



DECEMBER 2020

TREO STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

FutureSpark Coaching worked with the Treo team to identify a spectrum of stakeholders for engagement to inform the development of Treo’s 2021-2023 strategic plan. Despite the challenges of virtual engagement during the Covid pandemic, we connected with a broad range Treo’s of core stakeholders.

Although it is acknowledged that Covid and emerging from it will dominate the first year of the strategic plan, engagement did encourage stakeholders to look also beyond this. This full report outlines the details of our engagement, wider strategic context, main findings and suggestions for development moving forward.

I. HOW WE ENGAGED

METHODOLOGY AND STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

We used a variety of methods to connect with BCCS stakeholder groups including:

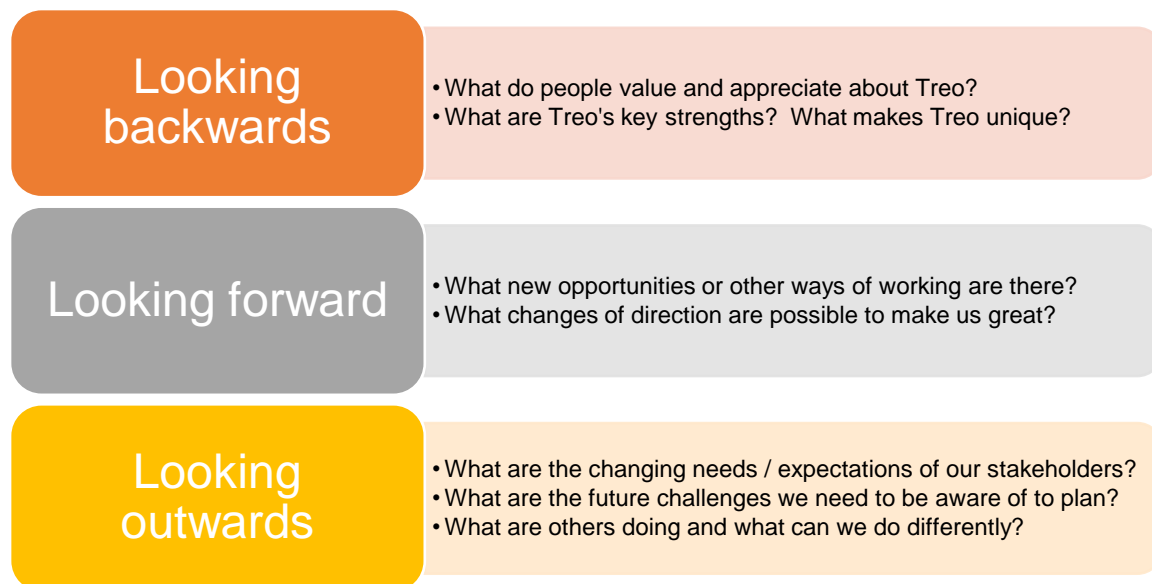
- One-to-one semi-structured interviews
- Survey
- Social media (Treo Facebook and Instagram)

A summary of the reach of our engagement with stakeholder groups is given below.

Stakeholders	Interviewees
Participants and families	13
Staff & Trustees	16
Referral partners and funders (WWETB, IASIO, Juvenile Liaison Officers, WYTEC, Probation Service, Pobal, Waterford Area Partnership, Community Based Drugs Initiative, Department of Social Protection, Housing First (Simon Community), Waterford Sports Partnership)	13
Total interviews and engagement	42

OUR FRAMEWORK FOR ENGAGEMENT

In our initial outline for reporting back on stakeholder engagement, we wanted to frame our findings under three key areas outlined below:



As our key methodology, we used an appreciative inquiry approach to frame our stakeholder discussions. A sample of the one of the stakeholder questionnaires we used is included in Appendix A.

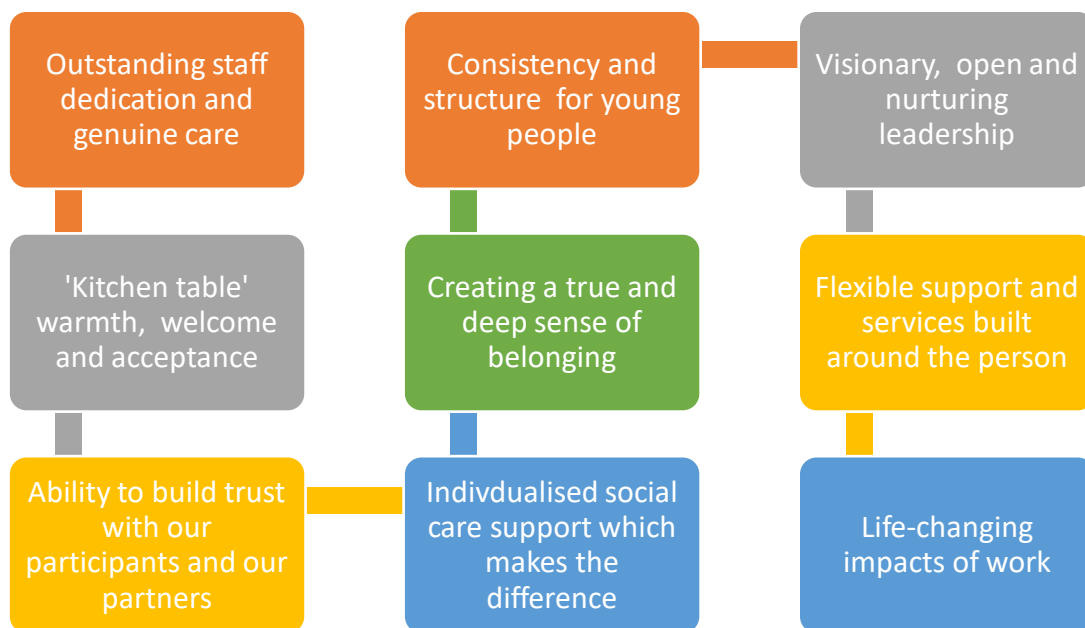
Central also to the development of Treo's strategic plan was to involve a cross-section of the Treo team, CEO and a Trustee in a sub-group to prioritise and review the drafting of strategic goals and objectives. We featured this into our strategic engagement process as an important dimension to ensure team ownership of the future direction of Treo drawing on the team's experience and expertise.

