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An Evaluation of the Community Training Programme

On behalf of:

The Social & Health Education Project

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Evaluation of Community Training Programme

1. Executive Summary

The Community Training Programme is an integral part of SHEP's overall training package. Though the evaluation content was affected by a degree of fragmentation in terms of available information which could have contributed to the analysis further, it is clear that the Community Training Programme is having a positive impact on participants in ways similar to the Core Training Programme.

Kearney Consultants' recent evaluation of the Core Training Programme recognises that:

SHEP is a singular organisation offering a range of courses unlike that offered in any other context in Ireland. Underpinned by a well-thought out vision and set of principles it is an empowering model of change and a positive vehicle of transformation in people's lives.

We see the Community Training Programme in a similar light. However, because of the sheer range and volume of community courses, the programme is less structured and cohesive than the Core Training Programme. While this is testimony to success in many respects, it has to be managed and monitored so that SHEP does not lose sight of its objectives and detract from its overall philosophy and approach to personal empowerment.

The evaluation revealed a high degree of satisfaction on the part of participants in a range of courses, and to this end, SHEP is achieving on its objectives. Many course participants went on to the Core Training Programme. Many noticed a positive impact and effect in their lives. Community Tutors are highly experienced and understand the SHEP ethos and approach to a huge extent. This is often complemented by their other training or work in compatible areas such as counselling and psychotherapy. They are a considerable asset to SHEP and their empathy and understanding of empowerment models is impressive. This should continue to be harnessed and valued by SHEP. SHEP management are inspiring in their commitment, passion and professionalism and their openness to constructive review.

As noted, because the Community Training Programme has been successful on so many fronts, it also suffers from a lack of cohesion which needs to be addressed. Key areas to look at in future strategic planning (more detail in **Section 7**) include:

- Ensuring that Community Training continues to be aligned to SHEP's core purpose
- Making sure that planning, management, administration and communication mechanisms are effective, appropriate and inclusive
- Instituting quality control systems at programme, project and course level
- Developing a system for appropriate targeting and relevance of course provision
- Safeguarding against dilution of SHEP's core ethos and *modus operandi* because of course volume and diversity
- Building partnerships at local level and looking to the concept of Centres of Excellence as a mechanism for expansion and efficient resource use

The Community Training Programme would benefit from the development of a strategic framework. The framework needs to be aligned to SHEP's vision and philosophy and take account of all the issues mentioned above and the specifics as described in **Section 7**.

Community Training is important to SHEP – no less important than its Core Training Programme. Community Training allows SHEP to have an impact in many more places in the community than it could do if it relied on one strand of training alone.

But the Programme suffers from a degree of fragmentation and absence of cohesion which has to be addressed through strategising its future in terms of management and coordination, administration, course identification, delivery and resource allocation. This is a time for such work and SHEP is well-placed to undertake this.

2. An Overview of the Community Training Programme

SHEP's Community Training Programme is diverse and varied. A typical range of community courses includes:

- Introduction to Personal Development
- Assertive Communication for Better Relationships
- Managing Stress in Our Daily Lives
- Family Communication
- Parents, Infants and Toddlers - Developing Relationships
- Children and Bullying - A Course for Parents
- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Women's Wellbeing
- Men's Wellbeing
- Health, Wellbeing and Empowerment for Older People
- Coping with Grief, Loss and Change in Life
- Inter-Cultural Awareness

Other courses are offered in response to the specific needs of certain groups, including those who face especially significant challenges. Identification of courses is frequently carried out by organisations working closely with certain groups or by Community Tutors working in the community.

Regardless of the focus and topics involved, all courses are informed by SHEP's philosophy and approach to personal empowerment and all are designed to support individuals towards greater self-awareness and capacity to move forward.

In setting up these courses, SHEP often works in partnership with other agencies and organisations active in the community. Core funding for the courses is sometimes sourced from local organisations or the VEC, which have an interest in supporting the development of the groups concerned, and participants are asked to pay small, nominal, or no fees, depending on circumstances.

Many of those who undertake one or more courses in Community Training progress to SHEP's Core Training Programme.

SHEP's management regards the Community Training dimension of its work as an essential ingredient in its entire package as it allows participants opportunities to participate in social and health education in a way that is empowering and progressive. Because the courses are run by tutors who themselves have undertaken training through SHEP's Core Training Programme, each course is informed by SHEP's unique philosophy, ethos and approach.

Other agencies, such as the VEC and the HSE, now recognise that SHEP's Community Training Programme is unique and different from more mainstream courses, as it is focused on personal empowerment combined with appropriate support both during courses and subsequent to course participation if that is relevant. Course participation often results in transformational outcomes allowing individuals to progress to other training and education or to other constructive paths.

SHEP asked Kearney Consultants to evaluate the Community Training Programme so that it could:

- Plan for the future based on a targeted assessment of activity and performance to date
- Assess the relevance of the Community Training Programme in moving into a new phase of delivery and adjust its operation accordingly
- Review the extent to which the Community Training Programme has met the needs of community organisations
- Evaluate the extent to which the Community Training Programme has met the needs of its identified target groups and individuals
- Ensure that it, as an organisation, operates effectively in delivering on its stated aims and objectives in difficult economic circumstances

This evaluation focuses on information collected through an analysis of documentation, outcomes of survey activity, discussions with participants, with Community Tutors and members of SHEP's management team. From this analysis, we make certain observations and recommendations for SHEP to consider in the future roll-out of its Community Training Programme.

The evaluation first puts a context on The Community Training Programme in terms of its place and role in fulfilling SHEP's mission and objectives and grounded in certain philosophical principles.

It then moves to an analysis of the perspectives of representatives of SHEP's management in terms of the value of Community Training to the organisation and to individuals who participate in courses.

Subsequently, the views and perspectives of Community Training participants are reviewed for information on their experiences and their views on future course planning and delivery.

Finally, Community Tutors' experiences and viewpoints are analysed in terms of learning for the future.

During the course of the evaluation, we made several attempts to gather information from local organisations and from a greater variety of Community Tutors and participants. This was not successful and we had to change the evaluation strategy as a result while still focusing on the evaluation objectives. This absence of data points to a level of fragmentation in the Community Training Programme itself which needs to be addressed and is one of our recommendations for future action.

3. SHEP as a Training Organisation

SHEP's training programme – in this case its Community Training Programme – is influenced and guided by its Mission Statement and Strategic Aims. These were initially devised several years ago and have undergone some reworking particularly in the past 6 years. They are the guiding mechanisms which inform SHEP's work plan presented to funders (especially the HSE and the Department of Community, Equality & Gaeltacht Affairs) and are the measure by which progress is assessed externally and are also helpful to SHEP's management and staff.

SHEP is a values-led organisation that works together with individuals and communities to develop capacities for positive change, to enhance health and well-being and to promote social justice. We do this through a range of integrated personal, community, environmental and international development initiatives. (As stated in Draft Strategic Plan 2011-2014 and SHEP web site)

Strategic Aims (as stated in current Workplan 2009-2011)

- That people will achieve individual wellbeing through the competent and responsible management of their personal lives and relationships
- That people will contribute to the achievement of collective wellbeing through competent and responsible participation in the management of communal affairs
- That no person will be unwillingly or unnecessarily excluded from developing personal effectiveness at an individual or a collective level

Organisations have cultures – or identities – which set them apart from others or facilitate their being part of commonly-based organisations. That culture is influenced by external factors and by those who promote it internally. Culture can be robust in a way that does not allow for change or can be capable of adaptation and inclusion. The organisational culture is often the "glue" which holds an organisation together, motivates those involved and contributes to long-term sustainability. Each organisation's culture is denoted by identifiers which distinguish it from others.

Because of SHEP's nature and underlying philosophy, its ethos and values are of great importance to its functioning as a training organisation and its contribution to society. SHEP is genuinely founded on a set of values which place the individual's empowerment at the centre and the organisation's ethos is permeated by this core focus as demonstrated in all its activities.

It is apparent that SHEP, as an education project, is fundamentally aligned to the principle of empowerment through a series of training (education) and support activities which, it appears, have some of their roots at least in humanistic psychology and community education.

4. Course Organisers' Perspective

4.1. Introduction

The Community Training Programme is hugely valuable to SHEP in a number of ways, including:

- It allows SHEP to deliver on its mission and objectives
- It allows SHEP to have a greater understanding of what is happening 'on the ground' and so to prepare and design courses that are more relevant to people's realities
- It provides a 'feeder' to the Core Training Programme
- It facilitates many who progress through the Core Training Programme to find training work and builds SHEP's impact in society
- It promotes SHEP's work through communities

Management agrees that Community Training is important to SHEP and that *"the organisation would suffer if it was not available."*

They acknowledge the huge commitment of Community Tutors to their work both while delivering courses and in work that they have to do in preparation and promotion of the courses. Tutors also gather information on likely course options and relay this information to SHEP's course organisers. This helps the latter to ensure that the courses on offer are those that are most relevant to potential participants' needs.

