

Scoping Exercise on Skills Development Opportunities for Social Justice Advocacy and Related Skills

Report to Atlantic Philanthropies

January 2012

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Background

The focus of this Report is to complement previous studies and existing information on the function and effectiveness of Advocacy. The Report examines issues around training of Advocacy personnel on the island of Ireland, both full-time Advocacy professionals and those within organizations who undertake Advocacy as part of a greater overall role inside their organizations.

It operates based on Atlantic Philanthropies' working definition of Advocacy as work that seeks to bring about policy or practice change and includes leadership development issues.

For many organisations, however, the report acknowledges that Advocacy is also understood to mean achieving positive outcomes for individual members on specific issues and this may or may not result in consequent systemic changes in policy or practice. In these cases 'advocacy' is understood to involve raising specific issues on behalf of individuals or perhaps a number of individuals associated with an organisation or issue, with relevant authorities. It can take the form of special pleading, identifying anomalies or other means to overcome or circumvent lack of resources and/or negative policy impact. While this form of 'advocacy' can sometimes indirectly lead to policy or practice change or review, seeking policy or practice change is not usually the prime motivation behind it. These factors were taken into account in assessing attitudes to Advocacy training and in making Recommendations.

The research uncovered a significantly more experimental attitude to Advocacy training in Northern Ireland compared to the Republic of Ireland. This situation arises substantially as a consequence of the recent development of conventional Advocacy in Northern Ireland as a result of the Peace Process. In the Republic of Ireland the level and nature of Advocacy practice developed at a gradual pace over a number of years and decades. In Northern Ireland development of Advocacy was significantly inhibited until the success of the Peace Process, which allowed those wishing to undertake Advocacy to develop greater interaction with the political and government processes.

Organisations provided full information on their internal Advocacy training and Advocacy operation based on the understanding of anonymity on their participation and of information supplied. A brief review of a limited number of online and UK advocacy training initiatives was also undertaken to provide some comparative information.

Advocacy Training Courses: Republic of Ireland:

A number of courses exist related to Advocacy Training at University and IT level. In addition there are a range of courses provided on leadership training, communications and achievement of goals by professional bodies such as the IPA, which are relevant in many respects to Advocacy.

These courses are specified in tabular format on the following pages.

There are, additionally, communications-type courses available of benefit to that aspect of Advocacy. These are not listed specifically as they may be of specific area interest and are also very widely available.

Advocacy Training Courses – Republic of Ireland

| <i>CENTRE</i> | <i>COURSE</i> | <i>DETAILS</i> |
|---------------|--|--|
| NUIG | Masters Degree In Public Advocacy and Activism | <p>One year (Sept – Aug), Level 8 entry requirement course, offering an advanced programme for those working, or intending to work, in international or local advocacy; including community organization, development, labour, rights, health, and environment.</p> <p>Divided into two teaching semesters (Sept – Dec. and Jan – Apr.), with work placements over the summer period. Offers <i>“experienced advocates for social change the opportunity to undertake structured studies in order to facilitate critical reflection and practice, and for those interested in working in the area to achieve a specialist qualification.”</i></p> |
| DIT: | <p>MA in Public Affairs and Political Communication</p> <p>MA In Applied Studies:</p> <p>Advocacy Practice Training</p> <p>Social Care Courses</p> | <p>One year, full time course requiring Hons (2:2 or higher) for entry.</p> <p>Focuses on a specialization within public relations, dealing primarily with the political environment. Features internships with significant public and private institutions, including Seanad Éireann, as an integral part of its academic content.</p> <p>Course content covers: Public Affairs, Political Marketing, Political Structures, Ethics and Political Process, Public Affairs Writing, TV Environment and Presentation, Corporate Environment and Strategy and Research Techniques.</p> <p>One third of the modules in this two-year part-time course are devoted to Advocacy initiatives, mainly at media level.</p> <p>A 60 hour course geared to people who have two years experience working in some form of Advocacy or who have obtained relevant Level 6 FETAC status. <i>“The course will develop the necessary understanding and range of skills required by a good advocate.”</i></p> <p>DIT runs a number of graduate and post-grad courses in the social care area, which emphasise <i>“advocacy for vulnerable or dependent clients.”</i></p> |

