunities to engage in social change. In the main, the conclusion of this evaluation is that most aspects of the programme were delivered as intended.

The specifics of the main successes of the key components are now discussed. The programme enjoyed a very high level of engagement, with most Wave Changers attending the 10 weekends over the 2-year period, the exception being the final weekends in Year 1 and Year 2, where the numbers were significantly lower. The programme weekends involved an extensive mix of personal and practical skill-based learning and training, as well as opportunities for the participants to meet and network. Regarding the former, the overall content and delivery of the programme weekends were highly successful. Other noteworthy successes of the programme weekends included the provision of a dedicated safe space and time away for participants to meet and discuss ideas and projects with each other, the Wave Change Team, and invited speakers and experts in the area. This was seen as highly valuable both at a practical level in getting help and advice, as well as emotionally in being supported and motivated to pursue one's social change idea or project. The significance of the peer network for social bonding and friendship was also particularly significant. The participant-led weekend in Year 1 and the small group work sessions held were regarded as a most valuable method of learning and interaction by the Wave Changers.

In terms of the external engagement opportunities, the vast majority of Wave Changers across both years took various opportunities to connect with individuals and organisations and attend events and conferences in the social and business fields. A particular focus on this in Year 2 meant that the first two programme weekends incorporated workshops focusing in particular on external engagement. The data clearly indicate that this aspect of Wave Change was implemented as intended, with both the Wave Change participants and the Wave Change Team expressing high levels of satisfaction with this programme component.

A series of specialist practical skills workshops were offered to participants outside of the programme weekends. The small group nature of these, and the overall content and delivery method, were regarded as highly satisfactory by those who attended. In Year 1, two specialist workshops were offered outside the weekends in venues across the country. In Year 2, the format was changed, whereby a total of six specialist workshops were held outside the programme weekends in Dublin. The tailoring of these to meet the needs and interests of participants was reported as particularly useful.

Another key component of successful youth civic engagement programmes is the provision of opportunities for youth–adult partnerships. The significant role of adults in youth programmes has been highlighted in the relevant literature (Woyach, 1996; Camino and Zeldin, 2002; Finlay *et al.*, 2010), whereby youth–adult relationships provide praise, reinforcement, mentoring and support to young people. Indeed, the specific value of mentoring has been highlighted as a critical component of youth social entrepreneurship programmes (UNICEF, 2007; Foundation for Young Australians, 2010 and 2013). The implementation of the formal coaching aspect of the Wave Change initiative varied greatly between Year 1 and Year 2, with two specialist coaching providers running individual sessions for those deemed by the Wave Change Team to be suitable to participate in Year 1. This aspect was regarded very positively by those involved. Such external support did not occur in Year 2 (see ‘Main challenges’ below). Also, in both years, a more semi-formal arrangement was put in place, whereby members of the Wave Change Team provided one-to-one support to some of the participants. In Year 1, this was mainly led by one member of the Wave Change Team who had specific responsibility for this aspect of the initiative and regularly approached the Wave Changers. Many of the participants in Year 1 found such support from the Team to be of great value. In Year 2, however, there were challenges associated with this arrangement (see below).

The provision of funding for social projects has been identified as another critical ingredient of youth social entrepreneurship programmes (UNICEF, 2007). Finance was available via the Wave Change Programme for successful applicants. The application for seed funding was a formal process comprising a written application form and an oral presentation to a panel of judges. It was an important experiential learning exercise for those who participated in this process. The implementation of this element of the initiative varied greatly from Year 1 to Year 2. In Year 2, the vast majority applied for and received funding, whereas in Year 1 most participants did not. One of the primary reasons for this contrast was the stage which participants were at in implementing social change, with those participants in Year 2 having a specific project, whereas most of those in Year 1 had ideas regarding social change rather than specific projects. Therefore, the Year 2 cohort were at a more suitable stage for making a seed funding application.

Main challenges in programme implementation

Overall, implementation of the programme was primarily a very positive experience. However, during the roll-out of the programme, a number of issues arose, which are now discussed in terms of learning for future endeavours regarding the provision of similar youth entrepreneurship programmes. One aspect that arose was the divergent views among members of the Wave Change Team and the Wave Changers on the extent to which a workable balance was achieved in Year 1 and Year 2 between the personal development and project development elements of the programme. While the Team members generally thought this worked well, particularly in Year 2, a desire for more applied learning

and practical-based training was highlighted by the Wave Changers. In particular, participants in both years would have liked in-depth sessions with more of an emphasis on action in developing their social change ideas and projects, and those in Year 2 would have liked more emphasis on project development.

In addition, pitching the content of the programme weekend sessions was challenging given the diverse group of participants, who were at different stages with their social change ideas or projects and also had different education and training backgrounds. This was particularly highlighted in Year 1 in terms of diversity within the group. As a result, the perceived value of some of the weekend content was low according to those who already had acquired skills in some of the areas or those who stated that they did not need these types of skills given the more advanced stage they were at with their projects. Other participants found it very challenging when comparing themselves to others in the group who were at more advanced stages.

In terms of attendance, relatively low numbers of participants self-nominated to attend the practice-based skills workshops held outside the programme weekends, particularly in Year 2. The data showed that participants have busy lives and prioritise their time. For some, these workshops were seen as additional commitments, which several participants did not have sufficient time to dedicate to. The scheduling of this training outside of the programme weekends, and the Dublin location of the workshops for those living outside the capital, were common reasons given for not attending. Also, levels of attendance at the final programme weekends in Year 1 and Year 2 were quite low. Some Wave Changers also noted that because of the largely reflective rather than applied or practical content of the final weekends, they were not as interested in attending these. A caveat to note is that these final weekends were held in September, which is a time of the year when many young people are in transition regarding third-level education, travel, employment and so on.