However, there is a need to really know its value to participants and to gather information as to how best to prepare the Community Programme so that it suits people's needs now and in the future.

4.2. Community Training Management & Administration

SHEP has in excess of 100 tutors delivering courses throughout Cork City and County and in parts of Co. Kerry. Some are involved through the quarterly meetings organised by SHEP for tutors while others are rarely seen. Some deliver courses directly with SHEP and some in other locations.

There is a sense, from the discussion with the course organisers, that the organisation needs to have more contact with all tutors, needs more structure in relation to tutor registration and the latter's progression in terms of their experience, qualifications and suitability as SHEP tutors for the long-term.

They recognise tutors as a considerable asset to the organisation not only in terms of their availability to deliver courses but also in dissemination of SHEP's ethos, philosophy and unique approach to personal empowerment. Registered tutors have all progressed through the Core Training Programme and also bring other skills, experience and qualifications to bear on their work. Tutors come from many different backgrounds which is a positive dimension to the SHEP package. Difference is respected and celebrated. The tutor pool is a very rich resource and fundamental to SHEP's current and future success.

However, it is clear from the course organisers' experience that some tutors are not aware of the entire package of training that SHEP offers, or of its overall philosophy and approach to individual empowerment. The organisers want to ensure that this deficit is addressed in the future in the interests of SHEP, the tutors themselves, and prospective participants. Course organisers recognise some shortfalls in the tutor registration process. This is borne out by Kearney Consultants' research through which it was difficult to establish exact numbers of tutors, their qualifications, and their delivery of courses. The tutor database is in need of upgrading according to the organisers.

Work needs to be done on quality control dimensions of the Community Training course delivery in the view of course organisers. Currently, participants' end-of-course evaluations (paper-based) are submitted by tutors at the end of every course they run and many tutors are met either individually or collectively to debrief on their experience.

The course organisers would like to review other quality control measures so that there is consistency in terms of course definition, approaches and methodologies across the board while fitting into the SHEP philosophy. Work is currently being carried out on codes of practice and protocols for tutors.

This streamlining would, in the course organisers' opinion, elevate the status of the courses.

In our view, it would also bring greater clarity and definition to the 'products' which SHEP is offering, which in turn would enable more effective promotion and awareness-raising.

Course organisers also see the value of strengthening links with other organisations and building partnerships which allow different stakeholder organisers to fulfil their differing but compatible objectives. Experience to date has been somewhat fragmented and lacking in strategic focus. SHEP is very open to new, innovative and creative approaches which allow its mission to be achieved and so stronger partnerships and alliances are welcomed for effective and meaningful course delivery.

4.3. Course Delivery

The non-academic focus is regarded as one of the Community Training Programme's strengths and is fundamental to SHEP's philosophy of personal empowerment. The experiential emphasis in each course – no matter what its initial focus – is a key part of the process of empowerment.

As tutors are all trained through the SHEP methodology, they are able to apply their learning to each situation in a flexible and appropriate manner. This formula works well at the identification and delivery stages. This is the case even if the course is not being delivered under SHEP's umbrella. According to the course organisers, there is universal agreement in the tutor group that the participant group and processes are actually more important than the content, and that flexibility is a key part of that approach.

5. Community Training Participants' Experience

5.1. Availability of Data

The data available for analysis was not as great as it might have been for a full and detailed examination of the efficacy and impact of the Community Training Programme. This reflects an overall fragmentation in the information and documentation of the programme and is one issue to be addressed by SHEP in the future.

Kearney Consultants made several attempts to gather information at local course delivery level but this proved frustrating and ineffectual. Local organisations (e.g. local family resource centres) were not in a position to provide information on courses they hosted or on participants in these courses.

As a result of these difficulties in gathering information, SHEP assisted Kearney Consultants in gathering information in a different way. This included:

- SHEP making a selection of participant evaluation forms available to the evaluators for analysis (on the basis that participants' personal details would be confidential)
- SHEP made contact with a range of Community Tutors to help the evaluators in gathering information

Despite earlier difficulties, this latter course of action by SHEP helped Kearney Consultants enormously in reviewing data and analysing its significance.

5.2. Analysis

The analysis consists of the following:

- A review of a range of participant course evaluation forms for courses held in 2009 and 2010 respectively
- A review of the outcomes of a participant focus group discussion

Kearney Consultants examined the course evaluation forms in two ways:

- Quantitative review of numerical data (e.g. numbers, range and course name and scores given by participants to different aspects of course delivery)
- Qualitative review of descriptive data (e.g. comments made by participants on their experience)

Information for both 2009 and 2010 reveals a high degree of satisfaction among participants across a range of courses held in a variety of locations in Cork city and county, and though it cannot be definitive, it can be assumed that this satisfaction level would be evident for courses delivered in other locations too.

Community Training 2009							
	Location	No. Facilitators	When	Overall Rating	Degree of Learning	Effect	Facilitator
Assertive Communication	Mayfield	1	Oct-09	8.00	9.33	7.67	9.00
Family Communication	Mallow	2	Dec-09	7.25	6.25	6.00	7.00
Stress Management	Tralee	2	Dec-09	10	9.25	9	10
Family Communication	Mallow	2	Dec-09	9.60	9.00	9.20	9.80
Men's Personal Development	Dunmanway	1	Jul-09	9.00	9.00	8.33	9.33
Personal Development	Ballincollig	2	May-09	9.33	8.83	9.00	9.83
Managing Stress in Daily Lives	Killeagh	1	May-09	10.00	9.83	10.00	10.00
Women's Well Being	Mallow	1	Feb-09	8.17	8.67	7.67	8.67
Stress Management	Kinsale	2	Feb-09	10.00	9.14	9.00	10.00
Community Training '10							
	Location	No. Facilitators	When	Overall Rating	Degree of Learning	Effect	Facilitators
Assertive Communication & Self	Tralee	2	Feb/Mar 2010	9.71	9.43	9.86	9.71
Managing Stress in Daily Lives	Minane Bridge	1	May-10	10	8	10	10
Assertive Communication & Relationships	Unsure	1	Spring 2010	8.83	8.50	8.50	8.67
Intro to Personal Development	Killarney	2	Jun-10	10	8.33	9	10
Play Acting	Ballincollig	1	Mar-10	9.75	9	8.5	9.75
Stress Management	Tralee	2	Jun-10	6.75	6.5	5.75	6.75
Play Back	Ballincollig	1	Mar-10	9.5	8.5	8.25	9.25
Men's Well being	Ballincollig	1	Jun-10	8.75	8.5	7.5	9.25
Personal Development	Unsure	1	Unsure	9.2	9	9	9.4
Family Communications	Ballincollig	1	Jun-10	8	8.33	7.33	7.33
Time For Me	Blackrock	2	Jun-10	8.8	8.8	8.2	6.4

Participants' responses on their forms were universally positive and no rating for any key question area was less than 6 (2009). Family Communication was the lowest scoring course in this selection. Both Stress Management and Managing Stress in Our Daily Lives scored very well.

It is noted that each course had different groups of participants who may not necessarily have known each other prior to their involvement. This is significant as it demonstrates the relevance of SHEP's courses in individual lives regardless of the influence of peers in making decisions to participate.

Though evidence is anecdotal due to the relatively small sample size, there is a sense that SHEP is “picking-up” on the mood and feelings of the times we live in. This is borne out by the huge interest that SHEP is currently experiencing in its new work in supporting “mindfulness”. Though outside the scope of this evaluation, it points to the organisation’s understanding of deep-rooted psychological shifts and need of individuals to search for meaning in their lives.

All of the courses were facilitated by SHEP-trained tutors, who were informed by its vision, philosophy, ethos and approaches. It is not clear from evidence available to this part of the research whether the courses were facilitated by tutors who maintain a strong contact with SHEP once their training is completed. As stated earlier, course organisers have advised us that many tutors do not maintain contact with SHEP to any great extent and this is a source of some concern in terms of quality control and analysing impact, among other things.

Though the sample is small in comparison to the number of courses, it reveals that participants had a very positive experience in courses, in terms of degree of learning, effect on themselves and their experience of the facilitator(s).

