



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PROJECT

MODULE CODE: BU7078



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Executive Summary

It was evident from the outset that CRANN's value within and contribution to the communities it serves, is exemplary as much as it is unrivalled. The core values in which the social enterprise was built, have provided a strong and resilient structure that has overcome both social and micro economic challenges to nurture growth and maturity.

The responsibility of the Trinity team was to firstly identify and preserve the outstanding qualities, characteristics and capabilities of CRANN. Additionally, the team was tasked with highlighting the key organisational issues and challenges within CRANN as it prepares to embark on a new chapter in its history, guided by its 3-year strategic plan.

This document illustrates the results from both the operational and financial analysis and captures the strengths, areas for improvement and potential opportunities that surround CRANN over the immediate, medium- and long-term future.

The team focused on diversifying the routes in which CRANN could take to secure vital funding. Furthermore, the document details the potential to increase revenue within CRANN's high performing finance services department.

The overriding objective of the Trinity team is to present viable solutions to ensure CRANN continues to build toward a sustainable future.

CRANN Overview

Crann Support Group (CRANN) is a Social Enterprise (SE) that works within the principles of community development bringing high quality support to Charitable Organisations through the provision of governance and operations support, primarily serving organisations devoted to childcare and families. CRANN provides shared services consisting of accounting, HR support, management consultants and various other ancillary services to Community and Voluntary Organisations. CRANN is restricted by its Constitution from serving SMEs and other commercial entities. A total of 20 community childcare organisations (CCOs) and community voluntary social inclusion projects (CVSIPs) are CRANN members and avail of the ancillary services provided. These shared business services include:

- Management of community enterprise services including consultancy and program development
- Human Resource Management
- Finance Management preparation accounts to audit stage
- Education and Training
- Community Employment Scheme
- Catering
- Facilities Management including transport, maintenance, caretaking, and cleaning
- Procurement Management and Reception

The values of CRANN are person-centred and consist of integrity, innovation and inclusion. Play, equality, individuality and cooperation are some of the core principles by which CRANN abide by and encourage all entities with which they have fostered a relationship. They request 360-degree feedback from all centres to ensure that they are upholding the standards that they have set for themselves covering the 7 areas below:

- I. Shared Business Services for CRANN and member CCOs and CVSIPs
- II. Employment and Enterprise

- III. Education and training
- IV. Vulnerable Families
- V. Developing Community Capacity
- VI. Advocacy and Lobbying
- VII. Developing Organisational Capacity: Governance

Human resource management and finance management along with training and education occupy the fulcrum of CRANN's offerings and compliance with employment legislation and high-quality standards is maintained as a going concern. These services are provided to community groups by CRANN with the help of the community employment scheme. The main difference between a SE and a company are the restrictions with which the SE is dealt through their Constitution. CRANN's diversified range of offerings can be transduced with the following SWOT analysis developed by CRANN staff through group brainstorming sessions:

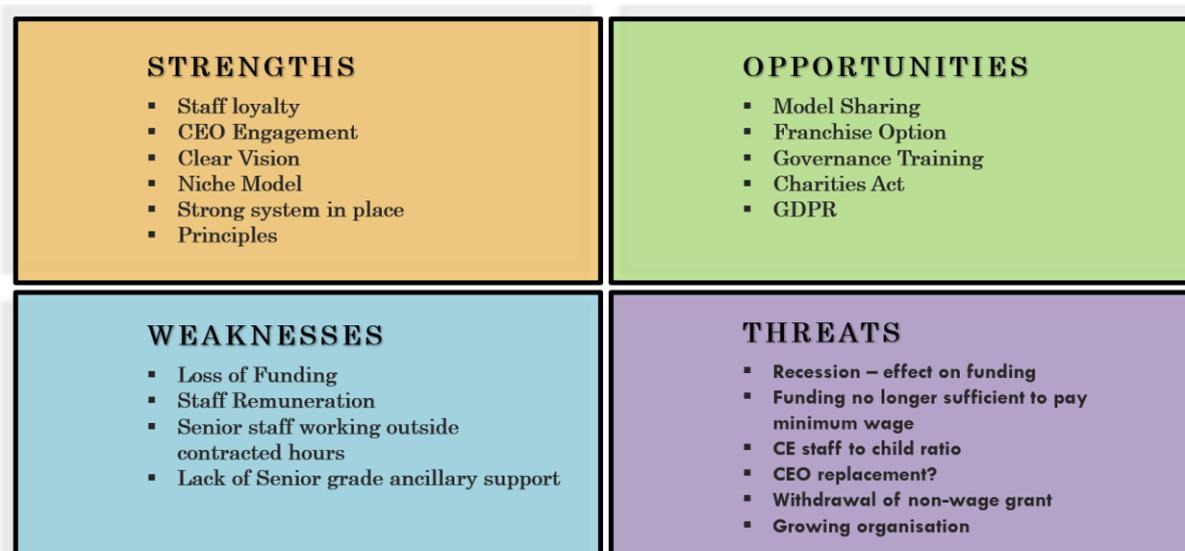


Figure 1 SWOT analysis of Crann

History

Having identified a need for both preschool and afterschool services in the South Meath area, the Ballivor Childcare committee was set up in 1999 and with the help of funding, several community childcare centres and childcare committees were established in the following years. As staffing responsibilities grew, further full-time staff and community employment (CE) participants were employed to manage a growth in community childcare centres across the region and provide quality childcare service through training and education.