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| Sligo IT | Higher Certificate in Arts in Advocacy Studies | <p>Delivered over two years by distance learning, with Level 6 entry requirement, organised in partnership with the Citizens Information Board and The Equality Authority. (Also offered through Waterford IT – Sligo IT accredited)</p> <p>Students come from a number of different backgrounds; Information providers from Citizens Information Centres, Nurses, Instructors, Care workers, Legal clerks, parents and people active in the community and voluntary sector.</p> <p>It emphasises disability and equality advocacy issues and includes placements.</p> |
| Athlone IT: | Certificate in Advocacy Skills | Part-time, 10 weeks, level 6 course <i>“The overall aim of the course is to promote the values, knowledge and skills necessary for people to advocate effectively on behalf of people with mental illness and to promote mental health.”</i> |
| Carlow IT: | Certificate in Advocacy | 20-week part time course with no formal entry requirements. The programme is aimed at clients, staff, and supporters of disability services and is a joint initiative between Wexford Campus of Carlow IT and Wexford Community Workshops in Enniscorthy, New Ross and St Aidan’s Centre in Gorey. |
| All Hallows | <p>Social Justice and Public Policy Programme</p> <p>M.A. in Management: Community and Voluntary Services</p> | <p>Two-year part-time programme. Requires 2nd Class Hons. degree but 20% of students may comprise ‘other categories, i.e. specific experience in the area.</p> <p><i>“It is envisaged that applicants will be working with an organisation/group/office involved with public policy or addressing issues affected by public policy.”</i></p> <p>One-year full-time or two-year part-time course, providing overall training in running community and voluntary organisations, including communications and advocacy.</p> <p>Requires a relevant Degree (2nd Class Hons).</p> |
| Dublin Business School | BA (Hons) in Media & Cultural Studies | <p>A Level 8 course over four years (2 evenings per week).</p> <p>“Graduates will be able to apply their scholarly training in applied settings: some with cultural institutions of various kinds, such as museums, others in advocacy groups, service groups or non-government organisations.”</p> |
| NUI Maynooth | MA In Community Education, Equality and Social Activism | One-year course “brings together experienced activists in community education and social movements with newcomers interested in social justice to create new knowledge and develop alternatives.” |

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| DCU | Advocacy and Leadership | Run in 2009 in conjunction with St Michael’s House. Explored communications, teamwork, the history of disability services, concepts of inclusiveness and an awareness of overall standards |
| IPA | Offers one-day and two-day courses in Leadership and Management, which provide skills necessary for implementation of effective Advocacy. | <p><i>Communicating and Presenting with Confidence:</i></p> <p>“Skills to communicate with assertiveness and feel more able to speak with peers and managers.... Participants will be able to communicate more effectively in order for their message to be understood and will have the tools to help change how they think in order to raise their confidence. They will acquire useful techniques for making more formal presentations.”</p> <p><i>Effective Writing:</i></p> <p>“increases awareness of the role of appropriate language in achieving the purpose of the report and draw attention to the usage of cliches and how to avoid them.”</p> <p><i>Executive Coaching:</i></p> <p>“Flexible, one-to-one courses aim to improve effectiveness for anyone in a managerial position and deal with issues such as setting goals, generating an action plan, communication skills and working effectively.”</p> <p><i>Project Management:</i></p> <p>“Deals with Personal effectiveness, organisational dynamics and team development and is “very suitable for anyone managing or leading a team”.</p> |
| IBEC | IBEC offer a range of flexible training courses but not specifically geared to Advocacy. | <p>The courses contain elements of benefit to Advocacy and IBEC offer to “<i>tailor most popular courses to your requirements.</i>”</p> <p>These courses include and range in details from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a two year part-time MA in Leadership in Practice • one day courses covering areas such as project management and presentation skills. |

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| <p>ICTU</p> | <p>ICTU run practical, short-term courses promoting advocacy / social change initiatives. Most recent example:</p> | <p>Youth Leadership:</p> <p>Two-day course <i>“To up-skill members of the Youth Committees of Congress and individual unions in relation to advocacy and communications”</i></p> |
| <p>Limelight Training (Dublin):</p> | <p>Advocacy Skills Workshop</p> | <p>One-day workshop, offered occasionally for voluntary organisations.</p> <p>Deals with issues such as: what exactly is Advocacy? Knowing the brief, Identifying selling points, Preparing for difficult questions and the art of negotiation.</p> |
| <p>ActivLink</p> | <p>Most Advocacy courses advertised relate to personal Advocacy.</p> <p>Some Courses are offered on Advocacy Training, e.g.</p> | <p>Community Development and Advocacy Training Course:</p> <p>Six day programme run by Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency (DESSA) (Nov 2010), for community development workers interested in social justice and equality for people with disabilities in Ireland.</p> <p>Accredited by Sligo IT, the aim is to bring an understanding of Advocacy as a tool of social inclusion.</p> <p>Exploring links between advocacy, disability equality and community development.</p> <p>Personal Advocacy Training is available on a wide range of courses, e.g.</p> <p>Peer Advocacy Training - through the Irish Advocacy Network</p> <p>Personal Advocacy Seminars are also advertised on ActiveLink, e.g.:</p> <p>Disability Issue 1 Initiative Seminar: <i>“will familiarise people with the Disability 1 Initiative and how they may engage with the projects that have helped people with disabilities.”</i></p> |

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| <p>Learning Point</p> | <p>A new “<i>central web-based sign-posting service providing a single source of accurate, up-to-date information about training and development opportunities throughout the Community and Voluntary Sector in Ireland.</i>”</p> | <p>It does not provide information specific to Advocacy Training in colleges or other institutions and organisations and is not a reference for Advocacy Training opportunities generally.</p> |
| <p>Other Bodies</p> | <p>Organisations such as The Wheel and ICTR organise conferences and events and provide websites that provide and allow exchange of information at practical level on relevant Advocacy related issues and methods</p> | <p>The Wheel’s 2011 Conference provided “<i>opportunities to learn more about:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the role of the community and voluntary sector in delivering public services</i> • <i>the changing relationship between the State and the sector.</i>” <p>The theme of the ICTR’s 2010 Conference was: “<i>We Do Make a Difference - telling the story in a real and compelling way.</i>”</p> <p>The Carmichael Centre runs a number of training and development courses which can include communication, promoting your organisation and strategic planning.</p> <p>These are often developed to suit an organisation’s specific requirements.</p> |