Regarding external engagement opportunities, a small number of Wave Changers in Year 2 pointed out that some of these opportunities were not open to all programme participants and that some were not introduced to any relevant contacts for their projects. Some participants suggested that more transparency around selection processes for some of these opportunities would be of value, as well as participants following up with the Wave Change Team on these activities at the weekend sessions.

The internships were an aspect of the programme where a low level of progress was made regarding implementation. During Year 1 of Wave Change, just two Wave Changers participated in internships, while internships were not progressed in Year 2 for any Wave Changers. A number of challenges were outlined as to why this outcome was difficult to achieve. Primarily, it was pointed out by members of the Wave Change Team that such internships require funding to provide paid internships and also require a high level of oversight in the form of management. Both of these reasons had resource implications for the programme.

Issues arose in terms of the seed funding process in Year 1, when the very low uptake resulted in only two funds being awarded. The primary reason for this was the stage of development of participants' social change ideas, with many not perceiving their ideas to be sufficiently developed to make an application for funding. Others cited the timing of the seed funding application process (after the summer) as being late in the programme, while a very small number of participants thought the amount of available funding was too low.

The provision of coaching and individualised support for participants was a complex task and posed some challenges for the Wave Change Team. For a variety of reasons (including demand and supply issues, suitability/matching and a Dublin location), not all participants in Year 1 were able to avail of coaching opportunities. In Year 2, no formal coaching was provided to participants despite the intention to do this towards the end of the programme. Some participants were dissatisfied that they were not offered a coaching opportunity in Year 2. Moreover, the ethos of the programme changed

in Year 2, towards more self-direction and leadership, and support was mainly established on a self-nomination basis, whereby those Wave Changers who felt the need for such help contacted a Wave Change Team member in order to get more semi-formal type support. However, it was also difficult for the Wave Change Team to manage an appropriate level of one-to-one support for participants to meet their individual level of need and stage of idea/project development. Such support requires specific individualised tailoring, based on an in-depth knowledge of participants' projects, and is therefore difficult to implement with large numbers of participants. This was a time-consuming task in Year 1 for one Team member in particular, while in Year 2 a lack of clarity on the part of some of the Wave Change Team members was highlighted in terms of their specific contractual remit and responsibility to individualised support provision, as well as challenges posed by having a geographic base outside Ireland. Some participants who received this type of support would have liked more specialised directional assistance rather than a general check-in to move their projects forward.

Finally, keeping track of the participants' progress on a regular basis throughout the duration of the programme and following up with them on tasks and actions requiring completion was found to be a challenge for members of the Wave Change Team.

6.3.2 Wave Change outreach

This was the second core component of Wave Change and was assessed in terms of progress concerning (1) a Wave Change online presence through its website and social networking sites (i.e. Facebook and Twitter) and (2) face-to-face outreach with similar organisations. The intended outcomes of the Wave Change online community were twofold: first, to connect young people aged 16–25 across Ireland to each other and, second, to connect adult allies working in the areas of youth civic action and social justice across Ireland. These were to be achieved through the establishment of a web-based portal for use by the general public. By and large, this component was not implemented as originally intended due to lack of capacity and resources, as well as lack of clarity on the purpose of the online component. Furthermore, based on implementation difficulties encountered in Year 1, a revised strategy was developed for Year 2, a key aim of which was the provision and sharing of relevant information with specific audiences, including young people, alumni, potential participants, and stakeholders on youth civic action, social change, social entrepreneurship and social innovation through the Wave Change programme. The main difficulties faced in implementing this revised strategy are now addressed.

Main challenges in implementation of the online presence

Following a review by the Wave Change Team and Steering Group at the end of Year 1, it was decided to set up a website, Facebook page and Twitter account for the programme in order to share relevant information with youth aged 18–25 and relevant stakeholders on social change developments across Ireland and to increase the visibility of Wave Change. An online presence was established through the website and social networking sites, whereby information-sharing and communication took place between Wave Changers, alumni members, Wave Change Team members and the general public. Hence, while Wave Change did meet its intended aim of sharing information and providing an interactive platform for users, quantitative analysis of this online presence at the end of Year 2 indicated relatively low levels of usage of these tools during the lifespan of the programme, with the exception of peaks in website visits and Facebook and Twitter usage concentrated at the recruitment phases, with significant declines thereafter. Moreover, these online modes were not widely used across the country, with the majority of users based in Dublin. From a visibility perspective, there was very limited profiling of the participants on the Wave Change website.

In terms of the reasons why such problems occurred regarding implementation of this aspect of the initiative, similar barriers to Year 1 were cited by the Wave Change Team and Steering Group in Year 2 in terms of lack of resources, capacity, technical expertise, time and clarity of purpose. In essence,

this aspect of the initiative was not prioritised, with the primary focus being on implementing the core programme in 2012 and 2013. The significance of networking, including by means of electronic platforms, has been identified by UNICEF (2007) as one of the critical ingredients of successful youth social entrepreneurship programmes. Given that an online presence is core to youth programmes because of the technologically driven means by which youth tend to communicate nowadays, and the mode through which such programmes are frequently marketed and promoted, the lack of progress in the development of an online presence could be described as a missed opportunity. Private Facebook pages were established by the Wave Changers themselves and used to connect and share relevant information among both cohorts of Wave Changers and Bootcamp attendees. The availability of comparative data from similar youth programmes to assess the online presence would be beneficial in order to put this finding in context.