The main challenge that emerged was borne from a lack of non-childcare services such as human resources supports, accountancy, education. CRANN emerged in response to a demand for social enterprise and built a strong and sustainable support system for the Meath community services to access and utilise in their day-to-day operations. CE schemes are harnessed to provide support to all organisations and CRANN gives training and education to these CE participants.

More and more CCOs contacted CRANN for assistance with day-to-day operational support and by 2012, CRANN was providing 703 childcare places across its community childcare centres. By 2018, this number was 972 childcare places across 10-member community childcare centres. Today, CRANN has 15 members and run 6 social inclusion projects. They have expanded one centre out to Dublin and are an umbrella for 300 staff. They also provide a bus service with 13 vehicles to support children's commute to and from creches and schools. With a turnover of EUR 6 million, they forecast twice a year in January and June.

(Crannsupportgroup.ie, 2019)

Financial Analysis

CRANN has operated efficiently and effectively as a Social Enterprise building up a small surplus in the years under analysis (2015 to 2019). The provision of a safety margin of two months revenue is usually recommended for profit enterprises and CRANN are currently maintaining this margin. However, this surplus does not provide any room for further investment in the CRANN offering based on these current levels of income.

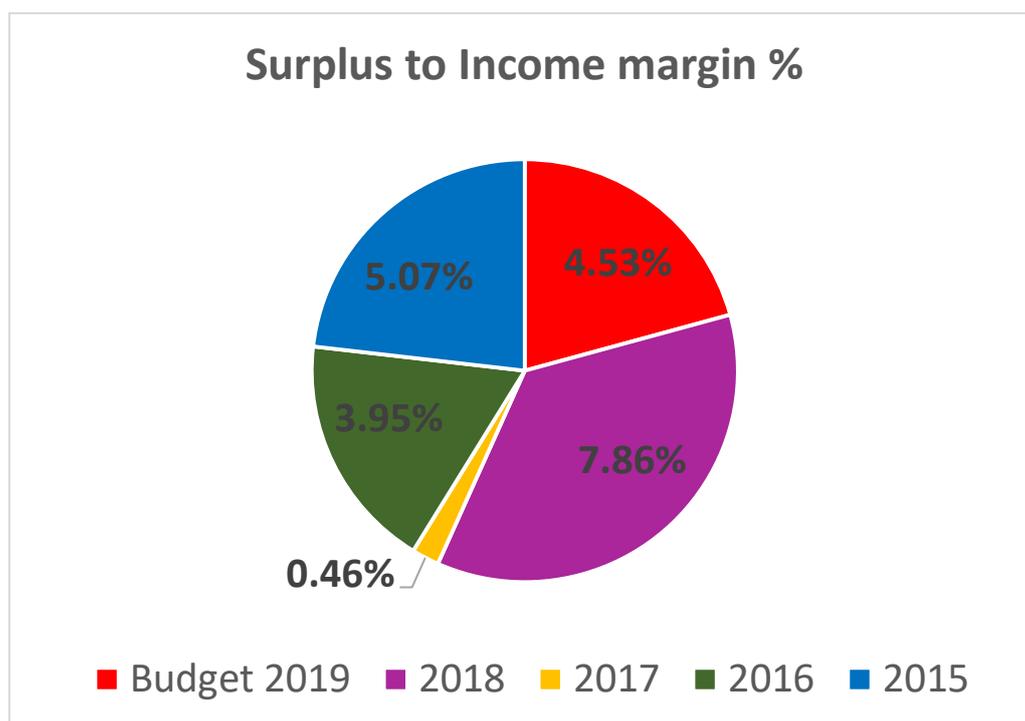


Figure 2 Crann Surplus to Income margin %

As can be seen from the summary graph below, expenditure and income were aligned over the same time period which is not unusual in the sector of community and voluntary services. It should also be noted that the primary expenditure item within CRANN is staff costs which makes up around 85% of total expenditure over the five years examined. Again, this is not unusual for this sector.