2.TREO'S STRENGTHS AND WHAT YOU SHOULD NEVER LOSE

2.1 KEY STRENGTHS

Overwhelmingly across the board, every stakeholder lauded Treo and where it has reached in terms of its impact, approach and ethos. The phrase 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' - particularly with participants - came up repeatedly. For many, Treo is currently at a high-point in how it works and the difference it makes. A notable number of stakeholders in fact cited Treo as a national model of best practice for other organisations to learn from such is the high esteem Treo is held in.

Treo's many strengths identified by stakeholders are summarised in the diagram below:



2.2. WHAT YOU SHOULD NEVER LOSE...


Stakeholders were asked the question 'What should Treo always hold on to and never lose, not matter what which makes them unique?' With any organisation there are varying views as to what makes it unique. However, the consistency with which the following qualities and values of Treo were listed was remarkable as outlined below.

Meeting people where they are at without judgement

Treo never judges you. I have been to court so many times, relapsed so many times and felt so down and ashamed but I was always accepted at Treo. Just how much they cared and accepted me after everything actually shocked me. I had never felt or had this support before in my life. Even when I moved on to other services, that contact with Treo has stayed and that means so much to me. - Participant

Genuine care from the team

I got my son back and I have Treo to thank for that. They care, they genuinely care. – Parent

You were my second family for the time I spent with you and I will always be so very grateful for all that you helped me do and helped me stop doing  miss you all – Participant Facebook

Person-centred approach

I wasn't 'tied down' to anything or choices. Treo helped me to discover what is out there for me and explored every option they could for me. Seriously, I cannot believe how now moving on into education and how it has changed me. Treo and education have completely changed my life. – Participant

What can I say, Treo has got it so right where they are at now. They are visionary and always up for trying out new things. The team, their outreach and the fact that they keep it genuinely person-centred with the variety of supports and services they offer. They are best practice and working at their optimum; they've stepped up to everything even during Covid. – Referral partner

Empowerment and hope

I got to a point where other services didn't want to work with me, gave up on me but Treo never did. I've now done a full 360 on my life. Whatever help you need, they will always find a way to get you it. – Participant

Treo spoke and worked with my son in such a respectful way which was new for him. They gifted him the power of choice when he didn't feel he had the power to choose. - Parent

Treo totally embody that belief in the capacity of a person to change. Treo know empowerment, how people can progress and support their resilience and talents to do this. Treo works with the story of people and hears the story. They allow people to

recognise and build on their talents over a period of time in the shared space they create for people to open up and talk. – Funder

The guys at Treo are just such a great team. Their approach, how they are with individuals and with each other. They are just so good at encouraging people. They have a real ability to engage with people in areas which are traditionally seen as hard-to-reach. When people come to me, they often always talk about Treo and always so highly. – Referral partner

Treo never gives up on anyone, that's what we do and will always do in how we work. – Staff member

Trust and integrity

Trust is the biggest thing for me. I never really trusted many people. Coming to Treo I felt comfortable. It feels safe and I never feel judged, no matter what. There is a balance between fun but also letting you know in a good way if you're messing. If I need to talk to someone I can Treo: I feel I can talk to them about anything. - Participant

Treo have a really deep understanding of how things operate in the areas they work in and of all the nuances and interfaces across communities between systems. Treo has credibility and accountability and does what it says on the tin. Their accountability and transparency are extremely important for working in their communities. - Funder

The Treo welcome and atmosphere

They have always made me feel welcomed, wanted and never unwanted, that's really a big thing. - Participant

Walking into Treo you feel the community spirit and sense of a family sitting around a kitchen table instantly. You feel happy that your son or daughter would be there.