Main challenges in implementation of face-to-face outreach

The intended purpose of this component was to connect and support organisations working in the social action and youth fields and to share ideas, experience, learning and best practice through the establishment of a Youth Civic Action Network. It was envisaged that this would be achieved by holding a biannual workshop programme and setting up an online forum for relevant organisations. Minimal progress was made in achieving this outcome, with just one workshop programme taking place in May 2011, while an online forum was not established. In a similar manner to the above discussion of the online presence, the focused priority on the development and implementation of the core Wave Change Programme meant that there was a lack of time, resources and capacity to drive this outreach aspect. Some members of the Wave Change Team and Steering Group thought the purpose of this also lacked clarity, contributing to difficulties in establishing such a network. It was also suggested that Wave Change needed to establish its credibility in the sector prior to delivering this component of the initiative. The experience it would gain in implementing the initiative would mean that it would be in a better position to deliver on this component, having established credibility and links with organisations over the course of the implementation period. On this basis, the Wave Change Team intended to focus on the Youth Civic Action Network in mid to late 2012; however, this did not happen and no major developments had occurred up to the end of the evaluation period.

6.4 Contribution to desired outcomes

This evaluation does not set out to establish impact, based on the knowledge that this takes time to accomplish and acknowledging that there are other potentially influencing factors which affect the overall outcomes of the initiative. Regarding the latter, for example, the baseline and follow-up questionnaire data revealed a high level of civic involvement and social engagement activity among most of the participants prior to joining and whilst involved in Wave Change, and also a high level of self-reported personal and practical skill levels. Furthermore, a major limitation of this study is the small size of the sample, which poses difficulties when looking for statistical significance. In light of this difficulty, the data was further analysed to determine whether there were any positive effects regarding changes to the Wave Changers' scores between Time 1 and Time 2 (Cohen's *d* value). This more subtle measure did find a number of positive effects.

In a more holistic manner, the evaluation uses a triangulated set of data to assess progress in meeting a broad set of desired programme outcomes. In particular, the various qualitative data gathered through focus groups, self-reflection diaries and observation were useful in gaining an understanding of the nuances of how the programme influenced the participants. In assessing whether Wave Change contributed to the following five intended outcomes, a contribution analysis approach was used:

1. inspiring participants to engage in social change;
2. providing participants with the relevant personal foundational skills (self-awareness, agency, self-efficacy, well-being);
3. providing participants with in-depth knowledge and practical experience of project management and social innovation;
4. connecting participants to a strong diverse network of change-makers;
5. providing participants with the opportunity to develop and implement social change ideas or innovative, sustainable projects.

While three of the intended outcomes from the programme were the same across both years for the Year 1 and Year 2 cohorts, some were different, reflecting the different type of participants recruited in Year 1 and Year 2. These differences were: (1) in relation to inspiration to engage in social change and make a difference, and having an opportunity to develop and implement ideas for social change, being most relevant to Year 1 participants, and (2) having innovative, sustainable projects emerging from Wave Change, being more applicable to Year 2 participants since they all had definite projects to work on when they joined the programme. The following discussion sets out the evaluation findings, which show that the programme by and large has achieved its intended outcomes, with some minor exceptions.

6.4.1 Outcome 1: The participants are inspired to engage in social change and make a difference

As previously stated, this is particularly relevant to Year 1 participants since it was assumed that Wave Changers in Year 2 were already inspired prior to joining because they came to the programme with a specific social change project. For the Year 1 participants, it is clear from the qualitative data that, at the beginning of the programme, most of them were engaged in and passionate about social issues, with which they had personal experience or which were relevant to their own culture. Wave Change provided an important context and supportive structure to further reflect, problem-solve and come up with solutions and develop projects based on various social issues they were interested in. On the whole, the research found that the Wave Changers in Year 1 were further inspired to engage in social change and make a difference based on their participation in Wave Change. This inspiration came from their peers attending the programme, as well as from keynote speakers and workshop presenters who attended the programme weekends or held practical skills workshops or masterclasses. Through this interaction with each other and exposure to external speakers and presenters, the group of

participants were motivated and encouraged to pursue their social change ideas and projects.

The relevant quantitative data measured both cohorts' levels of civic involvement and social responsibility at the start of the programme in Year 1 and Year 2. Both groups of Wave Changers were very similar in scoring themselves highly on both scales, indicating highly active and engaged participants when joining Wave Change. While not anticipated based on the different recruitment strategies, those in Year 1 were actually slightly more active and engaged than those in Year 2. Furthermore, when levels of civic involvement and social responsibility were compared prior to and after participating in Wave Change, no statistically significant differences were found, although a small increase in civic involvement was found. A possible likely reason for this is the constitution of the Wave Change participants which self-reported high levels of involvement and responsibility pre-Wave Change (i.e. high baseline scores at Time 1), so the scope for finding large increases was minimal.