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| <p>Online Advocacy</p> | | <p>Irish-based Online Advocacy training is still not generally widely available through internet searches, although a number of sites are emerging which act as advocates and also provide suggestions and ideas on Advocacy.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <p>Changing Ireland: <i>Changing Ireland aims to enable projects to network more effectively and to assist in promoting the profile of the Community Development Programme and of community development in general.</i> http://www.changingireland.ie</p> <p>Connect World <i>Connect-World is an Irish organisation, created and supported by the development aid community in Ireland, seeking to increase the quantity and the type of coverage of international development issues in the media.</i> www.connect-world.net</p> |
| <p>Online Advocacy</p> | | <p>Internationally based online Advocacy:</p> <p>There are a wide range of internationally based Advocacy sites that offer both detailed and generalised - but non-Irish specific – online ‘training’ on Advocacy.</p> <p>While these sites provide comprehensive suggestions and proposals for action they are of uncertain relevance and quality for the Irish Advocacy environment and may be of more specific benefit to those in Ireland already proficient in Advocacy work.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>www.aallspectrum.wordpress.com (US based)</p> <p><i>“Make Your Legislators listen – free Online Advocacy Training. Help improve access to legal information and strengthen AALL’s voice in government decisions – join our advocacy team.</i></p> <p><i>If you’re interested in learning the tools you need to make your legislators listen when you have something to say, we invite you to sign up for AALL’s free online advocacy training session, Join AALL’s Advocacy team.”</i></p> |

Advocacy Training Republic of Ireland: Main Findings:

- There are a reasonable number of Advocacy Training courses available in the Republic of Ireland.
- These largely comprise academic courses in third-level institutes mainly aimed at graduates and individuals, both long term and short-term and provide a generalised, if detailed, approach to Advocacy, i.e. while the content provides considerable detail, it often approaches Advocacy from a generalised perspective, rather than with specific methods of approach that Advocacy organisations working in specific areas utilise and develop internally in their work.
- Practical (usually short-term) courses, provided by IPA, trade unions and business associations, etc are mainly geared to leadership, management and representative issues of these groups and / or their members. They also provide generalised information on Advocacy
- Some Advocacy Training in third level institutions relates to health / disability, disability and related areas but tends to combine personal Advocacy also.
- While there are courses dealing with social justice issues such as human rights, wealth redistribution etc. which might usefully inform advocacy work, they tend to be more academic in content and not specifically focused on developing advocacy skills. Such courses may not prove attractive to a wide range of organisations engaged in advocacy.
- Courses that deal more comprehensively with social justice related advocacy tend to require a previous high academic background. They may be inaccessible to many in the social justice advocacy area for academic as well as cost and time reasons.
- There is a general absence of short-term, appropriately flexible courses available for social justice advocacy training.
- Online Advocacy Training is not developed to a significant extent in Ireland
- Significant levels of Online Advocacy Information is available from UK and US sources, but its applicability to the Irish environment is limited and questionable. It may be most useful as a resource for those already proficient in Advocacy.

Advocacy Training Courses, Northern Ireland:

Some initiatives are taking place in Northern Ireland aimed at developing Advocacy approaches geared to modern needs. This includes joint academic and advocacy training industry initiatives to address the issues of changing demand, lack of interest in training, and changing requirements. Examples include the introduction of short, one day, non accredited courses as a response to issues of cost and time as well as selecting specific relevant issues, such as fuel poverty, when devising advocacy training for the elderly.

Advocacy there has ‘skipped a generation’ in that Advocacy work really only began to develop significantly following the success of the peace process over the past decade.

As a result Advocacy practice, while generally less developed in Northern Ireland than in the Republic, is currently developing on more innovative lines in response to changing requirements in society and the economy also currently underway.

Advocacy Training is also under considerable review and development, but there remains a degree of ambivalence, resistance and lack of understanding among many target organisations on the concept and value of Advocacy training.

Queens University, Belfast:

Queens University is engaged in a model initiative geared to develop Advocacy among organisations working with and for the elderly:

1/. Changing Ageing Partnership (CAP):

The goal of CAP is to empower older people and their organisations to transform how they are viewed by sections within our society. To realise this, the programme “*will develop a holistic agenda that recognises the multiple realities of older people's lives alongside issues traditionally associated with older people such as health and social care, economic independence and community safety.*”

CAP's courses are delivered through four integrated programme strands, each led by a partner organisation:

- 1/. - Research and policy evidence that will support the work of age sector organizations and inform politicians, government and the wider policy family (run by QUB).
- 2/. - Leadership and Advocacy training to build skills among older people and groups (WEA).
- 3/. - Capacity building, co-ordination and communication with older people and age sector organisations (Help the Aged).
- 4/. - Equality policy development with older people and public bodies (run by Age Concern).