– Parent

Treo is one of the only places that I get that feeling of a great atmosphere which I haven't experienced anywhere else and I've worked in a lot of different places. I think as a best practice standard, other people should be learning from them. – Referral partner

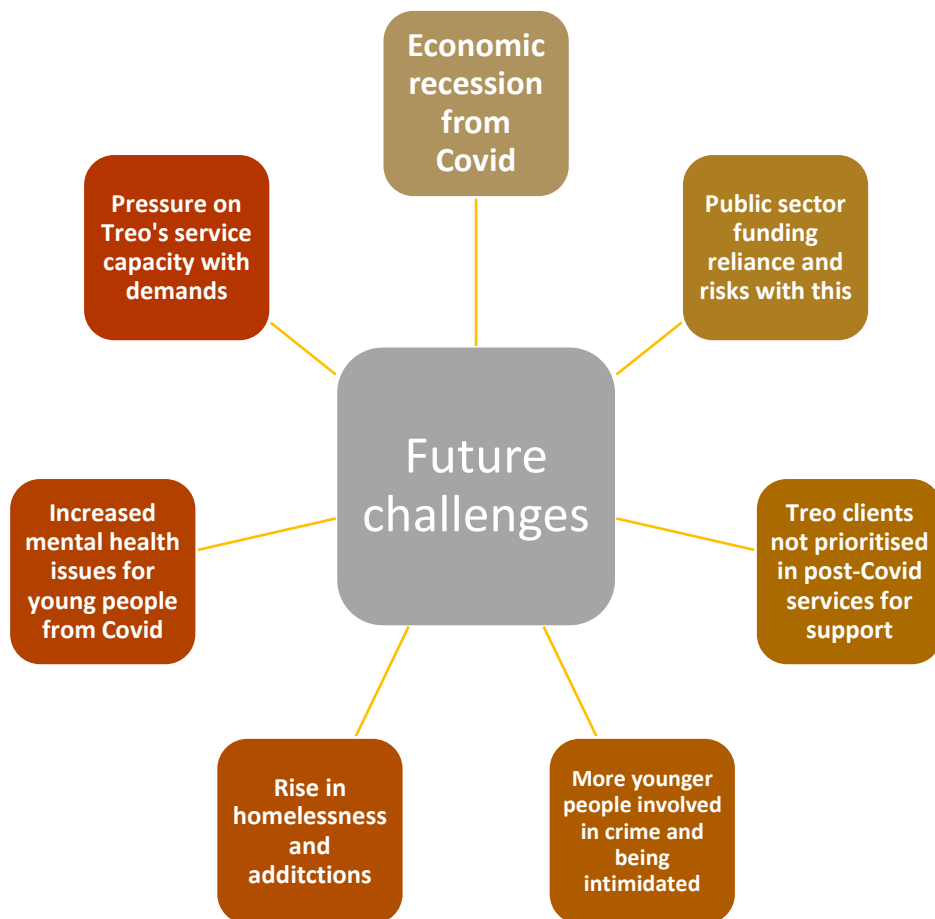
3. LOOKING OUTWARDS – STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGE

Integral to any strategic plan is taking a systems approach and looking outwards beyond the organisation. We questioned all stakeholders on what they see as the main challenges ahead and what needs to be on Treo’s radar as plan for the future. Evidently, Covid considerations were a huge factor and the uncertainty this brings as to the full impact on communities and how we emerge from the pandemic.

Here we have highlighted key challenges referenced by stakeholders as shaping the current and future landscape for Treo. We have also linked this to the strategic context of referral agencies and funders.

3.1 KEY CHALLENGES

There were a number of challenges looking outwards which stakeholders highlighted as important to note in thinking about how the world will look. These are summarised below.



Working with participants on a wide range of these challenges summarised above is already core to Treo's everyday work. However, the fallout for services and communities from Covid was highlighted by the majority of stakeholders as unknown and these issues could significantly worsen as outlined below.

Increased mental health issues from Covid

- The full impact of Covid on wellbeing may not be wholly evident now given the speed of change and rush towards 'getting back to normal' with hope of a vaccine. The need to work with the team, participants and families to 'process' and make time for healing from the pandemic was stressed as a key factor to build into future planning.

More younger people involved in criminality

- Stakeholders working in justice roles highlighted a growing trend of younger teenagers (13 – 15 years-old) becoming involved earlier in crime, living more chaotic lives who were not being fully engaged under the current Gardai diversion schemes.
- Participants voiced concerns that without contact with groups and structured activities significantly reduced due to Covid, boredom could lead some young people back to old habits and criminality.

Economic recession

- This looms large as the full economic impact of Covid is yet to unfurl and set to trigger other factors such as increased homelessness, unemployment and pressures on social welfare systems.
- Economic forecasts show that Treo's participant group is going to be hardest hit by the recession. In addition to a youth unemployment rate of 35.5%, almost a third of young people under 25 are now on the lowest rate of the PUP (€203) compared to a fifth of recipients over 25 in data provided by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.¹
- There are already barriers of discrimination to overcome for many of Treo's participants in securing work. With rising unemployment, the concern was expressed that Treo's participants could be even further disadvantaged entering the labour market with increased competition from more experienced candidates.

Public sector funding reliance

- All funders referenced the unknowns ahead of the impact on Covid on future funding to Departments and related community projects. It was widely felt that this would not be fully realised until at least Year 2 or 3 of Treo's strategic

planning cycle. This should be considered as a strategic risk factor given Treo's reliance on public sector funders.