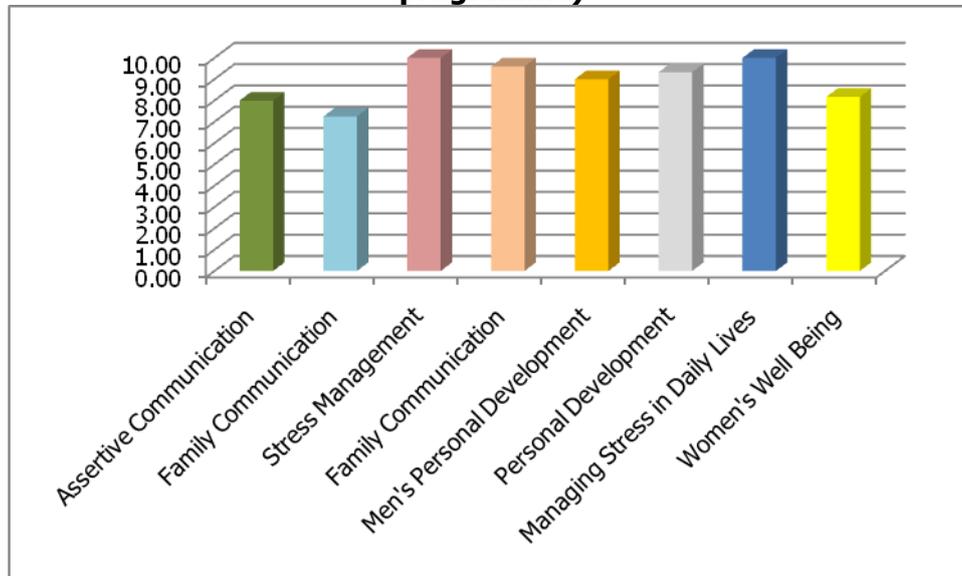
Responses for 2010 were equally positive by and large (despite the fact that the sample available was less than it might have been) although Stress Management in this sample, scored lower than the other sample courses. Facilitators were held in high regard by participants. Out of 11 courses in the sample, 4 had two facilitators involved. All courses were rated highly by participants. It appears that all courses were well received and well regarded.

Attachment 1 summarises the comments made by participants on their evaluation forms.

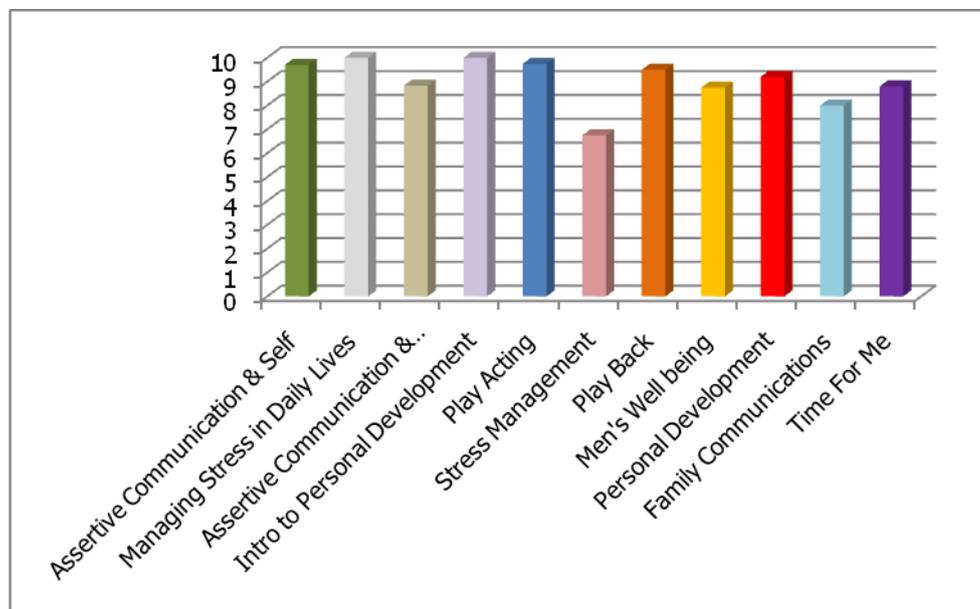
5.3. Figurative Analysis

The information for both 2009 and 2010 is further analysed graphically in the following figures.

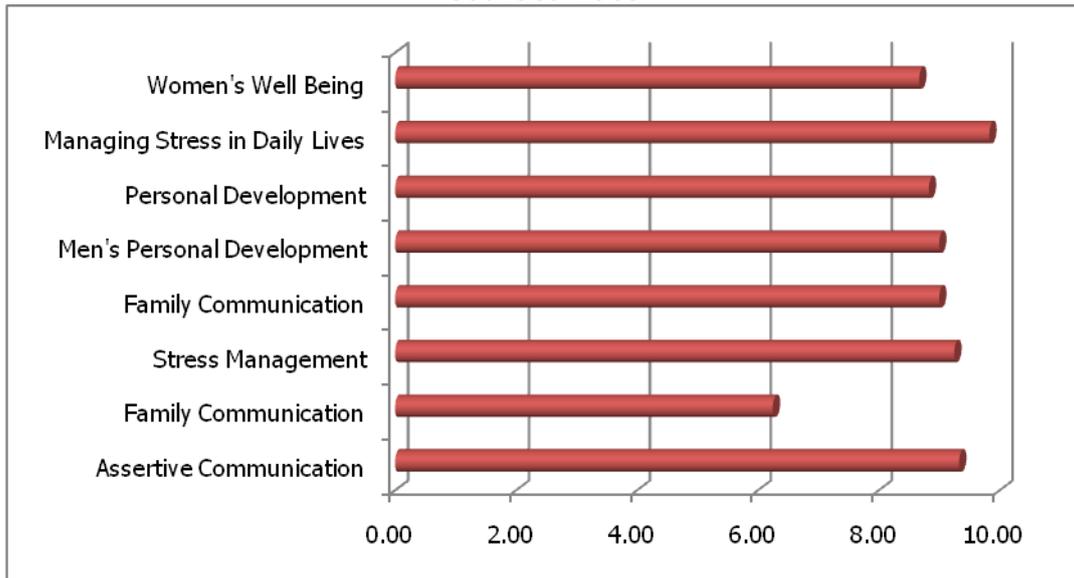
i. Overall Rating of Range of Community Courses 2009 (sample from complete programme)



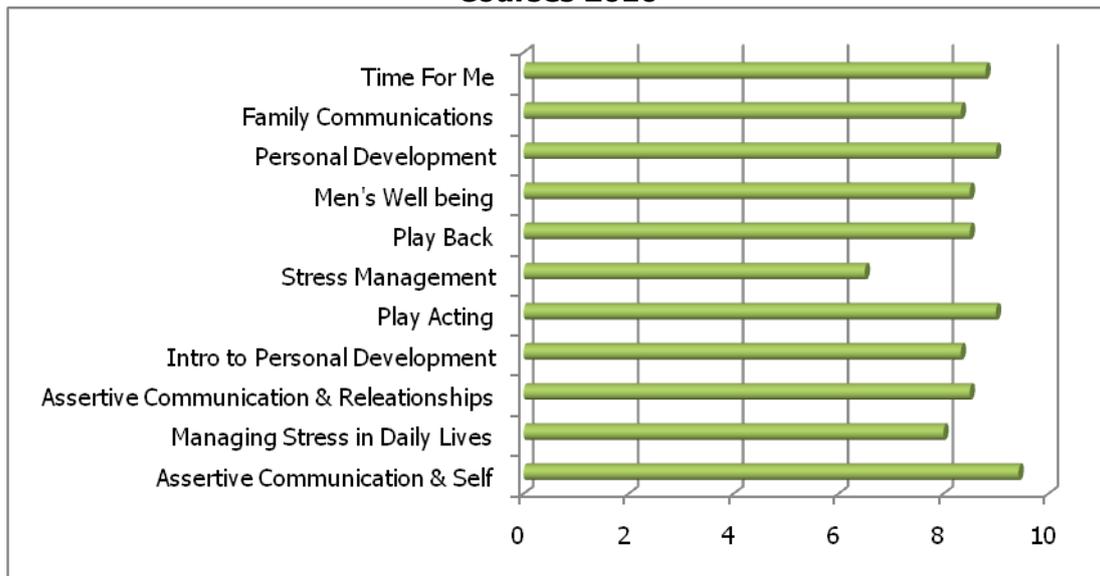
ii. Overall Rating of Range of Community Courses 2010 (sample of entire programme)