Queens University is attempting to address the issues of changing demand, lack of interest in training and changing requirements, through various initiatives with both Strategem - in relation to transferring expertise in professional lobbying to Advocacy organisations - and Atlantic Philanthropies through novel initiatives on the Ageing Programme and in relation to the Programme for Social Enterprises.

There is an acceptance of the need for Advocacy Training, and attempts are being made to introduce short, one day, no accreditation courses as a response to issues of cost and time that previously deterred participation.

The analysis to date, according to Dr Brendan Murtagh of QUB, is that organisations view traditional courses as being too expensive and time consuming and also question the standard of Advocacy Training, due to experiences from the past. There is also a residual resistance and cynicism towards formalised Advocacy Training and the standards achieved in Training courses in the past.

Those advocating on behalf of the elderly in particular identify a need for some form of Advocacy Training on specific issues, for example, fuel poverty, and development of a template suitable for responding to the rapid change in society and the economy as well as the significant developments within Northern Ireland itself. Suitable Advocacy training courses have yet to be developed that fully meet their requirements.

Attempts are being made to introduce one-day, no accreditation courses but this may again raise further questions on standards and overall quality of outcome from the courses. There is still no strong commitment from relevant community based and sectoral organisations to the concept and value of Advocacy Training in Northern Ireland.

This overall position is further supported by the analysis of Quintin Oliver, Director of Strategem. He believes there is “not a trend” towards more Advocacy Training, individuals and organisations do not attend what would be relevant follow-up training, although there may be an interest in brief, one-day courses.

Some courses that have been provided without fees, supported by Atlantic Philanthropies, have proved more popular.

University of Ulster – Magee College:

Human Rights & Peacebuilding, Masters Degree:

This high level qualification is provided on both a full time and part time basis and concentrates on legal and policy aspects of Advocacy.

The course content is aimed at developing skills relevant to policy, research and advocacy roles in the voluntary, public and private sectors in the UK, Ireland and beyond and to legal practice. Successful completion may also open up a range of further study and research options.

Full-time - three semesters (1 calendar year)
Part-time - six semesters (2-3 calendar years).

Colin Knox, School of Criminology, Politics and Social Policy, University of Ulster, confirms views on attitudes to Advocacy training, expressed arising from QUB studies. He highlights support for a view that the best advocates for social change are beneficiaries of initiatives, and that this is linked to a resistance to public relations and Advocacy 'experts' based strategies.

The new political situation in Northern Ireland has changed the nature of Advocacy and this requires new responses on dissemination of information to those seeking social change. Advocacy training programmes will need to respond to these new realities and it cannot be a situation that "one size fits all."

Non traditional forms of Advocacy Training:

Other non-traditional forms of enhancing Advocacy effectiveness include an initiative bringing organisations and politicians together to exchange views on how the interests of both government and relevant organisations can best be served and how messages can most effectively be conveyed to decision makers.

According to Majella McCloskey, CEO of CO3 representing third sector organisations, initiatives such as this are proving highly valuable as a new training approach to make Advocacy more effective and targeted.

The emphasis on providing training and information from a 'been there - done that' source rather than one based solely on an academic qualification of Advocacy principles is emphasised by the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA).

NICVA sees a value in training concentrating on building relationships and linking evidence to arguments for social change, etc. "Courses must build credibility before they will be viewed as worthwhile and accessed," according to NICVA. Smaller organisations can be assisted through initiatives such as policy forums as much as through formal training.

The Fairbairn Foundation, which operates both in the UK as well as Northern Ireland, is operating a new leadership programme designed to develop leadership and co-operation, which will achieve the same goals as formal Advocacy training. It is targeted at individuals within organisations and at bringing together groups and organisations that might not traditionally work together.

The strategy is, over a number of years, to facilitate participants to make a positive impression on society and the overall social justice sector in Northern Ireland.

"The aim of the programme is to provide the sector with an alternative and stronger voice through creating a cohort of people working effectively together," John Mulligan of Fairbairn explains.

Advocacy Northern Ireland: Main Findings:

- Innovative and experimental methods of Advocacy Training are required to attract organisations to participate in formal training courses
- Initiatives such as the Queens University course on ‘Changing Ageing’, led by a partner organisation active in Advocacy in these areas, offer one potential route to more acceptable and relevant formal training courses
- Bringing organisations and politicians together to exchange views on how the interests of both government and relevant organisations can best be served and how messages can most effectively be conveyed to decision makers.
- Linking evidence to arguments for social change enhances Advocacy effectiveness
- Policy forums can assist smaller organisations as much as formal training.

View within Organisations on Advocacy Training:

The general view of organisations is that an Advocacy Professional should understand how to convey the organisation's position to bodies on which the charity relies for funding, policy or other factors that influence and determine its work and effectiveness.

In general organisations consider their staff sufficiently equipped to undertake Advocacy, but this is not linked to a formal training requirement. There is a majority view that Advocacy in their organisation is 'inadequate' but this is explained as a general under-resourcing that limits the effectiveness of and ability to carry out Advocacy.

