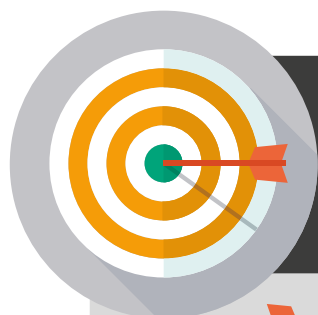




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Community Sports Development Officers Evaluation Summary 2020



The objective of this evaluation was to assess the extent to which the goals and actions of the CSDO programme have been implemented by carrying out a process evaluation.

- ➔ The Evaluation found that the actions of the CSDO programme are being carried out to a great extent across the network of CSDOs, especially under the pillars of **community activation, planning and relationship building**.
- ➔ These actions align with the original intention for the CSDO programme and enable a conclusion that the programme is a positive investment across the LSP network.
- ➔ Actions under the pillars of Research and Monitoring and Evaluation require continued support from Sport Ireland in the form of templates, training and capacity building.

Key questions of the evaluation

What are the key successes and challenges that the CSDO programme has experienced?

Q1



Which goals do the CSDOs need support in achieving?

Q2

Q1 What are the key successes and challenges that the CSDO programme has experienced?



SUCCESSSES

- ✓ A good level of networking between the CSDOs
- ✓ Majority of CSDOs take a strategic approach to their role rather than direct delivery
- ✓ CSDOs are getting out and about in the community to speak to leaders, activists and ordinary residents
- ✓ CSDOs are engaging successfully with a wide variety of smaller NGBs
- ✓ CSDOs have supported clubs by providing training and education opportunities, advice and guidance on programme development, club development grants, and advice on setting up new clubs etc.
- ✓ CSDOs have engaged with schools effectively by linking them to NGBs, upskilling teachers, providing programme support and resources, and raising awareness of opportunities etc.

CHALLENGES

| CHALLENGES | RECOMMENDED ACTION/ AREA FOR FOCUS | RESPONSIBLE AGENCY | SUPPORTING AGENCY |
|--|---|---|---------------------|
| Recruiting and maintaining a bank of tutors, coaches and volunteers | Increased focus on the development of tutor and volunteer bases which can support the delivery of programmes on the ground. | LSPs, NGBs | |
| Lack of Awareness of LSPs and CSDOs in partner organisations and communities leading to unrealistic expectations | National LSP Communications strategy | Sport Ireland | LSPs |
| Lack of resources to empower communities | Increased focus on training and development of leadership opportunities in order to support those identified as key individuals within a community. | LSPs | Sport Ireland |
| Competing priorities and values of partner agencies | Systems approach to improving levels of physical activity in the country. | Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Sport Ireland, LSPs | Local Authorities |
| Engaging with appropriate Target Groups | Tailored methods of communication to reach specific target groups, reach target groups using partners | Sport Ireland, LSPs | |
| Facilities- affordability and accessibility | Developing relationships to access existing facilities, charging a fee to participants where appropriate, and maintaining an up to date database of available facilities | LSPs | |
| Improved networking and clarity of role | Regional and virtual CSDO networking meetings that are led by CSDOs themselves | CSDOs | LSPs, Sport Ireland |
| Evaluation of programmes | Sport Ireland will endeavour to provide further and continuous training on all aspects of evaluation to CSDOs and provide support in ensuring that evaluation is included as an important work practice going forward | Sport Ireland | |
| CSDO contracts of employment | Sport Ireland to consider potential solutions to this issue. | Sport Ireland | |

Q2 Which goals do the CSDOs need support in achieving?



While establishing causality between actions of the CSDO programme and goals of the programme being fulfilled is beyond the scope of this evaluation, it is clear that CSDOs have taken and continue to take tangible action to deliver on all three goals. CSDOs are able to do this by way of collaboration with other individuals within the LSP, relevant partner organisations on the ground and NGBs. The evaluation found that the support CSDOs receive from these bodies is crucial to fulfilling their objectives and indeed, continued support is required for the achievement of all three goals.



GOOD PRACTICE IDENTIFIED



On how CSDOs can develop a strategic approach to their role rather than direct delivery:

- Getting out and about, developing relationships with participants and local partners face to face, **particularly early on in the role.**
- As CSDOs develop these relationships, and become more accustomed to the role, they develop the confidence to take a step back into a more coordination role, and empower local leaders and partners to take ownership of programs.



On how CSDOs can ensure that all activities taking place in the local community are well-coordinated:

- A **facilities and opportunities** audit can scope out the community, determine programmes or initiatives that are currently in place, establish what resources are available, identify potential opportunities and assist to build a better picture of what is currently happening on the ground.



On forming relationships with NGBs:

- Explore the strategic plans of NGBs before engaging with them, to identify areas where the LSP can support and work with them.
- By linking NGBs to local communities and schools, CSDOs are able to do a better job of engaging communities by providing access to a wide variety of participation opportunities.
- One CSDO outlined the approach of maintaining existing relationships with NGBs while selecting 2 or 3 NGBs per year to develop new relationships with.



On building community ownership:

- Many CSDOs highlighted how important it is to have a long term vision for what they want to achieve in a given community in order to build sustainability into programmes.
- Identifying key individuals within the community and supporting them was noted as a vital element in empowering communities to develop participation opportunities.



Success in the CSDO role:

- As CSDOs engage in a wide variety of tasks, it is clear that organisation and time management is a key element to being successful in the role.



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