6.4.2 Outcome 2: Participants have strong, resilient personal foundations to lead on change now and in the future, including enhanced self-awareness, sense of agency, self-efficacy and well-being

Civic engagement activities place much emphasis on developing the capacities of young people through supporting the 'soft' personal and social development skills. In particular, the positive youth development approach is a renowned theoretical model in this regard, focusing on five personality characteristics, namely: competence, confidence, character, connection and caring (Eccles and Gootman, 2002; Lerner *et al.*, 2005). Civic engagement is also linked with the promotion of resilience and social support among young people (Dolan, 2010). Organisations such as The Young Foundation in the UK have placed much emphasis on developing a framework to evaluate the evidence and impact of such skills development (McNeill *et al.*, 2012). The focus of Wave Change on building strong, resilient personal foundational skills for participants to enable them to lead on change, with a particular emphasis on self-awareness, agency, self-efficacy and well-being, is very much in line with these theoretical perspectives. This is also in line with Ginwright and Cammarota's (2002) social justice model, which emphasises the importance of self-awareness in fostering a positive sense of self and identity and social awareness in thinking critically about issues in their communities and solutions to address these.

The qualitative data reveal strong evidence of higher perceived levels of personal skills and well-being based on participation in Wave Change. The primary vehicle by which these skills were imparted was via the programme weekends. During these weekends, Wave Changers described how the interaction with each other, the Wave Change Team and programme presenters and inspirational speakers positively contributed to strengthening their personal foundational skills to lead on social change. The programme instilled a sense of belief and confidence among the Wave Changers in their social change ideas and projects. Moreover, participants described how they moved from having an interest or an idea or project to learning how to put this into action – and having the courage to do so. The communication skills and external engagement activities were highlighted as particularly beneficial in strengthening participants' personal foundations to lead on change. They also highlighted the value of having dedicated time, a safe place and empathetic environment to do this in the company of others who were trying to do similar things. Helpful advice from some speakers on self-care when working in the area of social change was mentioned as important in promoting well-being, and the personal development sessions and reflection, which featured strongly in both years, were valued by most participants. However, a minority felt that this could have been lessened and priority given to practical skills training, which they felt was essential to progress their projects.

From a quantitative perspective, a number of different scales were used to measure changes at Time 1 and Time 2 in participants' personal foundations. No significant difference in self-awareness, agency or self-efficacy were found when data at the beginning and end of the programme was compared.

However, a small positive effect was found in agency, no change in self-awareness, and a minor decrease in self-efficacy. Regarding the interpretation of these findings, it should be borne in mind that the self-efficacy scale adapted for this purpose was found to have a low level of internal consistency, thereby reducing its reliability in this study, while just two items were used to assess self-awareness for the purpose of this study.

6.4.3 Outcome 3: Participants have in-depth knowledge and practical experience of project management and social innovation, which can be applied to any work on social change they carry out now and in the future

The provision of relevant knowledge in the form of skills training to youth for their projects is one of the key ingredients of youth social entrepreneurship programmes (UNICEF, 2007). There is supportive evidence to indicate that Wave Change achieved the outcome associated with providing participants with in-depth knowledge and experience of project management and social innovation.

Project management is a discipline associated with organising, managing and implementing change. The skills and techniques associated with project management include defining, organising, planning and executing projects. The evidence on the achievement of this outcome is based on the positive contribution Wave Change made to participants' communication and presentation skills, project planning and implementation knowledge, and business and management skills. However, some caveats are relevant here. Project planning, implementation, business and management knowledge and skills were only focused on in Year 2 of the initiative. Also, there was a much stronger emphasis in Year 2 on applying learning in practice through the participants' social change projects. While the overall qualitative and quantitative data point towards Wave Change positively contributing to knowledge and experience of project management, a minority felt that they did not gain such skills and would have liked to have received more project management training, with business and financial management and funding particularly highlighted. In contrast, a small number of other participants explained that they were not interested in turning their ideas or projects into business enterprises and therefore questioned this ethos and skills focus.

Social innovation involves implementing novel solutions to meet a recognised social need or social problem. There is some qualitative evidence indicating that the initiative did strengthen participants' social innovation abilities through a mixture of peer networking, in particular during the residential weekends, and also through some specific workshops (in Year 2) on idea generation and solution formulation.

The project management measure, developed by the Research Team for this study, was used to assess changes in the Wave Changers' scores between Time 1 and Time 2. The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in participants' scores between Time 1 and Time 2, indicating improved skills acquired over the course of the programme in this area.

6.4.4 Outcome 4: Participants are part of a strong, diverse network of social change-makers aged 18–25 from across Ireland

Care is a central discourse informing civic engagement and is based on the premise that all youth, particularly those experiencing challenges and adversity such as poverty, health issues, disability and exploitation, need to be challenged and cared for (Pittman *et al.*, 2003; Dolan, 2010). One of the primary ways to achieve this is through supportive social relationships in the civic engagement and democratic participation field. Several evaluations have highlighted the significance of peer networks in this regard (Centre for Enterprise and Economic Development Research, 2011; Gilbert *et al.*, 2011; Berman and Mellon, 2012; Foundation for Young Australians, 2013). In a similar manner, the findings of this evaluation indicate that the Wave Change participants becoming part of a strong and diverse network of social change-makers aged 18–25 in Ireland was a key outcome achieved by Wave Change. The qualitative data received from both cohorts showed that the peer network of Wave Changers emerged as a very strong form of support, advice, skills and contacts for participants. Only a very small number of participants stated that their network was not enhanced through Wave Change. An alumni network was formed by the first group of Wave Changers from Year 1, after their completion of the programme. There were two elements to the Wave Changers' peer network. At a practical level, participants helped, motivated, supported and encouraged each other to work on their social change ideas and projects. They advised each other and shared skills and contacts. In some cases, they formed small work groups, which were cited as particularly useful. At a social level, the bonding, friendship and relationship formations that occurred among participants were a striking outcome of the programme, which could be traced over the course of the programme weekends in Years 1 and 2. Through such peer engagement, participants highlighted the fun and enjoyment they got from the initiative. They also stressed the value of empathy through being part of such a community or team of young people with a similar passion for social change, and the lack of such a forum in their lives until they joined Wave Change. After completing the programme, social media were highlighted as useful tools for the Wave Change alumni members to maintain contact with each other and to continue to discuss and work together on social change.