Smaller organisations regularly require Advocacy to be undertaken by a person or persons that have other responsibilities. Deficiencies are viewed as an issue of resources rather than a training issue. In principle, organisations would welcome additional expertise and training opportunities, but are either unaware of courses, believe they are not focussed enough on specific requirements of the charity, or are too costly and / or time consuming.

The CEO generally retains overall responsibility for Advocacy where an Advocacy Officer is also retained. The number of organisations that employ specific Advocacy Officers is limited. The general approach is to employ an Advocacy Officer who has a previous proven track record in Advocacy work or who has a background in politics, public affairs or media relations.

Advocacy Officers are generally expected to be self-starters who report to the CEO but also work as part of the team. It would be fair to say that Advocacy Officers are generally allowed an acceptable latitude to operate by CEOs.

Mentoring of Advocacy Officers is somewhat limited. The general approach is to employ an Advocacy Officer who is ready to hit the ground running. As such induction into the organisation's policies and priorities rather than mentoring *per se* is the more usual introduction. In some smaller organisations where a specific Advocacy officer is not employed, Advocacy work may be carried out by staff at a regional level, with HSE, etc, in addition to the overall role of the CEO or other Head Office staff on Advocacy.

Mentoring is provided in varying degrees, however the understanding of Advocacy often includes undertaking work on behalf of members to achieve positive individual outcomes. Change in policy sometimes arises from this work but is not the purpose of the Advocacy in the first place.

In general CEO's of organisations have not received formal Advocacy training. Their expertise arises from experience gained in real time work, either before joining the organisation or in their day-to-day work. In smaller organisations, and especially in many health related organisations, CEOs often have close personal affinity with the issues being dealt with by the organisation. This provides a very honed and specific understanding of the Advocacy requirements.

Again, it is important to state that the definition of Advocacy in many charities should be understood to encompass an ability to deal effectively with individual issues as well as achieving overall policy change.

Advocacy is almost invariably regarded as a key leadership skill. There is a significant view that Advocacy is a skill learned and developed over time and is based on experience rather than qualification.

There is no evidence to suggest that the approach to Advocacy training and expertise differs between those organisations that have a purely national role and those that have international links. The approach to Advocacy is more determined by organisation size.

Organisations do not appear to seek evidence of formal Advocacy training in recruitment of Advocacy Officers. Ability to 'do the job', contacts with the political government system and official bodies, media contacts and 'track record' would appear to be the overriding criteria in selection of candidates for full-time Advocacy officer positions.

Formal Advocacy Training is not regarded as a priority, either before or subsequent to employment of an Advocacy Officer. Networking within the sector, self-learning or research is undertaken by CEO's, Advocacy officers and staff whose remit includes Advocacy, as the most established means of improving overall Advocacy skills and effectiveness.

There is a significant view that Advocacy training opportunities are inadequate. There is generally a low level of knowledge of formal Advocacy training courses, to the extent of organisations being unable to name even one such course in some cases. There is a significant view that the particular emphasis and requirements of each individual organisation are so specific that formal training courses are either considered too generic or too generalised in nature to be of benefit.

If courses were considered specific enough, organisations feel they would avail of their services. However, custom and practice in organisations is to employ Advocacy personnel without reference to formal training.

Staff Advocacy skills are developed largely through internal discussion, familiarisation with policy, and day-to-day dealing with issues as they arise. Mentoring on a non-formalised basis is provided and varies significantly between organisations. Advocacy officers are expected to be self-starters and there is a significant view that formal training, or at least no significant formal training, should be required subsequent to employment.

Organisations are generally reluctant to admit deficiencies in Advocacy work, other than that resulting from lack of resources and personnel. It may be that insufficient auditing of the specific success and outcomes of Advocacy work is undertaken in a significant number of organisations.

In addition Advocacy officers in many organisations are also responsible for other areas of activity and this may include CEO, fundraising or service provision responsibilities. In this regard assessment of Advocacy effectiveness of individuals is objectively difficult. Organisations do not generally regard lack of formal Advocacy Training as the source of deficiencies in Advocacy work.

Organisations expressed a general willingness to provide or receive mentoring or other related training or support services within the sector. However this is a generalised attitude and the ability and resources of larger organisations to deliver on this position was not tested in this assessment. The potential exists to utilise this resource in the event that a structured approach is devised to implement it.

