

Former Students Testimonials about the Masters in Voluntary and Community Sector Management

“I would really recommend this programme. Coming from a Humanities background, the course gave an academic grounding to my work in the community and voluntary sector, both as a volunteer, and later as a paid worker. The programme allows students to research topics and areas of interest. The course is flexible for students dealing with work and other commitments, and I found the teaching staff to be dedicated and interested”.

(Gearóid Fitzgibbon, Community Worker, & Volunteer Chairperson with Changing Ireland Magazine, Limerick. Course participant, 2008-10)

“I benefited from the Masters in Voluntary and Community Sector Management in ways I did not expect when I undertook the course. I learned how to be a critical thinker, how to analyse and resolve practice problems and to be able to influence change from a bottom up position. I gained an ability to recognise and adapt to the influence of power dynamics in an organisation and to think systemically about service provision. I learned about financial management and how to access different sources of funding. I gained an in-depth understanding of the Third Sector”.

(Robert O'Driscoll, Health Service Executive South, Community Healthcare, Cork/Kerry. Course participant, 2008-10)

“As somebody who has worked closely with policy makers over the years I found the Masters extremely beneficial in increasing my understanding and knowledge of the Community and Voluntary Sector and I would highly recommend the course to not only people working or volunteering in the Sector but also to Civil/Public servants who engage with the sector”.

(Pat Bennett, Former Civil Servant and current Voluntary Sector Worker, Dublin. Course participant, 2010-12)

“I undertook the course in order to get a better understanding of the nature of the sector and of how management works. I completed the course with a much greater insight into my own work situation and the constant interplay of strategy and mission, which underwrites everything.....Much sharing of knowledge and resources also took place, informally, over the two years and connections were established which have outlived the duration of the Masters programme.....If someone is looking for an overarching perspective on the community and voluntary sector and a greater understanding of how it has developed and where it may go, in the future, then the Masters' in Community and Voluntary is a very worthwhile, challenging and engaging course”.

(Paul Seymour, Voluntary Sector Worker, Cork. Course participant, 2010-12).

"I completed the Masters in Voluntary and Community Sector Management in UCC from 2012 to 2014. At the time I was working full time in the sector and it really supported me in my understanding of community development and the potential that was there in my work i.e. in terms of building models such as social enterprises and cooperatives. It also supported my understanding of more managerial type practices that are relevant to the sector including financial management, governance and responding to organisational change. Overall, it gave me a good platform for applying what I had learnt in my work, built my confidence as a manager in the sector and

enabled me to build the capacity of the project in which I work for. I continue to have an excellent working relationship with a number of UCC staff, over a variety of departments in the college, who have supported me in my work on the ground over the years. I would highly recommend the course"

(Ciara Ridge, Project Coordinator, Traveller Visibility Group, Cork City, Course participant, 2012-14).

"As a manager of a regional youth service based in the Midlands, I was attracted to the Masters in Voluntary and Community Sector Management as it provided a wide ranging and relevant set of modules that I could bring back to my practical day to day work. The experience was challenging and extremely engaging, offering an environment of learning and dialogue. The lecture style encouraged debate and drew on the experience of the participants to support and critically reflect on theory which underpins work in the voluntary & community sector. I would recommend the Masters in Voluntary & Community Sector Management to anyone who is currently in a management position within the sector or has ambition to do so in the future".

(Geraldine Lacey, Regional Director, Youth Work Ireland Midlands, Athlone. Course participant, 2014-16).

"I returned to college in UCC having qualified there back in 1991. I was a bit worried and felt daunted but from the first day I found the experience exhilarating. I enjoyed the lectures and the assignments were made easy to understand. I also found the experience of my fellow classmates was helpful and would recommend the Masters".

(Gearoid McCarthy, Youth Work, GAA and Theatre, West Cork. Course participant, 2014-16).

"An element of blended learning provided through direct lectures, on-line learning, group projects and class presentations facilitates a high degree of debate and class discussion which I found helped enormously in improving my knowledge and understanding of this sector. The support and assistance offered by the lecturing team over the complete duration of the course was invaluable and contributed towards an enjoyable experience especially for those like myself who have been absent from the formal learning environment for many years".

(Cllr. Joe Leddin, Limerick Council, Course participant, 2014-16).

"I completed the Masters in Voluntary and Community Management in 2016, and it helped to improve and inform my practice as co-ordinator of a community-based project. I found the quality of the modules, the lecturers and the support given by the student group was an integral part of the experience. In 2017 I was awarded the WIT President's PhD Scholarship to pursue research on accountability and governance in community, voluntary and charity organisations, an opportunity which was made possible by completing the Masters. I couldn't recommend this course enough".

(Emma Maguire, Waterford. Course participant, 2014-16).

"I cannot recommend this course highly enough. I am still using knowledge learned two years on. The community and voluntary landscape is changing, compliance and governance becoming more essential. This course should be a compulsory programme for all managers of third sector organizations".

(Wendy McCarry, Manager, Bluestack Special Needs Foundation, Donegal Town, Co. Donegal. Course Participant, 2014-16)

“This programme provided me with a solid foundation on which to build my management credentials and to open up new employment opportunities within the third sector. The learning environment is extremely supportive and aims to compliment the varied professional backgrounds and expertise of the members of the group”.

(Adrian Sheehy, Care assistant, Cope Foundation, Cork. Course participant, 2016-18).

“I was delighted to find a management course which specifically related to the community/voluntary sector. To manage to complete this course while working full-time and raising a toddler, was difficult at times but made possible with the understanding and support of the course staff. I found the course practical and interesting and very relevant. It was what I’d hoped for and more. It gave me knowledge, confidence and skills”.

(Community Garda, Munster. Course participant, 2016-18).

“A great experience, made all the better by passionate lecturers who were well prepared for lectures and who were willing to support and advise me as a student . I also learnt a huge amount from fellow students who came from a wide range of NGO’s and were willing to share their experiences with fellow students. It was really worthwhile taking a day away from the office and focussing on my Masters”.

(Joe Marken, C.I.P.D., Manager Support Functions, Scouting Ireland, National Office, Dublin. Course participant, 2016-18)

“I was presented with an opportunity to return to study in 2016 and received support and encouragement from my line manager to do so. As managing volunteers is my role within the SVP it was an appropriate course for me to improve my skills and in turn the volunteer members benefit even more from my support. It was time consuming but extremely beneficial and I cannot believe that two years have gone by so fast. Anyone who works in the voluntary and community sector will benefit from this course and the support throughout from UCC and the lecturers will give people the confidence to plough through even when the going gets tough”.

(Ellmarie Spillane Dowd, Membership Support Officer, Society of St Vincent de Paul, South West Region covering Cork and Kerry. Course participant, 2016-18).

“I was delighted to undertake a part time masters in community and voluntary management. The course was excellent and tutors could not have been more accommodating to students who have not be part of the educational system for many years. This Masters has been an immense confidence booster to me personally and I would recommend the course to anyone who wishes to further their education and may not have had the opportunity in the past”.

(Cllr Richie Molloy, Public Representative / Area Manager Family Carers Ireland, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. Course participant, 2016-18).

"I really enjoyed this course. It provided me with additional tools and knowledge that have been of great benefit working in this sector. The support given by the lecturers was excellent, they had a genuine interest in everyone doing well. The class size was perfect with plenty of time given to discussion, lots of great learning."

(Christine Lodge, Manager, Ballymun Regional Youth Resource, Ballymun, Dublin. Course participant 2016-18).