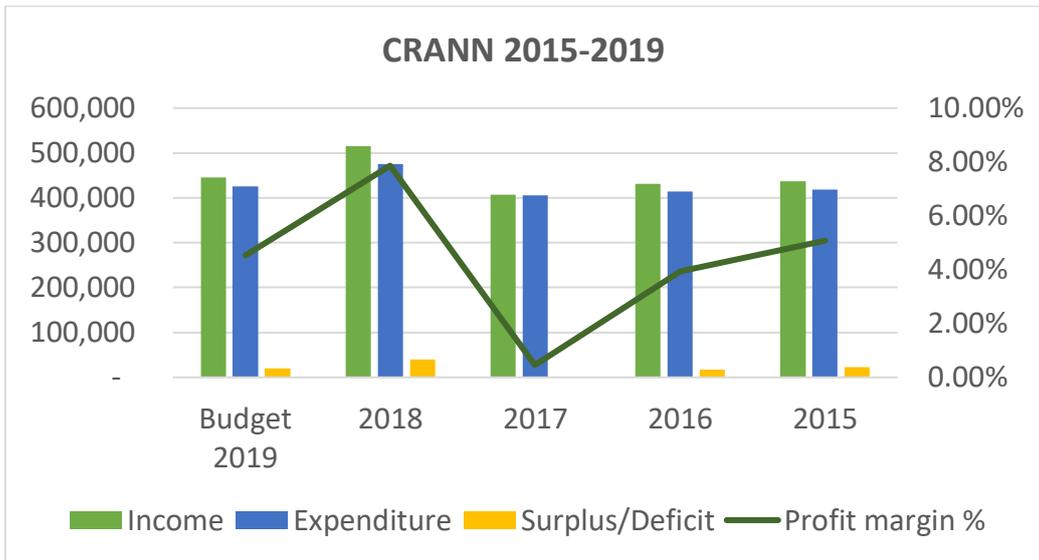


Figure 3 Crann 2015-2019

When we analysed the funding received by CRANN from 2015 to 2018 we discovered that CRANN, as an organisation, is heavily reliant on government funding with 57% of all funding coming from Community Service Projects and Grants. The next outstanding funding source in this period is the Support Services Fee which occupies an average of 30% of all funding and currently is projected to reach 36% of funding in 2019. This is one of the areas of possible expansion which we will explore further in this document.

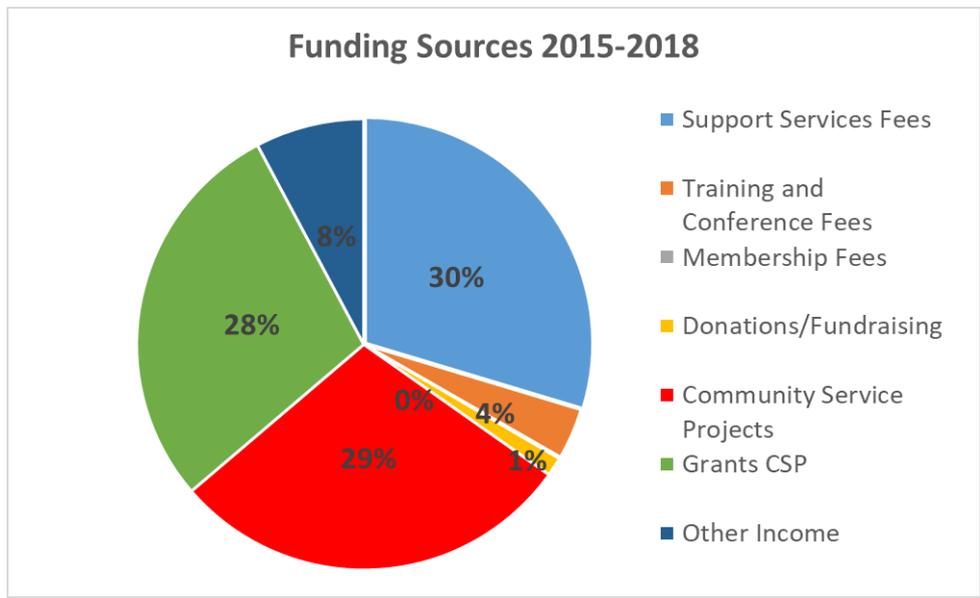


Figure 4 Crann Funding Sources 2015-2018

Issue identification

Following an extensive operational and commercial review, the team identified and extracted key issues which demonstrated potential to inhibit the growth targets of CRANN as it moved forward to execute its 2022 strategy.

The approach to the issue identification process involved a combination of frequent online engagements with the designated liaison in CRANN, physical on-site meetings with key stakeholders and the review of company financial and strategic documentation.

It is understood that CRANN require an increased level of funding to support its strategic intentions over the next 3 years.

In order of priority to action/address, the issues identified are as follows:

Priority	Issue
1	Lack of funding to support strategic intentions set out in 2022 strategy.
2	Finance Support Service department not delivering to maximum capacity/capability.
3	Overdependence on word of mouth (WOM) to attract business.