Survey on Advocacy Activity and Training for Social Justice and Related Skills Areas

| <i>Does your organisation carry out Advocacy work on behalf of members?</i> | |
|---|-----|
| Yes | 37* |
| No | 0 |

*All consider Advocacy is carried out but a substantial portion is Personal Advocacy or a combination of personal and policy, which is also considered to be bringing about change.

| <i>Advocacy is carried out by:</i> | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| CEO/ Head | 12 |
| Advocacy Officer | 6 |
| Many staff* | 24 |

*Includes overlaps

| <i>Are you satisfied with the level / impact of Advocacy?</i> | |
|---|----|
| Yes | 7 |
| No | 17 |
| Unsure/Some aspects | 13 |

| <i>When employing staff to undertake Advocacy evidence of formal Advocacy training is</i> | |
|---|----|
| Sought | 0 |
| Not Sought | 37 |

| <i>Has the person undertaking Advocacy received formal training?</i> | |
|--|----|
| Yes | 2 |
| No | 8 |
| Don't Know | 10 |
| Related Courses* | 19 |

*Not formal Advocacy training

| <i>Details available of Training (includes non-formal Advocacy Training):</i> | |
|---|----|
| Communications | 12 |
| Leadership | 11 |
| Other | 5 |
| Unspecific | 5 |

*includes overlaps

| <i>Was training received Before or After joining the organisation?</i> | |
|--|----|
| Before | 14 |
| After | 7 |
| Before and After | 5 |

| <i>If you employ Advocacy staff or engage in Advocacy, is mentoring provided?</i> | |
|---|----|
| Yes | 16 |
| No | 21 |

| <i>In your opinion, Is Advocacy a key or non-key leadership skill?</i> | |
|--|----|
| Key | 28 |
| Non-Key | 0 |
| Unclear | 9 |

*Includes Personal Advocacy

| <i>Is Advocacy training in your organisation</i> | |
|--|----|
| Adequate | 14 |
| Inadequate | 23 |

| <i>Requirements of an Advocacy Officer:</i> | |
|--|----|
| Knowledge of issues affecting members | 31 |
| Relevant contacts | 27 |
| Ability to convey messages relevantly | 26 |
| Astuteness | 22 |
| Produce New Ideas | 20 |
| Knowledge of systems | 19 |
| Knowledge of key players | 18 |
| Organisation | 16 |
| Self motivation | 11 |
| Track record | 9 |
| Ability to work with others | 7 |

*A free response was allowed

| <i>Requirements of Advocacy Training are:</i> | |
|---|----|
| How and where to convey message | 26 |
| How to network | 24 |
| How to develop activity | 23 |
| Communications skills | 21 |
| Organisational skills | 16 |
| Providing leadership | 13 |

| <i>Are you aware of Advocacy training courses or courses that relate to Advocacy?</i> | |
|---|----|
| Yes | 17 |
| No | 21 |

| <i>What is your opinion of courses?</i> | |
|---|----|
| Useful | 6 |
| Unsuited | 9 |
| Expensive | 6 |
| Time Involved | 6 |
| No Specific Opinion | 22 |

*includes overlaps

| <i>Has your organisation utilised Advocacy or related training courses?</i> | |
|---|----|
| Yes | 5 |
| No | 27 |
| Unsure | 7 |

| <i>Would you consider enrolling key staff on Advocacy Courses?</i> | |
|--|----|
| Yes | 19 |
| No | 7 |
| Possibly | 11 |

| <i>How could Advocacy skills be further developed in your organisation?</i> | |
|---|----|
| More contacts with similar organisations | 17 |
| Learning from others | 14 |
| Networking | 14 |
| Mentoring | 13 |
| Training | 12 |
| More staff | 9 |
| More attention to issue | 8 |
| Not relevant | 11 |
| No opinion | 9 |

| <i>Is there potential for Advocacy experts in larger organisations providing mentoring services to smaller organisations?</i> | |
|---|----|
| Yes | 11 |
| No | 3 |
| Possibly | 23 |

Advocacy Training in the UK:

Provision of Advocacy Training in the UK has developed to a greater extent than in Ireland, with a number of organisations offering courses and mentoring of Advocacy Professionals. Much of this training is specifically targeted at organisations and specific sectors, e.g. elderly, human rights, equality, etc.

While there are obvious differences in size and scale between Ireland and the UK that impact on how Advocacy operates in the two countries, a number of existing and innovative initiatives and programmes operating in the UK are worth noting for their potential to deliver improvements in Advocacy training in Ireland.

National Council for Voluntary Organisations:

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) is the largest umbrella body for the voluntary and community sector in England. It has counterparts in other areas of the UK

NCVO provides training and support to assist CEOs and other senior persons in community-based organisations as a *'key to releasing the full potential of their organisations'* and to *'develop their leadership skills.'*

NCVO's courses are varied in cost and structure *"to allow us to offer a sustainable consultancy service to a variety of organisations of different size, income and capacity."*

Seeds for Change

Seeds For Change Network is a non-profit training and support co-operative helping people organise for action and positive social change. It provides support and training to community groups and co-operatives – as well as to individual activists and campaigners, concentrating on social and environmental justice areas.

Its work is more specifically aimed at campaigning related Advocacy.

Seeds for Change works closely with each group and organisation to develop training based on individual needs. *"This means we don't have a set list of workshops that we do."*

The courses revolve around:

- Getting organised - the basics of setting up and maintaining a group
- Planning a campaign: aims, strategy and tactics
- Gathering Information
- Publicity: (leaflets, newsletters, websites etc), public speaking, organising public events, working with the media
- Power and change - changing power structures
- Raising funds.

British Institute for Human Rights:

The Institute offers a range of 1 - 2 day training courses as well as shorter Introductory courses on Advocacy.