In addition to a strong network, the network was also found to be relatively diverse in the sense of the variety of social issues and projects that participants were pursuing through Wave Change. Wave Change went some way towards recruiting a diversity of participants in terms of gender, background and geography, but some Wave Changers would have liked to have seen more diversity in ethnicity and ideological perspective. Regarding the latter, some were of the view that Wave Change was overly consensual and there was little room for alternative viewpoints, debates and challenges. An objective and a feature of many skills training programmes is the goal of encouraging exposure to diverse social networks through interaction with people from different world views, which can challenge views and may lead young people to envisage different futures for themselves (Brady *et al.*, 2012). Similarly, this is related to the argument by Mutz (2002, p. 122) that 'exposure to dissimilar views is a central element of the kind of political dialogue needed to maintain a democratic citizenry'. Diversity in terms of recruiting participants from disadvantaged backgrounds was not achieved by Wave Change.

Another beneficial outcome was the valuable support network provided by the Wave Change Team to participants in personally supporting individuals on the programme and facilitating them with opportunities to meet with key players, to visit relevant organisations in the social, business, voluntary and community sectors, to meet potential funders and to attend relevant events, seminars and conferences, both nationally and internationally, related to their social change areas of interest. Furthermore, improved networks of support were achieved through the exposure of the participants to a wide set of key external contacts and guest speakers involved in the provision of the skills-based training and in the delivery of keynote specialist thematic sessions during the programme weekends over the course of the programme. The quantitative data pertaining to this outcome shows no statistical difference in the Wave Changers' networks of support at the beginning and end of the

programme. However, a medium positive effect was found. Wave Change in this sense could be interpreted as a bonus in terms of support, meeting a gap in the participants' support system by providing a formal setting in the social entrepreneurship field for peers with similar interests in creating innovative solutions to address social change issues and problems, a situation which hitherto did not exist for many of the participants.

6.4.5 Outcome 5: The participants are provided with the opportunity to develop and implement ideas for social change, *plus* Bonus Outcome: Innovative, sustainable projects emerge from the programme

Finally, the importance of experiential learning and action-orientation is considered a core element of leadership and skills training in the civic engagement field. Wehmeyer *et al.* (1998) and Finlay *et al.* (2010) highlight the need to provide young people with tangible opportunities through 'learning by doing' to engage in action to meet specific civic goals. There is evidence to indicate that the Wave Change Programme provided most of the participants with the opportunity to develop and implement ideas for social change. It should be noted that there was a large difference between the Wave Changers in the stage of development of their ideas or projects for social change when joining Wave Change. In Year 1 there was a large mixture, with some participants coming with an area of interest or an idea, while others had a project ready to be implemented. In Year 2, while only participants with a project were accepted onto the programme, nonetheless there was a large variation ranging from early-stage to up-and-running projects. Such differences meant that Wave Changers had varied experiences in turning their ideas or projects into action.

At a general level, participants explained that through the regular discussion and interaction that occurred amongst themselves, opportunities arose to progress their own social change ideas and projects. In progressing social change, many highlighted the significance of the peer network of Wave Changers in providing inspiration, motivation, support, help, advice and friendship (see also Outcomes 1 and 4 above). Some Wave Changers described in detail how their particular individual ideas or projects progressed during the course of the initiative, moving from an idea or an area of interest to something much more concrete and to which they could apply action. Such opportunities could be related to both the strengthened personal foundations and improved knowledge and skill levels of participants (see also Outcomes 2 and 3 above). Furthermore, a set of additional elements, which included external networking, seed funding, internships and coaching opportunities, were important in supporting participants in a practical sense to progress their ideas or project and take action. It should be noted, however, that some of these opportunities were either not availed of or were not available for all participants, and there was a level of disappointment and a feeling that more progress could have been made on their social change ideas or projects if they had, or were able to have, availed of these things.

Finally, it was considered a bonus if innovative, sustainable projects emerged from Wave Change. A small selection of such projects were presented as case studies in Section 5.5.3 of this report. These demonstrate how several social issues which the Wave Changers are passionate about, based on their own culture and lived experiences, have been turned into action-based projects.

6.5 Summary

General

- The Wave Change initiative has met a gap in service provision for young people interested in pursuing civic engagement activities through social change ideas and projects.
- The initiative has provided several important youth development components, including support, growth and development opportunities, meeting needs, building capacity, self-identity and youth–adult partnerships.
- It has also provided youth leadership components, particularly in Year 2, through a focus on agency, personal responsibility and ownership.
- Wave Change ethos also emphasised experiential learning and action orientation in Year 2.
- The initiative has resulted in a range of positive benefits at individual and community level.