Treo's clients are not prioritised

- Other concerns aired were that with the increasing numbers of people accessing social care, welfare and other vital support services that Treo's participants (due to negative perceptions) could fall 'lower down the priority list' for help. This is far from anecdotal as the 'unconscious and conscious bias towards marginalised groups' is specifically referenced in the government's Roadmap for Social Inclusion.ⁱⁱ

Pressures on Treo's capacity with increasing demands

- Funders and referral agencies alike praised Treo on adapting and continuing their work during Covid. However, the problems of working with Covid restrictions for both staff and participants are clearly recognised. The current premises at Dungarvan would need to change to effectively accommodate work moving forward.
- The consideration for Treo to also adapt and provide more access to online learning resources and training in digital literacy was highlighted. As we slowly emerge from Covid, the need for service providers to 'embed technology in the delivery of learning or else risk becoming irrelevant' in our virtual worlds is also echoed in the Further Education and National Training Strategy.ⁱⁱⁱ The future vision outlined for economic development in Ireland clearly outlines both a shift in work to technological development and the digital transformation of public services.^{iv}
- Renew will enter a re-contracting process under the Community Support Programme in 2021. There is a clear desire to develop Treo's Dungarvan base. This work combined with the ongoing challenges of short-term funding and related administration raised the question of pressures on Treo's current management structure. Significant work has been undertaken by the Board to lighten the governance responsibilities on the CEO. The potential for overstressing management and the team, especially against the backdrop of Covid, was highlighted.

3.2 OPPORTUNITIES

In spite of the huge challenges we face dealing with and emerging from Covid, Treo's strategic context also offers opportunities as outlined below.

Increased commitment to community-based learning

- The new FET strategy places real emphasis on the need for diverse pathways to education and training for marginalised groups which embrace ‘innovation in ground-up community-based learning initiatives. The visionary and grounded approach to learning and participant support already hallmarks Treo.

Regional economic development and the green economy

- The National Framework for Ireland highlights 25% of growth across the four cities combined (Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford), enabling all four to grow their population and jobs by 50-60%, and become cities of greater scale, i.e. growing by twice as much as they did over the previous 25 years to 2016. With a concentration of large corporations and signature developments such as The North Quays, the focus across all new developments will be on social procurement and inclusivity for local communities. This presents not only increased employment opportunities for participants but also potential business opportunities for Renew.^v
- Both the national further education and skills development strategies setting the direction for 2025 clearly focus on reinvigorating access to and range of apprenticeship programmes.^{vi} Given the interest of many Treo participants in vocational and trade skills also emphasised by the Treo workshop team, offers a real opportunity for future development.
- National strategies such as in Future Jobs, Climate Change, Project Ireland 2040 and the National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland all reinforce the Renew’s strong position to deliver on multiple social inclusion and environmental outcomes.^{vii}

Cross-departmental support and collaboration for community projects

- There remains a vibrant and strategic commitment to the development of social enterprise supported by the Department of Justice and Equality with Pobal and other government departments. Building on their A New Way Forward Social Enterprise Strategy 2017-2019^{viii}, the growth of Renew was seen a key development focus by justice stakeholders for Treo.
- A key objective in the draft Youth Justice Strategy clearly states a commitment to more co-ordinated and collaborative resourcing. This includes a ‘matrix funding’ model, sharing training support for frontline teams and stories of best practice across communities. This anticipated shift to funding needs and desired outcomes for young people ‘rather than Departmental responsibilities and funding lines’ could strengthen opportunities for Treo to build longer term plans with key funders. ^{ix}

4. LOOKING FORWARDS – KEY FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

We explored with all stakeholders their views on how Treo could develop moving forward in terms of:

1. What you offer and develop for participants
2. Who you work and collaborate with
3. How you develop Treo as an organisation

To reiterate, everything Treo offers now is highly-valued and viewed as essential and core services to take into the future. No stakeholder suggested any lessening or omissions for future services different to the current provision.

As everyone navigates the tough terrain of Covid and what lies ahead there were a range of thoughtful recommendations for this strategic planning cycle.

4.1 WHAT YOU OFFER AND DEVELOP FOR PARTICIPANTS

There were many suggestions as to how Treo could continue to build on its excellent work. However, numerous stakeholders were keen to emphasise that whatever was developed for the future should never dilute the person-centred approach, individual care and values for which Treo is celebrated.

Under each of Treo's core functions we have outlined key findings and suggestions from stakeholders relevant to each as to how they could develop moving forward.

i. Develop outreach and engagement activities in Dungarvan and City

Previous to Covid there could be a lot of lip-service paid to pre-engagement work. Now since Covid you hear a lot more national conversations which now recognise the importance of human connection and it feels genuinely more valued. Treo are so skilled in that pre-engagement with vulnerable and marginalised learners which most organisations simply cannot do. For the future, Treo could think of how they could develop pre-engagement and those initial first steps with a view to taking a phased approach into to LTI with continued learner support. – Funder

What we have in Dungarvan is probably only tip of the iceberg in meeting the wider needs of that West Waterford area. It's a big area which has a vacuum of services in general, Treo's core services could be really developed at its Dungarvan base. – Treo trustee

All stakeholders stressed the positive impact of that first contact Treo has with young people as a cornerstone of its success. From meeting the very basic needs of food,

a shower or simply a warm welcome and human connection, this can be that crucial first step which starts a potentially life-changing journey.

Given the development and success of CE and LTI programmes in Dungarvan, bringing dedicated outreach and pre-engagement programme support was seen as a priority future action.