It specialises in Equality, Disability, Older, Mental health, Asylum, Carers and Youth areas.

Courses are '*tailor designed*' to the needs of a particular organisation.

Course content is '*strongly participative and interactive*' and involves discussion, presentations, group exercises and case studies

Training course fees are set on a tiered basis, depending on income of the organisation and nature of requirements and are based on a day rate to organisations not per individual.

Campaign for Freedom of Information:

The Campaign for Freedom of Information is a non-profit organisation working to improve public access to official information. It runs courses for organisations and individuals to enable organisations access information as a means of improving the scope and effectiveness of Advocacy work.

For the past five years the Campaign has run a half-day course on 'Information Commissioner & Tribunal Decisions' with the 2011 course scheduled for November. The course is aimed at FOI practitioners and those with a good working knowledge of the legislation. It highlights the latest developments in the way the exemptions, public interest test and the legislation's procedural requirements are being interpreted.

A more basic course has now been developed to assist those with a more general knowledge and level of requirements on FOI for Advocacy purposes. It also deals with how the Information Commissioner and Information Tribunal are interpreting key provisions of legislation?

Public Concern at Work:

Public Concern at Work is the whistleblowing charity. It operates largely based on fees from the consultancy and training provided to business, governments and other organisations.

- offers free, confidential advice to people and organisations concerned about crime, danger or wrongdoing at work;
- help organisations to deliver and demonstrate good governance;
- inform public policy; and
- promote individual responsibility, organisational accountability and the public interest.

Local Based Advocacy Initiatives

Advonet (Leeds):

Advonet is perhaps the most developed locally based Advocacy Initiative working to support and promote advocacy in Leeds and West Yorkshire, an area with about the same population as greater Dublin.

It was set up in September 1998 and is a Membership organisation open to organisations providing advocacy in the Leeds area.

It provides Free Advocacy training to organisations based in Leeds, organisations outside of Leeds may also participate in courses but are charged £160 for what are generally two day courses.

Advonet provides a support network for providers of Advocacy; it develops, co-ordinates & facilitates training and education on Advocacy and issues relevant to Advocacy.

It also seeks to identify gaps and develop Advocacy services and develops and promotes good practice standards for advocacy

In addition it provides a contact point for people who need Advocacy support and enable them to access it.

It runs regular short courses. The following is a typical example of course content currently on offer through Advonet:

Effective Advocacy and Negotiation Skills Training Course:

- A course for people intending to use Advocacy and negotiating skills for their organisation.
- Skills and qualities of an Advocate
- Principles of Advocacy
- Identifying situations suitable for Advocacy
- Statutory Advocacy
- Difference between Advocacy and other forms of help
- Dealing with conflict
- Dealing with stalling tactics
- Negotiating successfully.

In addition there are a number of professional Advocacy training companies in the UK, often working in conjunction with voluntary organisations to provide Advocacy courses.

Advocacy Training Partnership Ventures:

Advocacy Training is provided in some cases by a combination of private companies and registered charities.

Advocacy Training (AT) is a service providing Advocacy courses through a partnership between SEAP (Support Empower Advocate and Promote) and Kate Mercer Training.

SEAP was formed in 2000 as a registered charity and limited company to further develop and manage a number of specialist Advocacy services delivered since 1994. It specialises in disability, children's and older people Advocacy.

Kate Mercer Training is a City & Guilds Approved Centre that offers training and consultancy in the field of health and social care, particularly Advocacy and children's rights.

Courses are provided privately to individuals and organisations and normally cost in the range £300 - £600. The courses include:

1/: Certificate and Diploma in Independent Advocacy

Qualifications in Independent Advocacy are designed to:

- Provide relevant and practice based training to the advocacy workforce
- Ensure that people who use advocacy services receive high quality advocacy
- Improve consistency within advocacy across England and Wales
- Help raise the standards within advocacy
- Provide advocates with evidence that they are good at what they do and have achieved a recognised standard
- Provide commissioners with a tool to measure the quality of advocacy practice.

The need to develop an Advocacy qualification was felt by both the Advocacy sector and government who wanted to develop national training as part of a drive to improve standards and consistency. More and more advocacy services wanted to access accredited training as a way to improve and demonstrate the skills of its workforce.

In 2007, the Department of Health and Welsh Assembly Government, through the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) funded a position to work with the sector in establishing the need for a qualification and what it might look like.

2/: Fast Track - Four Core Modules in Two Days (Units 301, 302, 303 & 304):

This course is open to those providing Advocacy support for a minimum of 12 months, who have completed previous Advocacy training or have completed a minimum of 1,000 hours Advocacy practice.

The fast track course is a 2 day taught course which addresses the four mandatory units in Independent Advocacy (Unit 301, 302, 303 and 304). Their approach is not to teach advocacy but to support the participants to reflect and hone practical advocacy skills – whilst achieving an accredited and recognised qualification.

Following the 2 day taught course, participants are assigned an individual assessor who visits the workplace to both support and assess. Support and guidance is also provided from a team of tutors and assessors who all come from within the advocacy sector.

The Cost, at £920, is prohibitive except for organisations with significant Budgets.

