

MEMBER NETWORK MEETINGS- Q1 2015



Introduction

On 11th and 12th February, Business in the Community Ireland held its first Member Network Meetings of 2015 in Dublin and Cork, hosted by Deloitte and Marymount Hospice respectively.

This report presents the main points discussed at the meetings including:

- ✓ Network Updates
- ✓ Events Programme 2015
- ✓ Challenges in the Community and Voluntary Sector and The Evolution of Skills Based Volunteering
- ✓ Team Volunteering using Professional Skills

Business in the Community member organisations have a wealth of skills in their workforce. At the same time, many organisations within the Community & Voluntary sector are faced with typical business challenges of financial viability, governance, service delivery, staff motivation and strategic planning.

At our first network meetings of 2015, we highlighted some innovative examples of volunteering where teams of skilled professionals partner with community organisations and deliver real benefits in short timeframes.

Join our **LinkedIn private members only group**, [‘Members of Business in the Community Ireland’](#) to connect with members of the network. The Business in the Community Ireland members-only group provides a platform for members to continue network meeting conversations online, share best practice and access members-only resources.

Network Updates

Bernadette Phelan, Membership Services Manager highlighted important network updates including:

Welcome
to our new
members

We announced the **new members** to join the Network so far for 2015- Welcome



Banc Ceannais na hÉireann
Central Bank of Ireland
Eurosystem



Responsible
Business
for SMEs

At the end of February we will launch our **Responsible Business for SMEs** website, www.rbsmes.ie. This website will be our ‘shop-window’ for our new support service for small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs). As we enter our 15th year of operation, this is an important milestone for us - we now offer support to *all* businesses in Ireland on how to improve and adopt sustainable and responsible practices. The website provides SMEs

with general information on responsible business practice and includes case studies and various resources and tools. It also outlines our *one-to-one service* for SMEs on sustainability reporting. Please contact Bernadette Phelan, Membership Services Manager at bphelan@bitc.ie if you wish to learn more about our work in this area.



In March we launch version 3 of **The Business Working Responsibly Mark**. The Mark continues to be underpinned by ISO 26000 and significantly we are now moving to a three year cycle. Please talk to your account manager if you are interested in learning more about the Mark.

We will launch Ireland's only **Business Impact Map** for the fourth year on 13th May. This interactive online map showcases the impact that members of our network had on their local communities throughout Ireland for the year 2014 and highlights key societal issues supported by our members across the country. Our members use it as a tool for internal and external communication as a dynamic way to showcase community activities to employees and other stakeholders such as suppliers, customers and media.

We are looking to all our members to participate so that we can convey the full impact of our network. We will profile the map to a variety of stakeholder groups including government representatives and local media. Our current map displaying 2013 data is available on <http://livemaps.bitc.ie>

Important dates to bear in mind for this project:

- ❖ Deadline for Map data – **Tuesday, March 31st**
- ❖ Launch and celebration event – **Wednesday, May 13th**

Events Programme 2015

Member Network Meetings

Our quarterly network meetings are exclusive to our members and aim to be informative and inspiring events.

Save the following dates for these ‘must –attend’ Network Meetings:

Member Network Meetings	
National 11 th February	National 22 nd April
Quarter 1	Quarter 2
Munster 12 th February	Munster 23 rd April
National 16 th September	National/ Annual 9 th December
Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Munster 17 th September	

Upcoming Events

We updated our members on the upcoming events including:



Best Practice in STEM Programmes

BITCI is a partner in a STEM and Employability skills project, led by CSR Europe as part of their Enterprise 2020 campaign. The aim of the project is to position Europe as ahead of the curve on business engagement with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) activities for young people. Including Ireland there are six national partner organisations taking part in the project - Belgium, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland. As the Irish national partner we are gathering data in order to build a profile of what Irish companies have done in relation to STEM and Employability skills in 2014. We will present our findings and hear from businesses at a workshop on 26th February.



CSR Stakeholder Forum on the National Action Plan for CSR

The CSR Stakeholder Forum under the National Action Plan on CSR meets on 3rd March. At this meeting, the four sub-groups under the Forum will present their proposals for action. The sub-groups are based on the themes of i) awareness creation, ii) adoption

of best practice by large business, iii) adoption of best practice by SMEs, and iv) public sector engagement. BITCI will report back to members on the agreed actions.



Effective Community Engagement Workshop Series

The Effective Engagement Community workshop series is designed as an introduction to the components of effective community engagement for member company coordinators.

These workshops are ideal for those new to corporate community involvement, providing step by step processes.

Register to hear CR practitioners who have developed successful community engagement strategies share their expertise and experiences of various community models. There will be an opportunity to ask questions, exchange ideas and learn something new.



Member CEO Exclusive Networking Event

This exclusive networking event for the CEOs of our member organisations is to showcase how business is embedding corporate responsibility into their everyday practices and how our members are working together to ensure Ireland is a responsible and sustainable place to do business. Save the date in your CEO's diary. More details will follow closer to the date.

Read the full [Event Programme for 2015](#), detailing the events and training available to our members.

Challenges in the Community and Voluntary Sector and the Evolution of Skills-Based Volunteering

Imagine trying to run an organisation with no strategic plan, no website or no processes for identifying training needs. This is the reality for some community and voluntary organisations despite their significant role in providing essential services and supporting communities. With recent cuts in funding, support services and resources are adversely affected, at a time of increased demand on their essential services for service users and local communities.