The development of qualitative volunteering opportunities offering work experience and skills development in social care support was seen also as key to expanding Treo's outreach and engagement capacity.

ii. Extended vocational training and pre-apprenticeship pathways

There is a shortage of apprentices. It's a growing area of demand. The Southeast has traditionally been a base of so many electrical companies. You have seen it develop to now having huge companies in Waterford especially in engineering. Many of these companies offer not only local but international opportunities for apprentices. There is such a range of apprenticeships out there in so many different sectors and locally also in hospitality and tourism. Building these skills and pre-apprenticeship pathways is an area to develop.
– Funder

Having the chance to try out stuff like plumbing skills, outdoors work and other practical things and getting a bit of experience like on the bike repairs, you know working with your hands, is great at Treo. Even if you don't do a full qualification, getting that experience really helps you and keeps you motivated. - Participant

Many other participants expressed a keen interest in learning vocational and 'hands-on' skills and found fixing and making things satisfying and enjoyable. Aligning with regional economic, training and skills strategies; working with other partners (e.g. WWETB, WYTEC and WIT) to develop these pathways should be a key focus area.

iii. Building Treo's capacity to engage with employers

Our learning and QQI programmes have been very successful. Moving forward, we need more programmes to assist participants gain employment...However, there is no point giving our lads all the skills and then it's a full stop. We ideally need to develop a network of employers who will be prepared to give them onsite experience of the type of work they want to try for a couple of weeks and then see where things could go. It would be great in 3 years to look back and see how we've built that database of employers and relationships with successes to show for the work. – Treo team member

I think Treo could offer companies something really different for their CSR. They could take it beyond you know the usual CSR stuff of employees painting a wall in a community group as nice as that is. Companies could instead have the opportunity to support a placement or job mentoring for someone who has really worked against the odds to overcome an addiction or

other massive barriers to turn their life around. That is something much more meaningful for a company to do to help their community. – Referral partner

Treo already works closely with a number of local employers. However, to take this to the next level there was a wide variety of suggestions as to how this could be done to create more opportunities for participants. These included:

- Creating a bank of employers who would might regularly facilitate work placements specifically for Treo participants.
- Finding companies who might consider for the first time trying either a training or a work experience placement for someone with a conviction.
- Making more connections with business networks and larger companies to promote how Treo could offer unique opportunities for companies to fulfil their corporate social responsibility.
- Linking up with other justice partners (e.g. such as prisons) to co-ordinate and share employer network contacts and pathways into work in communities.
- Build employer testimonials of their positive experience of working with and employing Treo participants to win the hearts and minds of other employers.
- Creating a dedicated in-house role over the next 2 – 3 years to work on behalf of the whole organisation with employers.

iv. More preventative and awareness raising programmes

All of the preventative and awareness raising programmes Treo do, especially on criminality, are so well-balanced and grounded. Probably down to capacity and resources, they aren't really rolled out as widely as they could be in communities which they should be as they just do them so well. – Referral partner

A number of stakeholders proposed more of this type of early intervention work for Treo to share its experience and expertise in diverse communities. Moving to deliver in schools, companies, other community groups, GAA, sports clubs and youth clubs could be benefit more young people. This would also raise more awareness of what Treo do in other areas of Waterford city and county.

Other awareness raising programmes proposed included sexual health and consent, managing your reliance on and anxiety about social media, domestic violence and understanding diversity (e.g. LGBT and other communities)

It was also suggested that Treo could bring in other agency representatives and speakers for participants to help raise their awareness of practical topics (e.g. housing and welfare issues).

v. Continue to develop independent living skills

Participants and families really appreciated the practical support they received from Treo which made everyday life easier. The driving programme has been a resounding success and a prime example of this. This alone for participants opened up the possibility of being able to travel for jobs, study, helped family life and just feeling more independent.

Other independent living skills highlighted for development included understanding your responsibilities in rented accommodation, managing your finances, more survival cooking and how to organise and handle appointments with other services on your own.

vi. Keep building the variety of activities and supports young people want

Having the counselling and other things really helps you talk and open up. I have loved trying out so many things in Treo. Other favourite things are the trips away. It's not just about having a day out. I've been to places I never had the chance to visit growing up which are local so getting to know more about my community is really fun. – Participant

I love the summer activities and trips, it great for getting to know people and group bonding. – Participant

Keeping fresh the variety of our activities to spark and keep the interest of young people is so important. Offering all those things such as art, crafts, upcycling, music, therapies, sports and gardening are great and really benefit wellbeing as well as helping our environment. – Treo trustee

The above quotes say it all: more of the same for the future was recommended. The only additional suggestions were to consider offering more sports/outdoors activities, digital technologies access and developing a drop-in facility (like the Squashy Couch Café) or out-of-hours activities.