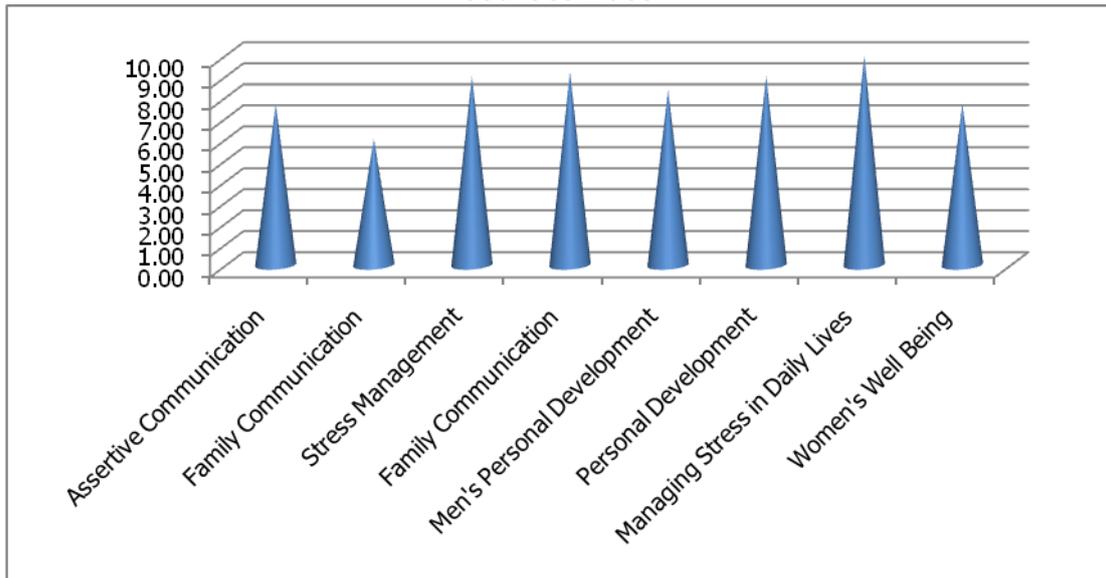
iii. Degree of Learning recorded by Participants in Selection of Community Courses 2009



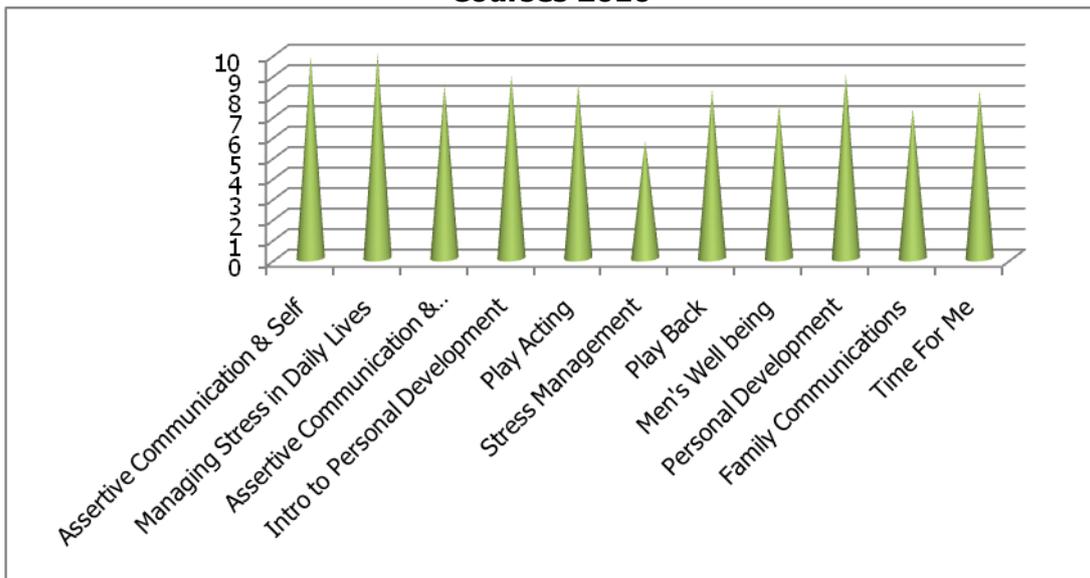
iv. Degree of Learning recorded by Participants in Selection of Community Courses 2010



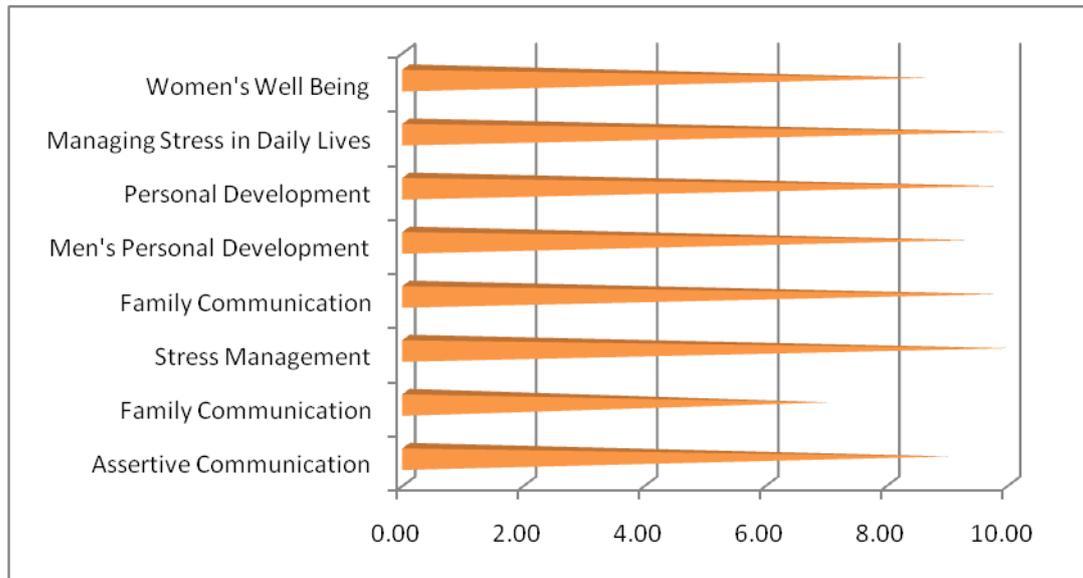
v. Participants' View of the Effect of the Course – from a selection of Community Courses 2009



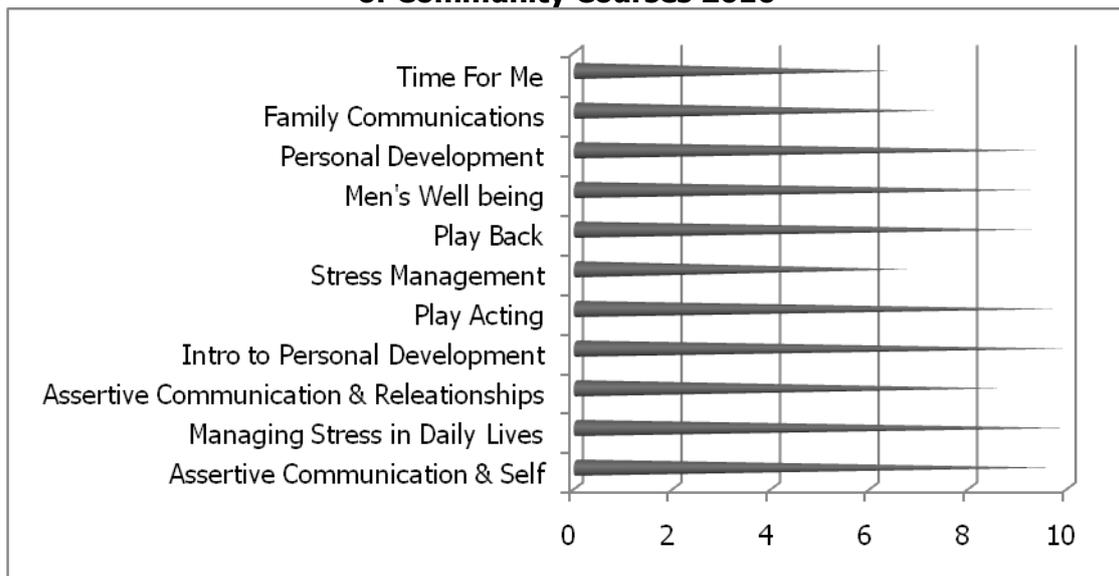
vi. Participants' View of the Effect of the Course – from a selection of Community Courses 2010



vii. Participants' Perspective of Facilitator(s) Different Courses – from a selection of Community Courses 2009



viii. Participants' Perspective of Facilitator(s) Different Courses – from a selection of Community Courses 2010



5.4. Gaps in the Analysis

The statistical information available for this evaluation does not allow for analysis of data such as:

- Extent of, and reasons for drop-out of courses if this occurred (there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that this happened though nothing concrete was available for the evaluation)
- Number of courses which did not go ahead due to insufficient numbers applying (management indicate that this is a factor but the scale and magnitude is not measurable)

- Number of participants who had done previous courses or went on to do other courses including Core Training (course evaluation forms do not provide space for this at the moment. Neither does other information available to us for the evaluation.)
- Tutor's level of engagement with SHEP
- Local organisation's involvement in course establishment and progression
- Links between local organisations and SHEP tutors or the organisation itself

This information would have been useful in a complete evaluation of the role, efficacy and impact of SHEP community training. Future evaluations would benefit from a more robust body of knowledge being available for analysis and reflection.

SHEP management acknowledge these shortfalls in their discussions with the evaluators and it will be addressed in the future. It became clear to us towards the latter stages of the evaluation that SHEP has a database which has a lot of information on it which could address some of the deficits mentioned above. This database could be examined in future evaluative work for its value to SHEP as a measurement tool. Unfortunately, this was not something about which we were aware during this particular evaluation.