Wave Change model

- In the main, the model remained the same throughout the two years of programme implementation.
- However, there were some specific differences:
 - The target group changed, from those broadly interested in social change with ideas for it, to those who had experience of taking action for social change and had a specific project at the start of the Wave Change Programme.
 - Diversity was originally framed in terms of recruiting youth onto the programme from socially marginalised communities or disadvantaged young people experiencing adversity. This was later revised into a much broader set of criteria, including education, employment, ethnicity, geography, social issue or idea, and minority group membership.
 - The learning and support ethos of Wave Change emphasised more peer learning in Year 2 and a shift towards promoting more independence and self-reliance on the part of the programme participants.
 - Balancing individualised support for participants by professionals with autonomous leadership and entrepreneurial characteristics on the part of participants was a challenge for the Wave Change Team.

Key successes in programme implementation

- Most aspects of the programme were implemented as intended.
- Wave Changers were supported and up-skilled in the areas of civic engagement, social entrepreneurship and innovation.
- There was a high level of engagement in the programme.
- The programme content was based on a mix of personal and practical skills development.
- There was a strong focus on networking, both with peers and external contacts.
- The programme met a gap in providing a safe space for young people to pursue social change ideas and projects in an empathetic environment.
- There were generally high levels of satisfaction with external engagement opportunities.
- The specialist workshops held outside the programme weekends were regarded very positively by those who attended.
- The coaching in Year 1 was viewed very positively by those who participated in it, and it was an example of providing important opportunities for the development of youth–adult partnerships.
- The seed funding process was an important experiential learning exercise for participants.

Main challenges in programme implementation

- Low attendance on the final programme weekends in Year 1 and Year 2, and low attendance at the specialised workshops held outside the programme weekends.
- Balancing personal development and project development aspects of the programme.
- Pitching the content of the sessions at the appropriate level so that they were relevant to all and all could learn from them.
- Providing an appropriate level of one-to-one support to meet participants' varying needs and stage of development of idea or project.
- Fairness regarding the provision of external engagement opportunities for participants.
- Providing interested participants with internship opportunities.
- Making seed funding sufficiently attractive to participants so that they make an application.
- Providing coaching to participants who wished to avail of this.
- Keeping track of participants' progress in between the programme weekends and following up on the completion of tasks required by the Wave Change Team.

Wave Change outreach

- This concerned the development of a Wave Change online presence through a website and social networking sites (Facebook and Twitter) and a Youth Civic Action Network.
- The intended outcomes were not met in this component of the initiative.

Main challenges in implementation of online presence

- Establishing an online presence became a secondary priority to the main priority of the Wave Change Team in terms of programme implementation.
- There was a lack of resources in terms of staff, technical expertise, time and clarity of purpose and value in order to implement this.

Main challenges in implementation of Youth Civic Action Network

- By and large, this aspect of the initiative was not implemented.
- Similar challenges to the outreach component (see above) in terms of lack of resources – staff, technical expertise and time.
- It was considered more appropriate to pursue this aspect when Wave Change became more established and had made more connections and networks with relevant organisations.

Contribution to desired outcomes

- The intended outcomes of the initiative focused on providing participants with: (1) the inspiration to engage in social change and make a difference; (2) personal foundational skills to lead on social change; (3) in-depth knowledge and practical experience of project management and social innovation; (4) a strong, diverse network of social change-makers; and (5) opportunities to develop and implement social change ideas or innovative, sustainable projects.
- This evaluation concludes that all of the desired outcomes intended by the initiative were, to a large extent, met over the course of the two years of implementation.
- The quantitative data does not generally reveal significant differences among participants in most of the desired outcomes at the beginning and end of the programme.
- However, a large set of qualitative data reveals positive progress made by participants on each of the individual outcomes.

7. Conclusion

The need for civic action programmes designed to support youth social entrepreneurship and innovation is increasingly being recognised and reflected in their growth in popularity. While it is a growing sector in Ireland, Wave Change was one of the first civic action initiatives to operate in the area. The delivery of the Wave Change Programme addressed the need, identified by the funders and Social Entrepreneurs Ireland (SEI), to support a cohort of youth in the 18–25 age group to act on their ideas for social change. While it was originally envisaged that Wave Change would generate opportunities for those most unlikely to acquire such support (namely, youth from marginalised communities or those who are themselves marginalised), Wave Change did not actively seek to target disadvantaged youth. Recruitment to the programme was focused on high-potential young social entrepreneurs, irrespective of their background and life experiences. However, some allowance was made to include youth with high levels of personal insight into the social problems and challenges faced by youth in Ireland today.

As evidenced in this evaluation report, overall the Wave Change Programme model as implemented worked well. In line with guidance by UNICEF (2007) on key supports needed for young social entrepreneurs, it focused on the delivery of knowledge, networking, mentorship and finance in order to support participants to transform their ideas into action or to take their existing projects to a more advanced stage. Some core youth development components delivered by the initiative included support, growth and development opportunities, meeting needs, building capacity, self-identity and youth–adult partnerships. Some important youth leadership components, particularly focused on in Year 2 of the programme, comprised an emphasis on agency, personal responsibility and ownership.