4.2 WHO YOU WORK AND COLLABORATE WITH

i. Reviewing the age group of participants supported by Treo

I know we have age cut-off and this is guided by our funders and other organisations work with 24-years upwards. However, when someone has worked with us for a longer time and that relationship is strong, it's hard to say goodbye and good luck. It's something we need to look at. One way is to think about how we handle transitions. Ideally, build up to transitions during the year before they move on. You could then have a year of transition support available working with other referral agencies for when people move on just to check in if needed. – Treo team member

The ages of Treo participants came up in a number of discussions not only with the team but also with external stakeholders. There were four main points recurring in discussions:

- The possibility that Treo's support could be flexed to meet the small number of young teenagers who were involved from an early age in criminality and who didn't respond to other interventions for their age group (i.e. under 16s).
- The potential for Treo to work with participants over 23 years-old (outside of its CE scheme). Some Treo participants have been with the team for a number of years. Older participants often only need a little support with some practical things for which they didn't want to undergo 'referral process' to another agency.
- In a number of discussions, the availability of referral services for over 23s – particularly during Covid – were not seen to adequately meet the needs of new referrals. This was proving to be a gap in local services.
- Treo already has very strong referral partnerships. If there was to be no immediate change in Treo's age range, working more in partnership on transitions could be a focus as highlighted above.

ii. Supporting families with group activities and programmes

If you have a family member who feels that they are better supported, who has more skills and self-care that Treo can help with, who has connections with other families who understand, then you create a stronger network of people to better support our younger people. - Parent

Treo regularly connects with participants' family members in its wider work. The desire for wider engagement with families, victims and communities was shared by probation services in the ethos of restorative justice and also in 'healing' from Covid.

Family members wanted peer connections and emotional support. They thought that accessing some of the expertise and skills of Treo and organising some joint activities with their family member who was engaged with Treo would benefit so many. This type of connection was also seen as way of helping families (who might never have connected due to previous 'bad blood' experiences) to build neighbourhood relationships.

iii. Strengthening collaboration with other organisations

You know working in agencies that there are just some bits of social and welfare services which don't work as well for clients. Treo and other organisations can spend a lot of time advocating for individuals with agency staff who are just working within systems which also frustrates them. Maybe trying another approach where you with others collectively engage with policy makers to advocate for your client groups is something to consider. – Referral partner

Although we all represent Treo, people really build collaboration and rapport through their individual connections with each of us. That's why it's really important to have that time to go out and meet staff in other organisation and referral agencies and keep doing it. This is what builds strong links, connection and trust. – Treo team member

All external stakeholders rated highly of the relationships they had with Treo in every aspect of their connection with the team. Treo's professionalism, openness, flexibility and integrity were key qualities regularly mentioned by partners, funders and referral agencies. Suggestions for developing Treo's connections and collaborations moving forward included:

- Building the team's networks through more regular visits and talks to other organisations.
- Sending a regular email update or newsletter about Treo's work and new projects to partners and referral contacts.
- Exploring even more shared resourcing of programmes / activities.
- Bringing participants from different services together using community networks for joint group activities (e.g. sports via the Waterford Sports Partnership or creative community initiatives such as Waterford Walls).
- Outside justice partnerships, co-designing clearer transition and referral pathways to help clients move on with confidence to other services (e.g. into education).
- Jointly lobbying for change on the policies practices of agencies which don't work for participant groups at a strategic or regional level.
- Raising the profile and value of collective work to positively change negative societal attitudes and stigma which our participant groups can experience.

iv. Tell the story of Treo more widely to others

Who really knows what we do outside our direct areas? I think there are so many different ideas out there about what we do such a training organisation or a diversion project etc. A lot of the time if you mention Treo, people don't know anything about us and they always ask 'Who's Treo?' – Treo team member

How Treo is known was a recurring theme for future development. Many stakeholders appreciated that Treo approached its work in a very humble and understated way reflecting its ethos. However, given impact of Treo's work, it was widely felt that Treo could better tell its story, profile the success of its participants and what is actually does in local communities and at a national level. There were many reasons given as to why Treo should give this more attention, namely:

- Showcasing the work and achievements of participants would give them a real boost with wider community recognition and celebration (e.g. such as Treo's involvement in the Christmas Market).

- Participants felt that hearing the stories from directly from Treo participants would be inspiring for other young people and help them to make positive changes.
- People who know Treo and have benefited from Treo already share their positive experience with others, why not use this more for the greater good? Many people want to champion and give something back to Treo.
- More awareness of Treo actually could create other partnerships and connections to benefit participants.
- It could help connect Treo connect with other families / young people experiencing difficulty outside Treo's traditional catchment neighbourhoods who aren't aware it exists.
- Potentially attract more community supporters for Treo (e.g. volunteers and fundraisers to help out operationally).
- Raising Treo's profile would also benefit Renew attracting more customers and other business development opportunities.
- Other organisations could really learn and benefit from the best practice work of Treo which was seen as innovative and visionary (e.g. its person-centred ethos, outreach support and CE model).
- It would help to win hearts and minds of communities as to how people can change and turn their lives around. Treo has a good story to tell and getting the message out more with media partners would get the public more on the side of participants.
- Wider community connections combined with Treo's restorative justice expertise could facilitate much needed community conversations in the future to recover from Covid.
- A higher profile could lever more support and influence with local leaders, representatives and policy makers which would assist advocacy work.

4.3 HOW YOU DEVELOP TREO AS AN ORGANISATION

Under this theme, there was a variety of ideas as to how Treo approaches organisational development whilst staying true to its values. These are broken down under sub-headings below.

i. Further developing Renew

A real milestone for Treo has been the funding to create Renew which has come on board and everyone can really see the potential for it to develop. It's absolutely fantastic. The lads love it and it helps with their skills set. It would be great to see this expanded and more business opportunities for Renew explored. – Treo trustee

Seeing the lads' faces and their reaction to the advertisement of jobs for Renew and that applicants with convictions were wanted is what Renew is about as well as developing it as a real business. We want to see Renew grow and be able to employ more people with convictions. – Treo team member

Renew is highly valued in its current work and there are great expectations and excitement as to what is possible for the future. Recommendations from stakeholders as to what Renew could focus on to help it grow are outlined below.