5.5. Qualitative Analysis

The evaluators originally intended to make contact with a range of participants from different courses in a variety of locations. SHEP course organisers were very helpful in this respect but attempts to engage with local organisations and/or with tutors based in various locations proved largely fruitless. A survey was sent to a number of Community Tutors but the response rate was negligible. A survey was also sent to local organisations and the rate of return was extremely low. Kearney Consultants had to change strategies on a number of occasions. SHEP helped the evaluators to finally gather qualitative information in two principal ways:

1. Through inviting a range of Community Training course participants to a discussion with the evaluators
2. Through facilitating setting up of a focus group discussion with Community Tutors

Both these exercises were fruitful and contributed to the evaluation.

5.6. Community Training Course Participants

Nine people attended a focus group in February 2011. They were very helpful and generous in their contributions to the discussion. The level of sharing was inspiring and the honesty and integrity of each individual was very impressive. This reflects well on SHEP and echoed all previous encounters we had with participants and tutors alike. SHEP appears to facilitate people towards being truly open and honest in a safe environment. As facilitators, we were accepted without question and in a true spirit of support and participation. This is not always the case in a focus group. It should be said too that each member of the group understood and accepted the ground rules of the discussion without any problem. They respected each other's point of view and listened in a very positive way to what others had to say without judgement or criticism.

5.7. Participant Profile

The demographic nature of the focus group reflected, in the first place, the overall gender mix of many SHEP courses – two men and seven women. The age range was between 30 and 60, with the majority between 30 and 45.

Participants appeared to come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds and from a variety of locations (although all were close to or in Cork city). None of the participants in the focus group had known each other prior to doing SHEP courses.

It was clear that some participants were involved in Foundation 1 in the Core Training Programme while others had done community courses. All participants undertook their courses in Cork city locations. There were no rural-based participants at the focus group discussions.

A number of participants indicated that they had been in very difficult personal situations prior to their involvement with SHEP. Each person stated that they had been actively seeking out options for ways to deal with situations, to improve their lives and increase their personal capabilities.

5.8. Awareness of SHEP Courses

Focus group participants heard about SHEP in different ways. Most of those interviewed heard about courses through word of mouth, others researched it on the Internet, others came across the leaflets, and, in one case, through another organisation with which they were involved. There was a sense that it was not terribly easy to find SHEP on the Internet and to find out exactly what they offered. There was also a feeling that there was an element of serendipity about how people found out. SHEP did not seem to have a strategic position in the media or elsewhere as an organisation offering personal development capacity building options.

5.9. Need for Course

When participants attended various courses, all but one seemed to feel that there was an early match between their needs and expectations and the individual courses they had found or to which they had been referred. All but one of them were very complimentary and enthusiastic about the courses and indicated that the courses helped them enormously on a personal basis.

There was some discussion about the lack of efficacy and impact that other agencies have with regard to supporting people through mental health difficulties. Participants all seemed to think that society is particularly challenged at the moment in this regard and that some sections of society (e.g. young men) are very challenged. Some participants stated that organisations like SHEP were absolutely vital and provided support like no other agency with regard to helping people to deal with difficulties and obstacles in their lives.

Participants stated that involvement in SHEP has been “life-changing” and that it affects relationships with family and friends in a positive way. It is noted that some of these responses were by participants who had undertaken the Core Training Programme Foundation 1 course.

5.10. Application Process

No problems were experienced at all. The system appeared straightforward and was rated as "excellent." The telephone support and, in some cases, face-to-face support prior to course commencement was "second-to-none."

5.11. Course Content and Approach

Courses were characterised as "fluid" and this was seen as a positive attribute by most participants, in that activity was geared to the needs of the group. Some element of fore-knowledge might have been good, possibly with regard to the detailed aims of the course, although it was recognised that this could be difficult if the tutors are being responsive to the group and individuals within it. One participant found the unstructured approach to be "frustrating" and found the course at times repetitive and somewhat boring.

One interesting comment: "SHEP doesn't go by the book."

5.12. Experience of Course Delivery

Personal time commitment to involvement in courses did not seem to be an issue for the majority of participants. For some, sessions that lasted two and a half hours could have gone on longer in their view. Regular sessions were looked forward to with positive anticipation. There was an acceptance that course content had to vary to meet needs.

Cost of courses did not seem to be an issue and many participants viewed other SHEP courses favourably and had gone on to take them up. Some of the participants' comments referred to costs of the Core Training Programme and they indicated that the instalment option was really useful and should be highlighted more in course promotion.

One participant had been involved with a Self-Esteem course and had not completed the full quota of sessions that were timetabled. Her experience was that she found the sessions boring, and that they did not seem to meet her needs. She was not in any way anti-SHEP as a result and her relationship with the organisation had not been in the least acrimonious. She voluntarily acknowledged that the programmes SHEP runs are very valuable to a great many people. However, in this instance, what was on offer was not for her.

5.13. Experience of Community Tutors

Participants had universal general praise and appreciation of the commitment, professional expertise and acumen, empathy and understanding of tutors. They showed tutors huge respect and in some cases viewed tutors with the highest regard. It should be noted that in their responses, some participants referred to Core Training Trainers rather than Community Tutors. They did not make a distinction between Core Training and Community Training.

All those with whom we spoke seemed to feel that co-facilitation was a positive aspect of the courses and that solo tutors would not function as well.

5.14. Course Impact

Each individual gave their own specific responses to the effect that the courses in which they had been involved were very significant in their lives. All but one of the participants interviewed totally enjoyed the experience and found it enriching and life-changing. One

participant did not experience the course in this positive way. They found the course in which they participated unstructured and somewhat tedious.

Again, and despite mention by the facilitators that the focus was on Community Training rather than the Core Training programme, some participants interviewed did not seem to distinguish between the two and their responses to the impact reflected this. They stated unreservedly that the course had been transformative and life-changing.

Almost all of the participants had gone on to other SHEP courses after their initial interaction with the organisation.

Their experiences were almost identical with those of the participants in the Core Training Programme evaluation, which highlights the perception that there is a SHEP brand of training and that participants do not really differentiate as to which programme a course belongs. Benefits were seen as substantial, life-changing and highly personal, which was why they were so valuable.

Despite being almost universally satisfied with the courses, participants did indicate that things were a bit "*fragmented*" with regard to knowing the full range of what SHEP does and what it provides. For example, none of the focus group members knew about the Coiscéim service which was surprising. Others did not know about the Core Training Programme.

5.15. Participant Suggestions

- The majority of this focus group was agreed that there should be more SHEP training available and a concerted campaign mounted to promote awareness. This should involve distribution of material in shopping centres, leaflet drops, activity in colleges, TV and radio.
- SHEP needs to develop a structured approach to how it promotes its courses and to consider the media through which it advertises.
- SHEP needs to promote itself in a greater number of places – in family resource centres, in public locations such as shopping centres, on the radio, on the TV. SHEP needs to "*tell its story*" – perhaps through a specially commissioned documentary or as part of a programme such as Nationwide.
- SHEP also needs to do some work on providing clear and accurate information on its full range of courses and services to participants and to potential participants.
- Participants felt that SHEP should extend its programmes to schools and to other groups such as young men, young teenagers.

6. SHEP Community Tutors' Perspectives

6.1. Tutor Profiles

Tutors came from a variety of background and experiences. Some had followed more academic routes in the past, some have followed different paths. Some have a mixture. Two out of nine interviewed have been involved since the mid 1990s.

All those interviewed had completed SHEP Core Training and had an understanding of the organisation's ethos and philosophy which they brought into course design and delivery. Some tutors had augmented their tutor training with courses and programmes which were outside of the SHEP remit. Some were already trained psychotherapists.

It appears that while some tutors focus on delivery of community-based courses as their main delivery, others have other businesses and services including their own psychotherapy businesses. Of those interviewed, one tutor is involved for a very long time with SHEP and is involved in a range of committees. Other tutors are involved as trainers on the Core Training Programme. The focus group had one man and 5 women. All are very committed and keen to remain involved with SHEP for the long-term. All see the organisation's value to individuals and society.

6.2. Need for Course

Some tutors indicated that a need was often identified locally and then a tutor found to facilitate an appropriate course. Other tutors perceived a local need and then approached an appropriate organisation such as a family resource centre or the VEC for support to fill that need.

In some cases, SHEP identified a need and sought tutors to run courses at its own premises.

6.3. Course Promotion

Tutors believed that course promotion relied on the strength of the interpersonal 'grape-vine', localised advertising and the fact that courses arose from perceived need or direct request. SHEP also promoted the courses through various channels though the tutors did not refer to this.

On the other hand, there was a feeling that knowledge of SHEP further afield was fragmented and that this could be improved. Some areas were seen as definite candidates for a big push on awareness-raising and there could be more targeting of identified groups who could benefit from the Community Training Programme. This dovetailed with some comments by tutors that SHEP really knows what it is selling so that there is no ambiguity and that there is greater clarity among potential participants about courses.