The Wheel, a support and representative network for the community and voluntary sector in Ireland, recently published a report titled 'Portrait of the Non-Profit Sector' highlighting the challenges that currently face the community and voluntary sector.

Below are some interesting key findings cited in the Wheel report:

- ❖ Over 60% of organisations experienced a decrease in income between 2009 and 2012, with the majority (60%) of these experiencing a decrease of between 11-25%.
- ❖ Most organisations are responding to decreasing income by securing efficiencies and reducing the scale of activities, almost one fifth have dropped some services
- ❖ One third of organisations do not have a written strategic plan
- ❖ Vast majority of organisations use more volunteers as two thirds of organisations have taken steps to reduce spending on staff
- ❖ Most organisations have no formal process to assess training needs; only 40% have a written training plan and budget
- ❖ 15% have no website; 20% have no social media presence

Being aware of these challenges helps us to identify what supports we, as individuals and organisations, can offer to support community and voluntary groups in delivering their services and serving communities. Professional skills are currently in high demand by the community and voluntary sector as charities either don't have the skills in house or the money to buy the expertise.

As a result, we have seen a move towards the use of core expertise and resources to support the upskilling of the community and voluntary sector.

Read the full 'Portrait of the Non-Profit Sector' Wheel Report [here](#).

Team Volunteering using Professional Skills

Business in the Community members have a wealth of skills in their workforce. We highlighted some innovative examples of volunteering where teams of skilled professionals partner with community organisations and deliver real benefits in short timeframes.

The following members spoke about their initiatives to address the various challenges facing community and voluntary groups. They have crafted their programmes to fit with their business skills, both soft and technical, and the needs of the community and voluntary groups.

Impact Day- Professional Skills One-day Volunteering Project

IMPACT Day is a company-wide initiative where employees volunteer to devote one working day to a project that has a direct and positive impact on society.

Impact Day for Deloitte in Ireland has evolved steadily over the last six years. From its beginnings as a team volunteering day that focused on painting and gardening it has developed into a large-scale strategic programme that taps into the interests and skills of its employees for the benefit of many community and school organisations. Last year four community organisations worked for a day with teams of Deloitte volunteers with a wide range of skills to address a business issue they had identified.



Project Bright- Charity Blitz Day

Project Bright invites submissions from employees to come up with bright ideas to help address local social and environmental issues.

KPMG targeted the community and voluntary groups needs by organising a Charity Blitz Day, an idea submitted to Project Bright. Teams of KPMG volunteers worked with charities on the challenges faced by each individual organisation. They collaborated with senior charity representatives to implement solutions to their specific challenges and empowered them to make positive change.



Master Class- Sales Training and Mentoring Programme for Community and Voluntary sector

Oracle recognised the potential to develop a strategic community programme to utilise core areas of expertise to address some of the current challenges in the community and voluntary sector, namely reduced revenues. With the “Master Class in Sales with Professional Mentoring”, the charities have been involved in a 360° learning process, which allowed them to learn new techniques to develop strong messages about their work in order to maintain and secure funding streams. The mentoring the participants received from the employees ensured they gain confidence in using the new skills and techniques learned.

We also heard from community groups whose needs can be met by skilled volunteers. Sticks and Stones Anti-Bullying Programme has benefited from the professional skills of employees of our members

including Bank of Ireland, Deloitte and Oracle. Marymount Hospice, Cork has many needs to support their services that the professional expertise of volunteers could have a positive impact on.



Sticks and Stones Anti-Bullying Programme

Sticks and Stones is an award-winning provider of anti-bullying solutions in Irish schools. They believe that every child should be able to fulfil his or her potential free from the damage bullying causes. Their goal was to create a sustainable model, ideally a phased expansion of the programme with trained facilitators in place around the country to make their service available to all schools. The support of BITCI members meant a great deal to them providing fresh perspectives and practical training and business solutions.



Marymount Hospice, Cork

Marymount University Hospital & Hospice offers three distinct services: i) respite, intermediate palliative and residential care services for the older person, ii) specialist palliative care services, at both inpatient and community level, iii) an Education Centre that offers University and other courses, placement and conference facilities.

Key points from speakers on the topic of engaging in team volunteering using professional skills:

Objectives of engaging in professional skills volunteering

- ✓ To offer diverse employee engagement opportunities; while gardening and painting are often the focus of team volunteering, employees often have an appetite to use their diverse range of skills and apply them in different environments, using it as a leadership development opportunity
- ✓ To have a greater impact for the community partners, through the development of replicable programmes to reach more charities
- ✓ To create long term partnerships to see the impact of engagement and support over time

Process of developing skills-based volunteering initiatives

- ✓ Take time to plan a programme of skills-based volunteering
- ✓ Get leaders involved and supportive by showing how professional skills volunteering aligns with an organisation's values
- ✓ Match the needs of the community and voluntary group with the skills of your organisation- Business in the Community will broker relationships with community organisations and source suitable projects so that the return on investment for community and business organisations is optimal.

Impact of engaging in professional skills volunteering

- ✓ Opens employees' eyes to challenges that community and voluntary groups face
- ✓ Benefits for employees include the opportunity to build relationships across the organisation and to get exposure to C-level and board level in charity organisations
- ✓ Highly effective, time-efficient way to support the Community & Voluntary sector
- ✓ Community organisation found the benefit to be fresh eyes, a team-based approach, expertise and practical outcomes that could be implemented
- ✓ Wealth of skills and expertise from the business sector brings added value to community and voluntary groups with real and long term impacts; learning ways to work more strategically, effectively and creatively