Wave Change was delivered via a mixture of learning models comprising structured learning, peer-to-peer learning and project-based experiential learning. The structured learning environment, facilitated in particular by the five programme weekends, enabled focused delivery of training, support and development opportunities for the Wave Changers. The personal development components complemented the programme's focus on idea generation and project development, taking a holistic approach to the support provided to the Wave Changers. There were high levels of satisfaction among the Wave Changers with the overall delivery of the programme weekends in Year 1 and Year 2, and more specifically with the content delivered. A high value was placed on learning gained from the practical, applied sessions and the delivery of the practical skills workshops by experts in the field outside of the programme weekends. However, it did emerge that, given their age profile, the Wave Changers had busy lives, including study, work and social commitments, and it was a challenge to attend the workshops delivered outside the programme weekends. The report reveals the importance of utilising, to the best extent possible, the available time during the programmes weekends to maximise the value of this time and to ensure that the content delivered is accessible and relevant to as many of the Wave Changers as possible.

The peer-to-peer learning model was a unique dimension of the programme and worked very well, as revealed in the report. It emerged strongly in the data that the Wave Changers valued the opportunities provided to meet informally, brainstorm and exchange feedback with their fellow participants, particularly during the programme weekends. As well as learning informally from each other, a high value was also placed on the structured peer-to-peer skills-sharing sessions, which featured more prominently in Year 1. This would indicate scope for the initiative to place greater emphasis on creating the opportunities for more of these types of sessions as part of the programme delivery. Furthermore, the evaluation established that the project-based learning model in Year 2, which encouraged and supported the Wave Changers to apply their learning directly to their social change project, was an important vehicle for the Wave Changers to apply what they were learning and created valuable opportunities for experiential learning. Participants found this type of learning

particularly useful.

The support structures available outside the programme weekends (namely, the openings provided to engage with strategic people influential in the field, the opportunity to apply for seed funding to financially support their ideas and projects, and the coaching and one-to-one support offered) were key aspects of the initiative. These provided further applied learning and development opportunities to the Wave Changers, as well as additional support. However, the absence of formal coaching opportunities in Year 2 was notable and was something the Wave Changers perceived they would have benefited from. The evaluation revealed the importance of achieving the appropriate balance between supporting the Wave Changers to be autonomous leaders and to take control of implementing their own ideas and projects for social change, while ensuring the presence of experienced adults to provide individualised guidance and support in bringing their projects to fruition. Moreover, while the programme in general targeted high potential social entrepreneurs, one cannot assume a level playing field, thereby further illustrating the requirement for individualised tailoring to meet specific needs.

The programme model, as delivered, enabled Wave Change to largely achieve its intended outcomes. Inspiration to engage in social change, enhanced self-awareness, sense of agency, self-efficacy and well-being, as well as improved knowledge and experience of project management and social innovation, were all common themes emerging from the self-reported experiences of the Wave Changers. The data highlighted that one of the key successes of the programme was the peer support network it generated for the Wave Changers. There was strong evidence of the value the Wave Changers placed on being part of a network of like-minded peers and feeling part of a community working towards social change in Ireland. It was revealed that this peer network further contributed to the Wave Changers' enhanced sense of agency, confidence and self-belief. As revealed in the case studies, Wave Change also provided the opportunity to develop and implement ideas for social change, and some innovative and potentially sustainable projects have emerged from the programme.

Outside of the delivery of the core programme, limited progress was made by Wave Change in engaging in outreach via its website, Facebook page and Twitter, or in developing the envisaged Youth Civic Action Network to connect organisations operating in the field. It can be said that the latter was ambitious, given the staffing resources available to Wave Change and the fact that, as a new programme, it was only embedding itself in the sector over the 2-year implementation period. However, regarding the former, given the importance and value that youth place on websites and social media, this was a weakness of Wave Change and a source of dissatisfaction for the Wave Changers themselves. Wave Change could have benefited from a greater priority being placed on the development of its online presence, not only to boost the programme's profile and to reach out to other young social entrepreneurs, but also to provide an outlet for the Wave Changers to showcase their ideas and give further exposure and credibility to their work as young social entrepreneurs. The level of public engagement during the recruitment phases of the programme, when time and resources were dedicated to generate online content, illustrates the potential of the online presence to offer a platform to interact with the public. This would require the ongoing allocation of sufficient resources.

The value-for-money assessment of Wave Change, in comparing it to a relatively similar programme in Australia, shows that such programmes are resource-intensive, requiring a high level of staffing and associated personnel given the intensity of inputs of skills development and supports required for participants. Moreover, staff need to have a high level of experience in the social entrepreneurial fields in order to meet participants' needs adequately. As programmes such as this become more embedded and established, it is likely that an expanding pool of alumni members providing their time on a pro bono basis could be a significant resource in the delivery of this type of initiative in future years.

This evaluation report is part of Wave Change's commitment to knowledge generation and dissemination, and the findings are based on the 2-year programme implementation timeline of November 2011 to October 2013. The report contains important programmatic learning for Wave Change, as well as for similar programmes that aim to meet the needs of young social entrepreneurs working to address issues of social change. This evaluative learning is important given that this is a relatively new but expanding field in Ireland. Research on similar programmes should be encouraged so that a strong knowledge base will inform the future development and value of such programmes for youth.