Tutors identified the opportunities for promotion of Community Training courses through community facilities and organisations and creating a stronger partnership with them.

Interestingly, tutors felt that some courses were better if they were offered centrally by SHEP. Individuals might feel awkward about joining a group of people they already knew in their own locality but would be happier in joining a group in a more distant location where they probably would know none of the other participants before the course started.

6.4. Application Process & Course Administration and Support

There were no perceived problems with the administration involved in processing applications.

Course delivery was seen as satisfactory as outlined in the previous discussion. Comments were centred around the support received from SHEP itself and how helpful that is.

All tutors knew they could get support from SHEP at any time. The Education Coordinator is always available. Tutors have monthly supervision sessions. Some friendships have developed through the years and tutors have a strong network. Some tutors, it appears, do not seem to get involved in any activities other than course delivery.

There may be some issues with the regular tutor meetings (once a quarter) as the agenda seems to be devised in advance without apparent input from tutors. This perception accompanied another one which is that there may be some sense of exclusion of some tutors in comparison with others. Participants in the focus group indicated that some tutors are not as aware of the way things work in SHEP. These perceptions and some of the gaps in involvement perceived by tutors need to be addressed and the overall tutor group dynamic needs to be strengthened.

6.5. Range of Courses

Community Tutors deliver a wide range of courses. Courses mentioned included: Introduction to Personal Development; Grief, Loss and Change; Family Communications; Self-esteem; Assertiveness; Positive Friendships, Stress Management.

Tutors also mentioned work with particular target groups – Secondary School Children, members of the Traveller community, parents of younger (primary school) and older children (secondary school level), asylum seekers, gay and lesbian groups, and those involved in post addiction rehabilitation. Some had also undertaken one to one interactions as counsellors. It was not clear whether this was through the SHEP Coischéim service or not.

6.6. Course Customisation and Flexibility

This question became somewhat linked with the discussion of the previous one. In identifying or assessing need, tutors seemed to feel that there was an element of adjustment to any course which was further influenced by the nature and needs of the group of participants.

6.7. Approach to Training

There was a sense that tutors were not simply operating under a SHEP brand and that they themselves had not made a progression to their current level of expertise solely through a range of SHEP training courses.

There was general agreement among those whom we met, that the SHEP ethos was and is very important to the work they do. Indeed, there was a perception that that ethos was rippling into other courses and organisations. It was mentioned that the VEC seems to have gained an understanding of SHEP tutors' approaches and is seeking the organisation out more as a partner in e.g. personal development courses.

Modification was seen to be an essential part of the course delivery to match the group and individual needs, being too rigid in terms of course content was seen as being too limiting.

There was seen to be great value in the philosophy that answers lie not with the tutors but within the individual.

Therefore, the group of participants themselves are the key, not the content of the course, the process is more important than the outcomes. Courses with the same title may well be different because of this. Participation should be experiential, not academic in nature. Indeed, it is seen as a strength that the courses are non-academic, experiential in nature and accessible to a wide variety of participants.

It was also generally agreed that co-facilitation was a preferred option to individual facilitation. This had a two-fold effect – allowing for greater support of participants and for variety in approaches.

Organisations like the VEC, some community-based organisations and some HSE departments seem to be beginning to recognise the value of the tutors' approaches to the courses and their focus on process and experiential learning rather than outcomes

6.8. Participation

Most community training courses have a wide range of people involved although the majority are female which can be a challenge in terms of equity and balance. According to tutors it also points to a need to promote men-only courses.

This did not seem to have been a problem, perhaps because of the way in which courses were initiated in the first place. Overall, participation rates were seen as high, drop-out rates as being low although that might vary depending on the nature of the course. 'Seasons for Growth', for example, might lose individuals at a higher rate than other courses, although sometimes this was because they were referred on to the low-cost counselling service (Coischéim).

6.9. Outcomes

Tutors do not seem to have any negative experiences to relate, their perception is that the courses run are of "*huge value*" to individual participants. There was general agreement that most of the courses have long term benefit and impact on participants' lives.

Some survey forms were administered to various tutors in late 2009 by the evaluators but the response rate was very low and so does not constitute a representative sample. Some points raised by those who did respond are useful though. Tutors indicated that courses that they ran had very good participation rates, good interaction between people. It seems from responses that some participants were on medication (e.g. anti-depressants) and the suggestion was made that it would be good if people knew about SHEP in advance of potential participants seeking medical intervention as another option in their empowerment. There is a lot of need "*out there*" and a need for SHEP to play an integral part in this.

Tutors indicated that the impact on participants was positive, that the emphasis on the experiential in the courses was appropriate and the long-term influence on participants was good.

Support by SHEP was good, according to Community Tutors. They could rely on SHEP to guide them if they had queries or issues.

6.10. Suggestions

- Tutors generally would like to see more involvement from men in the Community Training Programme, possibly even offering 'men only' courses.
- Course closure was sometimes disjointed and there could be a greater focus on this element of course delivery in the future to complete one course and to prepare for either future courses or leave participants with a strong sense of a future personal path outside of courses participation.
- The possibility should be explored of adapting some of the existing courses to suit individuals who have already covered some of the elements that they contain so that participants are not going back to the beginning to go over material they have experienced before. This comment, however, was probably made more in relation to the Core Training Programme.
- Some work needs to be done on addressing the involvement and contribution of tutors in various SHEP activities and including their perspectives in development of Community Training.
- In terms of promotion, SHEP needs to tell people about the payment plans (this is probably for Core Training Programme though), a need for "*simpler wording*" in promotional literature.
- In terms of the practicalities of partnership with other organisations, tutors were generally in favour of the idea of greater connectivity with locally-based organisations and with the concept of establishing centres of excellence.
- SHEP could do some work on identifying key aspects of the Community Training programme to encapsulate in a more robust promotional strategy so that ambiguities are reduced and potential participants have clarity about what is involved.
- There was some sense from the tutors that it would be both desirable and possible to build the strength of the tutors as a group, and that the system of meetings and groups already in place could be examined and adjusted to encourage more involvement.

7. Observations & Recommendations

The Community Training Programme is an integral part of SHEP's overall training package. Though the evaluation content was affected by the degree of fragmentation in terms of available information which could have contributed to the analysis further, it is clear that the Community Training Programme is having a positive impact on participants in ways similar to the Core Training Programme.

Our earlier evaluation of the Core Training Programme recognises that:

SHEP is a singular organisation offering a range of courses unlike that offered in any other context in Ireland. Underpinned by a well-thought out vision and set of principles it is an empowering model of change and a positive vehicle of transformation in peoples' lives.

We see the Community Training Programme in a similar light. However, because of the sheer range and volume of community courses, the programme is less structured and cohesive than the Core Training Programme. While this is testimony to success in many respects, it has to be managed and monitored so that SHEP does not lose sight of its objectives and detract from its overall philosophy and approach to personal empowerment.

Course management personnel regard Community Training as an integral part of SHEP's overall package and believe that it contributes to their delivery on the organisation's vision and purpose as well as having other benefits including supporting its Core Training Programme. They also see that it has certain deficits in terms of being less well-organised and somewhat more fragmented which makes it harder to evaluate and to plan.

The Community Training Programme provides a number of direct benefits for SHEP as a developing organisation. These are:

- It provides a potential pool of Core Training course participants.
- It allows SHEP to know what is going on "on-the-ground" and to customise its delivery appropriately. SHEP's course organisers regularly review course delivery with tutors to assess impact and effectiveness and this provides a powerful means through which to gather information, to customise course delivery and to lay the basis for future course planning.
- It creates a greater awareness of what SHEP does at local community level and among locally-based organisations.
- It allows people have access to SHEP's training and unique approach to training who otherwise may not have had this opportunity.
- Because courses are generally of short duration and are relatively low-cost or free in some cases, this increases accessibility to quality training which otherwise may not be available.
- The courses allow for growth in awareness by other organisations and agencies of SHEP's particular ethos and approach to training to the extent that there is some evidence to suggest that these bodies are moving towards incorporating SHEP courses as part of their core course delivery. Examples include the HSE South and the City and County VECs.

- The experience of delivering the entire community training portfolio builds SHEP's capacity to deliver on its ethos and ways of doing things and is a huge component of the entire SHEP organisational package.
- Those tutors who do network either informally or as part of SHEP's tutors' network indicate that they derive considerable benefits from their involvement personally and professionally. This builds SHEP's overall human capacity and skills base.

Community Tutors interviewed during the evaluation process are generally very happy with their role in the programme and see its value in SHEP's overall achievement of its objectives. SHEP-trained tutors run a wide variety of courses which appear to be largely under-pinned by their original training with SHEP which increases the scope and range of the organisation's influence as a training organisation with its primary focus on individual empowerment. They bring a great deal of experience and training to their delivery – including training as professionals in other spheres e.g. psychotherapy - and these are considerable assets for future development and strengthening of the Community Training Programme.