Staffing

- Aim for a 'mixed' team in Renew: if you are working with staff who may experience relapse or need a lot of support it could impact the enterprise's ability to deliver on contracts and deadlines if staff are off etc.
- Consider developing contracts which build up people's hours as they progress and bed in (e.g. moving from 6 hours then up to 12 hours per week etc.).
- As Renew grows, it will need more operational supervision which could potentially stretch too thinly the existing management structures of Treo.

Governance

- Renew is still developing and needs to clarify further that relationship with Treo in terms of governance, branding and operational parameters/expectations of roles. It's still on the journey of moving from towards commercialisation. This will be especially important when it comes to re-applying to Pobal's Community Service Partnership programmes as it moves to a new model in 2021.
- It can be hard for small community based social enterprises to be heard amidst larger, more established social enterprises in national decision-making and policy. Developing Renew's relationships with social enterprise and environmental networks such as its membership of the Waterford Social Enterprise Network and Community Reuse Network of Ireland will assist Renew's influence and voice.

Business development

- There are 'true believers' and supporters of Treo who are currently loyal Renew customers. The next stage of development should take a cold, hard look at what Renew offers, who they are targeting and what will be profitable (e.g. think about phasing out kindling) to make an effective and evidenced business case.
- Look also at where Renew could capture small niche markets and how the product offer could be further enhanced for these (e.g. from doing rust removal on bicycles up to specialist supplier partnerships with other community organisations).

- Plan for how you balance Renew’s future needs for space, workshop equipment, storage as it expands (new premises may be needed) with the organic connection to Treo which the current co-location brings.
- Build Renew’s own branding and marketing across local communities and ‘hard sell’ the social and environmental outcomes; people will buy on this alone and from affluent communities. Share the stories of how people have journeyed to work at Renew. These narratives are really important in SE development.

Collaboration

- Connect and lever social enterprise expertise from others (e.g. tapping into support from key stakeholders such as Waterford IT, Local Enterprise Offices and the South East Business Innovation Centre).
- Think of how Renew can connect with the social procurement opportunities which are now built into major regeneration and investment projects such as the North Quays development.
- Explore future collaborative social enterprise development opportunities from the EU. They are leading on sustainable economies across all local regions and with its green and social focus Renew aligns so well.

ii. Re-negotiating longer-term and stable funding for roles and services

How the current contracts for the LTI are organised – having to reapply on a 44-week cycle – when you are working supporting participants on longer 3-year programmes is a challenge and a bit ironic if you look at it that way. It doesn’t offer any job security. On top of this, there have been no salary increments for such a long time. That’s tough just due to the nature of the funding. - Treo team member

This is one example of how funding cycles could and should be co-ordinated differently. Funders also acknowledged how some of their funding and reporting cycles were inefficient and duplicated reporting requirements generating unnecessary administrative work for both projects and funders.

As a low-threshold access service, Treo’s work is demanding and requires refined practitioner skills and dedication. A number of community stakeholders also highlighted the need for staff to feel secure and supported in their roles as a priority in order to work at the ‘top of their game’ with vulnerable young people.

It was also acknowledged that the Treo team (in contrast with other community organisations) had worked hard to stay operational during Covid and this was noted by all funders. Moving forward, these factors all play favourably in positioning Treo to negotiate long-term funding.

iii. Sustainability and capital

Other related suggestions for enhancing income, facilities and resources included:

- Identify new funding avenues (local, regional, EU) outside of statutory partners and diversify Treo's fundraising mix.
- Change the Dungarvan premises as it does not serve our needs well and aim in the long-term to own a Treo building in the locale.
- Upgrade / extend existing facilities (e.g. kitchen area, have a 'cosy' area and open up communal areas to try out activities such as music etc.).
- Develop outdoors space (e.g. to have more horticulture or emergency shelter pods for participants).
- Develop the workshops (spaces and equipment) to accommodate more access to hands-on skills learning and production of pieces (e.g. to sell)
- Have small buses to take clients on trips etc.

iv. Leadership and management

In the Treo team the energy is always really high and they are so excellent as a team. I just want them to be mindful of looking after themselves and not stretch themselves too thin. Treo needs more management capacity to develop in the areas they want to grow in. - Funder

It was recommended by many stakeholders that Treo will need to create additional management support to the CEO in order to:

- Build on Treo's service provision in Dungarvan and meet increasing demands of fundraising, administration and compliance.
- Continue to strategically develop Treo's profile and advocacy with local and regional stakeholders.
- Oversee the development of Renew as a social enterprise.
- Undertake succession planning as a whole for the organisation.

v. Team development

We always need to maintain the open relationships between our Board and the team and care for the wellbeing of the team. Always we need to be mindful of the pressures on staff and resources. It is so important that we check in on the team; how they are and have coped through Covid. We need to understand this whole experience and the impact that it has had on them personally too. We want to support our team as they are constantly supporting young people to cope with so many things. – Treo trustee

Recommendations to develop Treo's team included:

- Additional outreach and tutor team members to maintain the adaptability of activities and programmes for clients in both locations.