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Appendix 1: Agenda for Wave Change Weekend 1, Year 1

24–26 February 2012
Boghill Centre, Co. Clare



Friday, 24 February

7:00 – 8:30	Arrival and Welcome, dinner
8:30 – 10:30	Introductions

Saturday, 25 February

8:00 – 9:00	Breakfast
9:00 – 9:30	Warm-up and The Journey Ahead
9:30 – 10:30	Evaluation overview/Survey completion – CFRC Team
10:30 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 12:30	Personal Development Session 1: Catherine Vaughan
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 15:30	Personal Development Session 2: Catherine Vaughan
15:30 – 15:45	Break
15:45 – 17:30	Team challenge (outdoors)
17:30 – 19:00	Break
19:00 – 20:30	Dinner
20:30 – 22:30	Guest Speaker and 'entertainment'

Sunday, 26 February

8:00 – 9:00	Breakfast
8:30 – 9:00	Optional Quiet Session to begin the day
9:00 – 9:30	Warm-up and overview of the day
9:30 – 11:15	Team Session 1
11:15 – 11:30	Break
11:30 – 13:00	Evaluation and Workshop with Niamh Heery
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 14:30	Additional evaluation time if needed to wrap up
14:30 – 16:00	Team Session 2
16:00	Workshop ends

Appendix 2: Agenda for Wave Change Weekend 3, Year 2

27–28 April 2013

The Exchange, Temple Bar, Dublin 1



Saturday, 27 April

9:00 – 9:45	Introduction to the weekend and programme update
9:45 – 10:45	Group check-in
10:45 – 12:00	Stock Take presentations
12:00 – 12:15	Break
12:15 – 13:15	Stock Take presentations (<i>continued</i>)
13:15 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	External Engagement (workshop)
15:30 – 15:45	Break
15:45 – 16:45	Negotiating the highs, lows and curve balls (Inspirational Speaker)
16:45 – 17:00	Break
17:00 – 18:00	Taking care of yourself (workshop)
18:00 – 19:00	Dinner
19:00	Wave Change Show

Sunday, 28 April

9:15 – 9:30	Arrival/Tea & Coffee
9:30 – 9:45	Introduction
9:45 – 10:30	Group discussion – personal experiences and strategies for dealing with failure
10:30 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 11:30	Minimum Viable Product overview – How to define your MVP and how to test it (workshop)
11:30 – 11:45	Break
11:45 – 12:30	Minimum Viable Product (workshop – <i>continued</i>)
12:30 – 13:00	Lunch
13:00 – 13:30	What is my MVP and how can I test it?
13:30 – 14:30	Group work – MVP and prototyping
14:30 – 14:45	Break
14:45 – 15:45	Reflection round
15:45 – 16:30	Evaluation forms

Appendix 3: Examples of external engagement activities by Wave Changers

2012 Programme Participants

- One participant was the youngest recipient of an Arthur Guinness Fund Social Entrepreneurship investment of €50,000. His project, RAG Ireland, continues to expand.
- 4 Wave Changers were nominated to the US Embassy Youth Council.
- Several Wave Changers featured on TV and radio and in the print media, speaking about young people in Ireland today, the issues they are passionate about, their social change projects and social entrepreneurship (e.g. RTÉ TV *Frontline*, NewsTalk *Global Village*, RTE Radio One *John Murray Show*, *Irish Times* 'Generation Emigration', TV3, BBC radio).
- 2 Wave Changers have a programme on South Dublin FM on 'Multiculturalism in Ireland'.
- 5+ Wave Changers from 2012 are now in full-time employment or gaining paid part-time work based on opportunities and experience gained from the Wave Change Programme.
- One Wave Changer has set up a social enterprise, Teen Tasks, funded by the Wave Change Seed Fund.
- One Wave Changer ran for the post of Equality and Citizenship Officer for the Union of Students in Ireland (USI).
- Some 2012 Wave Changers met with an SEI alumni network member in May 2012 to discuss cultivating and working with businesses in their areas as a means of possible sources of funding and support.
- 7 Wave Changers were involved in various award ceremonies, media and entrepreneur events, and dance, music, choral and film entertainment activities.
- 2 Wave Changers represented Wave Change at the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations (NACO), hosted by the University of Coimbra, Portugal, which involved discussions concerning issues of social justice by young people from all over the world.
- Several Wave Changers attended a Change Nation event, the purpose of which is to bring together inspiring innovators and entrepreneurs to discuss how to solve Ireland's greatest challenges in education, health, environment, economic development, civic participation and inclusion. The first of these events was held in Dublin in March 2012, and there are now partner organisations and local champions spreading this work throughout the country.
- 6 Wave Changers attended the Louise Opperman lunch in Cork in April 2012.
- Wave Changers attended over 100 meetings and events as part of their External Engagement Programme, including the President's 'Being Young and Irish' initiative; pitches to key funders supported by Wave Change; 1:1 funder meetings with Dermot Desmond, The Atlantic Philanthropies, One Foundation, Washington Ireland Programme; practical advice and support from leading social and business entrepreneurs; Umar Discussion; US Embassy Youth Innovation Conference; and UNESCO Paris Conference.

2013 Programme Participants

- In a similar manner to the 2012 cohort, the 2013 Wave Changers attended many events, discussions, and meetings, and were involved in pitching for funding. Some of the key engagements included:
 - The Umar Discussion;
 - Philanthropy Ireland;
 - SEI Minnovation Fund;
 - CFRC conference, NUI Galway;
 - FERD Social Entrepreneurs;

- UNESCO Paris Conference;
- Arthur Guinness Project;
- Gay Medical Association Conference, Denver, USA;
- SEI Alumni Event;
- MBA week, TCD, Dublin;
- June and September seed fund panels;
- Individual networking with key contacts in the media, civic engagement, campaigning, social entrepreneurial, academic and political fields.