There are some issues around individual tutor registration and support which have to be addressed so that SHEP can be confident about the quality of training.

Our main observations in respect of participants' experience of Community Training are:

- That participants' level of satisfaction is considerable. Like its Core Training Programme, SHEP in the Community Training Programme seems to have tapped into real needs and wants which individuals have at present. This ties in with SHEP's original *raison d'être* and humanistic approach to supporting citizens.
- We repeat the observations from the Core Training Evaluation as they are also relevant for Community Training. They are:
 - That SHEP appears to demonstrate a distinct and positive ethos and dynamic as an organisation with a perceptible value system based around the individual within the context of community.
 - That the level of satisfaction is consistently high. SHEP seems to have identified a real need within a sector of the community and is meeting that need to a high degree. Courses continue to attract applicants year on year without appearing to have outlasted the demand for them.
 - The majority of course participants perceive a great benefit to themselves from the courses they undertake, particularly in personal development, outlook on life and relationships within their community and to other individuals.
- Course participants do not necessarily distinguish between Core Training and Community Training. SHEP matters to participants not necessarily because they are doing a particular course, but because they have found something that is relevant and appropriate to them at a particular point in their lives.
- The range of training courses on offer is considerable and focused largely on individual support, reflection and development. The entire portfolio is impressive, if sometimes confusing to the uninitiated. This is both a strength (i.e. course range

reflects SHEP's unique capacity) and a possible problem (i.e. messages could be confusing and get lost in translation).

The Community Training Programme has a number of shortfalls which need to be addressed in future planning. These include:

- Some sense of a lack of a strategic approach to its organisation and administration which detracts from the ability to promote, to develop and to review progress.
- Lack of engagement of some Community Tutors with SHEP to the point that it is unclear what some are doing in courses, how they approach courses and what impact courses that they run are having on participants.
- Concerns about the extent to which local organisations know and understand the value of SHEP's Community Training package for its own sake but also in terms of what it could contribute to their fulfilment of their own objectives.
- Lack of connectivity between some tutors leading to a feeling of being excluded and not part of the overall development planning processes. Some tutors do not understand the appraisal and decision-making structures within SHEP and this causes some frustration on their part.
- Gaps in submission of evaluation forms and variations in evaluation form formats which sometimes make it difficult to assess and review impact and effectiveness of course participation.
- Some issues about how Community Training is promoted in terms of branding, key messages, web site promotion and an overall consistent and strategic approach to promotion similar to other training organisations (albeit with a different focus). The point made earlier about confusion because of the wide range of courses needs to be addressed in future promotional strategies.
- Information deficits in terms of knowing the through-put of participants from Community Training to Core Training and vice-versa. If this information was readily available (perhaps through realignment of the existing database) then the overall impact would be strengthened in many ways.
- Despite tutors' reservations about some aspects of management and organisation, SHEP Community Trainers generally feel valued and believe they are making positive contributions to course participants' lives.

SHEP, in common with other evolving organisations, faces challenges in the delivery of its Community Training Programme which need to be addressed to ensure that it continues to achieve its vision. These include:

- Simplifying and refining its communication methods and use of tools to convey key messages and to target prospective participants and supporting organisations and to adjust these to suit a wide range of contexts.
- Streamlining the management and administration of the Community Training Programme so that as much information as possible can be contained therein for planning, review and evaluation purposes as well as support of participants if they

want to progress through various course options.

- Developing a strategy in relation to identifying other groups and individuals to be targeted in line with its stated vision and purpose.
- Ensuring that Community Tutors are at the centre of on-going planning and development of the overall programme and of specific aspects of course content.
- Maintaining its relevance to its core funders – the HSE, the Department of Community, Equality & Gaeltacht Affairs and FÁS (and its successor) and the VEC.

It is in the light of these observations that we offer the following recommendations to SHEP in developing the strategic planning for sustainability that the coming years will demand. These recommendations are, in some ways, similar to those presented in the Evaluation of the Core Training Programme:

- 1. Alignment to Purpose:** There could be better alignment of SHEP community training activities and outcomes with published, or about to be revised, versions of the organisational Mission Statement, Aims and Objectives, Vision and Core Values and other published material. The present economic climate will force publicly-funded organisations to justify themselves in as robust a way as possible and it may well be that SHEP could present the benefits of its activities in a fashion which is more beneficial to itself.
- 2. Communications:** We would recommend a review of communications mechanisms for their effectiveness. Paper, media, advertising and internet could reflect activity and outcomes more accurately and enhance the image of SHEP training.

A large number of course participants become involved with SHEP by personal recommendation. However, more targeted awareness and ongoing communication strategies could widen the target base for training.

At the same time, there is a definite value in being able to demonstrate in a dynamic fashion through organisational communications the values, activities and benefit of the Community Training Programme to existing and potential funders and partners.

- 3. Tutor Support & Involvement:** There is a need to streamline mechanisms for supporting and involving all tutors at different times for different purposes but with the overall objective of ensuring that SHEP's vision is achieved and that approaches to training are in line with SHEP's own quality training standards.

The tutors' meeting and support structure needs to be reviewed and individual issues raised by tutors need to be dealt with more efficiently than on a quarterly basis. This could be done through setting up time-bound working groups to focus on specific issues with a relatively rapid turn-around-time. There is possibly a need to review the role of the Tutors' Advisory Group in this context.

- 4. Tutor Registration:** There were some ambiguities in how Community Tutors seem to continue their relationship with SHEP. These need to be addressed. Tutors, though they may have different styles, need to renew their registration with SHEP through satisfying certain criteria established by the organisation. Ideally, the criteria should centre on SHEP's mission, values, ethos, principles, procedures,

protocols and adherence to SHEP's codes of practice. Tutor contracts should only be signed off on once the tutor complies with this. Thereafter, registration could be dependent on other factors such as continuing professional development.

- 5. Tutor Database:** SHEP already has a lot of information. If tutor registration is streamlined, then SHEP could recommend tutors to interested local organisations, agencies and groups. The local organisation would contract tutors in its own right and would have a simple reporting mechanism with SHEP so that the latter can update its database. The database is the most powerful tool to be used in this process.
- 6. Targeting & Relevance:** The value of SHEP's training depends on the organisation's ability to maintain the relevance and immediacy of its programme, by being able to keep a finger on the pulse of community needs and priorities. If the type and profile of participants changes then there is a need to be prepared to alter approaches and content and possibly offer variations in the delivery of Foundation Courses as well as in the content of the Community Training Programme.

Although Community Training Courses continue to attract people, part of the holistic procedure of managing that programme is about *monitoring and assessing* which target groups need to be included in the recruitment process.

There is scope to target more men – ideally for men-only groups – so that they can get opportunities to derive value from their involvement. There are opportunities to target select groups such as Transition Year Students or young people between the ages of 17 and 21, many of whom may be experiencing personal struggles. Courses could be targeted at colleges and places where young people congregate. As with the Core Training Programme, courses could be run in prisons, in addiction centres, as part of the rehabilitative process.

There is a need to be mindful about the psychological and emotional state of some course participants. It is likely that some people may be in vulnerable situations or may find themselves feeling more fragile once they are participating in a course. Options and supports need to be provided – such as access to the Coischéim counselling service or referral to another support service.

- 7. Course Content, Continuity & Quality Control:** Because of the diversity of courses, schedules, content and variety of tutors, there is a need to provide a SHEP strategic framework and for tutors to prepare and deliver courses in line with this so that SHEP can have reasonable expectations in terms of achieving objectives. There is a danger that SHEP's vision, ethos and approaches to delivery could be diluted or negatively affected and this in turn could have unanticipated impacts on participants. The framework needs to be understood and agreed by all Community Tutors and 'signed up to' on an annual or at least a regular basis. This, in turn, would be one of the criteria to which Community Tutors need to adhere to renew their association with SHEP.
- 8. Streamlining & Record-keeping:** There would seem to be scope for some standardisation of SHEP systems of record-keeping across the board such as application processes, information on activity and evaluation processes. The use of the SHEP database is a key element here and could help considerably in the easier compilation of statistics and information that in some cases need to be gathered

manually at present.

Once set up, such systems could not only save some staff time in processing but also generate valuable and meaningful management data. Better connectivity does lead to better connections, a better information flow and a better image.

9. Partnership: Provision away from the centre does not always appear to be consistent. Indeed, there is evidence of a great degree of fragmentation and lack of awareness of what SHEP does. Community courses are an ideal “fit” for many of the objectives of local organisations. Once a strategic training framework has been worked out at central level, and once SHEP is clear in what it wants to communicate, it would be worthwhile to work intensively with locally-based partners in a particular area to develop a workable partnership model. Once this pilot phase is complete, then SHEP could roll out similar provision in other locations.