- An education officer role for ‘wrap around’ support to learners.
- Flexible access to tutoring / other support skills when needed.
- Ideally an onsite drugs counsellor as this one of our biggest issues in Treo’s work with young people.
- Ensuring ongoing CPD and supervision for team progression and wellbeing.
- Adequate administrative support to meet the reporting and monitoring requirements of funders.
- Volunteer development.

vi. Governance

We have really put a lot of work into our governance at a Board level and we’re 90% to where we want to be. It’s one area we always have to focus on and keep our governance processes and Board refreshed. – Treo trustee

Recommendations to continue Treo’s momentum in its Board and governance work included:

- Continuing to enhance the Board’s skills and experience (particularly in relation to enterprise, legal, financial, HR and marketing).
- Think about how we involve young people in our governance or former Treo participants on our Board.
- Develop a clear business model for Renew.
- Review what we capture, measure and use to relay the impact of work for ongoing accountability and effective performance.

vii. Models of good practice or other approaches to learn from

In view of the complex issues our staff are dealing with, i.e. new drug choices, sexual health leading to STIs, mental health, depression, independent living, homelessness, it is vital that our staff and Board should be provided with training that would reflect most up-to-date methods of dealing with the same on a regular basis. – Treo trustee

This was one question we explored to tap into stakeholders’ wider expertise which could provide additional insights for organisational development. Other approaches, training or projects which stakeholders highlighted in this arena included:

- Trauma-informed care.
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).
- Community reinforcement approaches.
- Peer mentoring models for young people.
- Tusla’s person-centred work on understanding young people’s eco-environment growing up.
- Connecting with homeless sector partners to develop best practice policies / procedures.

- Develop better practices in our business planning. Use the data more to plan and review how we perform and where we can improve. Question why we might not have reached some KPIs based more on analysis and data.
- Scandinavian, Dutch and Australian models of practice for addressing homelessness and criminality working with young people.
- The *Get Real* restorative justice project led by NIACRO in Northern Ireland.
- Drop-in Day Centre at Merchants Quay in Dublin.
- PACE social enterprise café in Dublin.

5. CONCLUSION

Becoming a strategic thinker is about opening your mind to possibilities. It's about seeing the bigger picture. It's about understanding the various parts of your business, taking them apart and putting them together again in a more powerful way. It's about insight, innovation, emotion and imagination focused on reshaping some part of the world.' – Max McKeown

Given the rich array of views which all stakeholders contributed with heartfelt enthusiasm, Treo can strategically position itself to progress with genuine cross-sectoral support and confidence.

Treo's unswerving commitment to its participants, communities, mission and most of all its values will as always be its anchor for any strategy. We hope that these insights from engagement have helped to see the bigger picture and inspired, even in the maelstrom of Covid, a real sense of possibility.

REFERENCES, DESK TOP RESEARCH AND THANKS...

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A SPECIAL THANKS TO...

We would also like to express our appreciation to members of the Treo team who were actively involved in developing the plan by generously giving their time to our strategic planning sub-group. A special thanks to Danny Murphy, Sinead Landers, Denise Healey, Nicola Dee, Linda Murphy, John Devlin and Ken Sauvage.

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE SAMPLE

Introduction – appreciating the best of Treo

Sample questions – appreciating the best of

- Tell me about your favourite memory as a Treo team member / Trustee
- Think about a time when you saw Treo as an organisation at its absolute best. Describe that for us.

Topic 1: Impact and reach of Treo – looking forward

Treo is looking ahead at how it develops in the next 3 years and beyond. In what we offer and who we offer it to are key questions. We want to build on our strengths and create the opportunities where we continue to have a social impact of which we will be really proud of.

1. Name one thing which Treo always needs to hold on to no matter what which makes it truly unique and different from other organisations.
2. Let's think about all the different interventions and support we offer under your programme / as Treo. Where would you put place these on...? (use of the Boston matrix framework)
3. To have continue to make the most positive difference we can through our work, we always need to consider our most important target groups. Think of:
 - Which of our existing groups / organisations do we need to work more with?
 - What other new groups / types of people do we need to start working with?
4. Reflect on how we currently work as an organisation. What changes could we make in our systems or structures to excel in what we do?

Topic 2: Looking outwards

We want Treo to be a force of positive change in the work we do and for the communities and stakeholders we serve. To do this, we need to keep on top of the changes in the world around us and also of what we need to provide which meets the needs of our clients and stakeholders to stay relevant and always adding value.

1. What do you anticipate to be the key challenges over the next 3 years which we all need to work on across sectors to enable the right support for the groups we work with and serve?

-
2. Thinking ahead, what might you see as situations or opportunities for Treo to strengthen its work in:
 - Connecting and collaborating with others to benefit clients?
 - Delivering any new services or working in a different way which will benefit clients / our key stakeholders?
 3. As a staff member/Trustee what creative ideas or methods have you seen in other organisations / best practice models which Treo should consider as part of how it works moving forward?

Topic 3: Visioning the future

When we look at strategy and planning more long term, we need to think about our how we do things internally, what challenges and opportunities lie ahead externally. We always need then to consider how we might change to rise to these challenges and opportunities.

1. What values should we promote to guide our work as an organisation which are most important to you?
2. Imagine you had the power with this strategy to select your top 3 actions for the Treo you would like to see. Which three actions would you prioritise?