New Focus on ‘Effectiveness’:

Many organisations in UK are now assessing the outcomes from Advocacy and Advocacy training, rather than seeking to necessarily expand their range of Advocacy, according to CEO of the Sheila McKenzie Foundation, Linda Butcher.

“What is the purpose of campaigning?”

“What have you changed?”

“It must not be activity for the sake of it”

These are concepts increasingly used to address Advocacy and Advocacy training.

Reduction in government funding and change in the overall environment in which organisations are forced to operate is producing a range of new responses to Advocacy and Advocacy training. These include:

- Larger organisations organising in-house training of volunteers, particularly for campaign-related Advocacy
- Peer- to-peer training and ‘sharing ideas’ through active learning
- Requests for specific training related to predicted national changes in policy or funding
- A recognition that change in Advocacy approach as well as in overall approach is required to ensure the survival of the organisation

At a certain level conventional Advocacy Training is being viewed as redundant and participative learning regarded as more valuable, particularly for higher level Advocacy staff. For back up staff one-day courses are seen as relevant.

A further concept is that effective Advocacy can be enhanced not just by Advocacy officers but by all those associated with an organisation, including staff, board members and service users.

Advocacy Training UK: Main Findings:

- Provision of Advocacy Training in the UK has developed to a greater extent than in Ireland, with a number of organisations offering courses and mentoring of Advocacy Professionals.
- Much of this training is targeted at specific organisations and specific sectors, e.g. elderly, human rights, equality, etc.
- In many cases the Advocacy training providers work closely with each group and organisation to develop training based on individual needs.
- Courses are '*tailor designed*' to the needs of a particular organisation and the approach is '*strongly participative and interactive.*'
- Systems of provision of free Advocacy Training have been developed in some areas
- Advocacy Training is also provided in some cases by a combination of private companies and registered charities.
- Many organisations in the UK are now assessing the outcomes from Advocacy and Advocacy Training, rather than seeking to necessarily expand their range of Advocacy.

Recommendations:

- The range of Advocacy Training courses available in the Republic of Ireland are not being accessed to a significant extent by organisations. There is a requirement for short-term, appropriately flexible courses, developed in conjunction and consultation with the sector and responsive to its needs.
- Innovative and experimental methods of Advocacy Training are required to attract organisations to participate in formal training courses
- Development of training courses led by a partner organisation(s) active in Advocacy in specific sectors offers potential to develop relevant and meaningful formal and comprehensive training courses.
- Non-traditional forms of Advocacy development, as an alternative to formal Advocacy training, should be promoted. These include networking forums, bringing organisations and politicians together to exchange views on how the interests of both can be delivered; linking evidence to arguments for social change and organising policy forums.
- Training should be targeted at specific organisations and specific sectors, e.g. elderly, human rights, equality, etc and courses tailor-designed to ensure relevance.
- Provision of Free Advocacy Training courses, as developed in the UK and through Atlantic Philanthropies in Northern Ireland could be introduced on a pilot basis.
- Online Advocacy Information available from UK and US sources could be adapted for Irish Advocacy conditions.
- An assessment of the purpose and outcome from Advocacy activity and Advocacy Training is required to ensure training programmes are effective.
- The role of the whole organisation in promoting Advocacy (board members, staff, and beneficiaries) should be examined to evaluate the best means of achieving positive Advocacy outcomes for organisations.
- A Forum on Advocacy for Social Justice could be organised to determine what issues are impeding achievement of aims and targets, the impact of the new economic situation on these areas and how Advocacy training and organisation can be improved as a consequence.

List of organisations contacted

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| Republic of Ireland | Irish Guide Dogs | Sheila McKechnie Foundation |
| Actionaid Ireland | Irish Heart Foundation | Strategem |
| Alzheimers' Society of Ireland | Irish Hospice Foundation | University of Ulster (Jordanstown) |
| Arthritis Ireland | Kerry Diocesan Youth Service | |
| Asthma Society of Ireland | Misean Cara | UK Advocacy services analysed |
| Birdwatch Ireland | Mountain Rescue Ireland | |
| Bothar | MS Ireland | Advonet |
| Brainwave | Muscular Dystrophy Ireland | British Institute for Human Rights |
| Carers' Association | Pobal | Fasttrack / Think8 |
| CEIST | RESPECT | Campaign for Freedom of Information |
| Cheshire Ireland | Samaritans | |
| Clann Credo – the Social Investment Fund | Scripture Union Ireland | National Council for Voluntary Organisations |
| | Simon Community | |
| Concern | St Michael's House | Public Concern at Work |
| Conference of Religious in Ireland | Threshold | Seeds for Change |
| | | Support Empower Advocate |
| COPE | Northern Ireland, and UK-based working in Northern Ireland | Promote / Kate Mercer Training |
| Cystic Fibrosis | | |
| Enable Ireland | | |
| ERST | CO3 | |
| Fighting Blindness | Fairbarn Foundation | |
| GORTA | Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust | |
| Headstrong | Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action | |
| Hope Foundation | | |
| Irish Cancer Society | Queens University, Belfast | |