10. Centres of Excellence: Stronger partnerships at local level could lead to the establishment of Centres of Excellence which would function to roll out Community Training on a local level. These centres would also gather information on individuals’ needs for SHEP support and research could be used by SHEP to inform its future planning and delivery.

11. Strategic Planning: A time of evaluation is also an opportune time for considering the strategic planning for the future of the Community Training Programme. As demonstrated by the research undertaken by Kearney Consultants and outlined in this report, SHEP has a valued set of training products on offer which continue to attract participants who rate the programme very highly indeed.

Tutors’ Role in Planning: As suggested in the Core Training Programme Evaluation, the relationship between the organisation and the tutors is fundamentally important to the delivery and success of the whole training programme. Therefore, we would recommend that the SHEP should look at mechanisms for empowering tutors to participate as partners in taking the organisation forward, to retain its sustainability and relevance, and to help in planning any new developments.

For example, if SHEP were to spend time on developing training products related to any of the potential target groups mentioned above, the process of research and planning for that could involve a select number of tutors in those processes in order to contribute to the necessary work, gather vital data, and create a sense of ownership and partnership.

12. Strategic Framework: The Community Training Programme would benefit from the development of a strategic framework. The framework needs to be aligned to SHEP’s vision and philosophy on the one hand, and also streamlined to address a range of questions and related issues including:

- Who is it for (now and in the future, specific targeting)
- Where is it going to roll-out (decisions about where and why some courses are going to run, centres of excellence)
- Who will deliver it (and to include registration, tutor selection criteria, co-facilitation, partnership approach)

- What core themes/issues is it going to pursue (refinement, including decisions not to pursue certain courses, as part of other programming)
- How will it be resourced (finance, materials, equipment, people)
- How will success be measured (each course, annual review, evaluation methodologies)
- How will it be managed and administered (database development and enhancement, local partnership)
- How will quality be ensured (tutor registration, impact and effectiveness, certification)

Community Training is important to SHEP – no less important than its Core Training Programme. Community Training allows SHEP to have an impact in many more places in the community than it could do if it relied on one strand alone.

But the Programme suffers from a degree of fragmentation and absence of cohesion which has to be addressed through strategising its future in terms of management and coordination, administration, course identification, delivery and resource allocation.

This is a time for such work and SHEP is well-placed to undertake this.

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Attachment 1: Overview of Participants' Comments, 2009/2010 Courses

Assertive Communication

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other comments
Learned a lot, it's ok to say no!	N/A	Very Beneficial
Learned to work as a team	N/A	N/A
Professionalism of Facilitator	More attendees	More Courses of similar nature

Family Communication

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
New Friends	N/A	Would do another course
If you change, things will change	N/A	Would love a follow on course
Listening Skills, communicating	N/A	N/A
Count to ten before losing temper	Bring teenagers in for night of course	Worthwhile and helpful course

Stress Management

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Entertaining	N/A	N/A
How to relax and get rid of stress	Refresher course after some time	Relaxing and not living in the past
Learning to listen, know how to say stop	Being Longer	N/A
Very relaxing environment	N/A	Carry on good work

Family Communication

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Great course excellent facilitators	N/a	N/A
Confidence Boost	N/A	Made New Friends
Group Integration	N/A	N/A
Information, Learning and friendly tutors	N/A	Lovely tutors and beneficial in my personal life
Learning about myself, not the only one with problems	N/A	N/A

Men's Personal Development

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Assess my own behaviour, esp when angry	Run course twice a week	Very helpful , I am grateful
Group Work	Be available to more people	N/A
Talk about my problems	Making the course longer	Look forward to more of the same

Personal Development

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
I got to know me	N/A	N/A
How to change for the good, understand myself	Cant think of anything	Best course ever
Very welcoming / non judgemental	N/A	Really enjoyed the course
Well facilitated, honest, trusting. Learned a lot	Being longer duration	Will apply to the F1 Course
Very helpful and encouraging	N/A	Wonderful Experience
Awareness in lots of areas	Maybe for longer duration	N/A

Managing Stress in Daily Lives

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Meeting nice people	More courses	No
Creating great self awareness	A follow on course	Important courses a must have for modern lives
Value on myself	Putting exercises into practice	Very nice teacher
Gained Self Confidence	Follow on course	N/A
A feeling of self worth, ability to relax	N/A	Enjoyed the whole experience
Self Esteem	Another Course of similar nature	Excellent tutor

Women's Well Being

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Listening to very interesting topics, hearing others	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A	N/A
More aware now of all the health issues	Too much time given to some people	N/A
Sharing in discussions	More listening , less talking	No
Sharing ideas with others	Questions must be answered	Would like follow up sometime
Facilitator	More input from others	Enjoyed the relaxed way the course was run

Stress Management

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Relaxation and enjoyment	Fantastic	First Class tutors
It helped to relax me	N/A	N/A
Making me more aware	Very good course	More courses
Thank you... Hope to do more	Showing me how to relax	more of same
Relaxation	Excellent as it was	Very worthwhile
Encouraging me to take time for myself	More of these courses	Thank you so much
To be able to relax	N/A	N/A

Assertive Communication & Self

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Learning was concentrated, but I was at ease	Spread course out over longer duration	Invaluable
Excellent team of facilitation, very skilled	N/A	Pleasant and relaxed
Growth emotionally and spiritually	Breaking it into modules	It has changed my life for the better
Found role playing beneficial	More time	Would do it all again, I have learned so much
Became aware of myself	More time	Thoroughly enjoyed it , very good learning
Learning to deal with people more assertively	more time, felt it was bit rushed	Learned a lot about me
Learning I have the right to say no	Longer time for over all course	Very grateful to facilitators

Managing Stress in Daily Lives

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Time management, Relaxation	An extra night	Excellent facilitators , easy to get on with
Good tutors , good participation of class	N/A	N/A
Good experience, time for reflection	N/A	Very good and worthwhile
Very relaxing	N/A	Tutors warm and friendly

Assertive Communication & Relationships

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Courage to be assertive	At times a lack of experience by facilitators	Learned from others in the group
Learning how to stay open	The group was too big	Very deep issues came up for me
Learned a lot	Less symbolism	Useful, but can be heavy at times
Group interacted well	Extending it up to 10 weeks	Very good value
Learned so much about myself, opened up	Extra few weeks would be better	Well organised, structured and worthwhile
Easy to understand	Extend to 10/12 weeks	Good presentation and simple language

Intro to Personal Development

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Time out for myself , felt relaxed	N/A	N/A
It helped me to slow down and listen	N/A	Better advertising of the courses
Awareness and acceptance	N/A	N/A

Play Acting

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Fun and guidance	Make it longer duration	Thanks
Very Freeing, time flew each night	N/A	N/A
I was able to leave myself outside, totally enjoyed	N/A	N/A
Very inclusive and private	?	N/A

Stress Management

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Sharing life experience	More weeks not enough time	Would like to do personal dev
Felt very at ease	Nice music and scented candles	Thank the facilitators
All in a circle , all equal	Make the course longer	Venue very good

Play Back

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Meeting nice people	Having more courses	Would love course in Killarney
I feel freer	Its perfect	Very beneficial
Push myself to do new things	longer and more courses	More please
Great growing	N/A	Would love to do more

Men's Well being

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Talking about my week and getting feedback	N/A	Listening to others
Interactions with tutor and group	Length of course	N/A
Pointed me in the right direction	Length of course	N/A
How to be more assertive	Increased to ten weeks	N/A

Personal Development

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Talking with others really helped ,me	N/A	Really enjoyed course
Finding out that everyone has problems	Nothing	Very well run, kind patient and helpful
The bond in the group	Extend it by two or three weeks	I enjoyed every minute
very nice people, tutors approachable	More role play	very interesting
Sharing and listening	N/A	N/A

Family Communications

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Awareness	More of them	Sessions should be longer
People in the group	Better facilitator	N/a

I am not the only one with problems	More time	Really enjoyed this course
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Time For Me

Comments	Room for Improvement	Other Comments
Learning about myself	Course Excellent	N/A
Discussions	N/a	N/A
Honesty , Great group	Thank you Catherine and Marie	N/A
Just being with new people and time to myself	N/a	N/A
Learning to cope better in my relationships	N/a	N/A

Stress Management Tralee

How Course Helped	Facilitator's Style	Positive
Managing Stress	Amazing, Fantastic	Yes
Handle Stress in positive way	Very Calm and understanding	Yes
Awareness	Good and Educational	Yes
Applying Knowledge in life	Excellent	Yes

Stress Management Carer Support

Recommend this course	Facilitator's Style	Positive
Yes we should all do a course like this	No answer	No answer
Yes very much	No answer	No answer
Yes we should all reflect on our lives	No answer	No answer
High recommend this course	No answer	No answer
Yes definite	No answer	No answer
Yes I have already	No answer	No answer