Figure 5 Crann - Issues Identified

Proposed solutions:

Government Funding Proposal

Replicating a Social Enterprise

This section of our proposal was developed using the guidance in *The Challenge of replicating Social Programs* (Bradach, 2003).

The value of a proven model should not be underestimated in this space as ‘replication can reduce the risk of failure’ (Bradach, 2003). CRANN can point to their success in the revitalisation of struggling community childcare and voluntary organisations. The organisations that are delivering these services have been able to focus on their areas of expertise while relying on CRANN to deliver services such as HR, Management and Finance at an affordable rate. Without CRANN’s offering, these organisations would be unable to access or afford the resources and expertise that CRANN provides. Franchising the offering is low-hanging fruit for an organised and professional entity like CRANN and will offer the opportunity for the social enterprise to grow organically. ‘Franchising offers some thought-provoking lessons for social enterprises seeking to grow.’ (Bradach, 2003)

A more reliable Corporate Governance model can be provided by CRANN thus providing risk assurance to funders. Providing a network of support from similar organisations will lead to collective learning and grant CRANN the opportunity to develop new relationships and cultivate further business growth. CRANN possess the capacity to provide the following service offering to the Government:

- Substantive evidence of success
- Systems to track KPIs to prove value created
- Summarised strategic plan similar to that suggested in Appendix 2

Current funding sources that need to be replicated

Support Services fees	€153,030	30 %
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Grants

€296,139

57%

Therefore, it is the Government to whom this concept needs to be sold.

Resources required for the offering

- Manuals
- Capacity to train
- Framework guide
- People on the ground to codify the tacit knowledge to make it explicit and ensure that organisations are abiding by the framework

Nationwide Focus

This can be guided by establishing the demand from creches nationwide or the identified need provided by government funders. If driven by government, it is important for CRANN to engage with the organisations identified and get buy-in to the service.

Ensuring quality and protecting the Brand

CRANN must decide on the level of involvement with the replicated organisation into the future. A hub or an independent entity as part of a support network should ensure that all participants are following the framework that CRANN has provided to maintain the standard of excellence that CRANN currently represents.

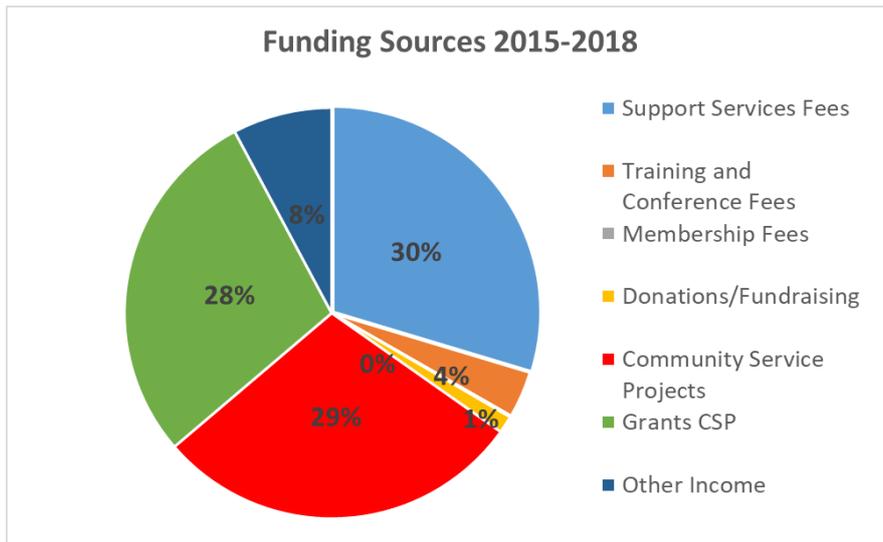


Figure 6 Crann Funding Sources 2015-2018

Funding Sources

CRANN have established credible financial and accountancy services over the past number of years. We recommend that CRANN look at expanding and marketing this service nationally to generate new clients and start the process of expanding their operations. Team Grafton will assist CRANN by making a number of recommendations which will help them to launch their current financial services to attract new clients.

Existing Financial Support Service

Grow funding from existing financial support service to fund business expansion. We have put together some suggestions to further grow this service and reach potential new partners.

Bank Loan

If CRANN already have a relationship with one of the leading banks, it is likely that they would be eligible for a business loan. It would be easier to apply for a loan with the bank you already have a relationship with, as rates may be more favourable than with a third-party financier.

Microfinance Loan (Microfinance Ireland)

Microfinance Ireland offers small loans of up to EUR 25k over short terms of 3-5 years and at an Annual Percentage Rate (APR) of up to 7.8%. The application process is straightforward, and loans can be approved and drawn down quite quickly. This could be an excellent option for CRANN as the loan amount offered doesn't exceed the 20k CRANN need to fund its expansion. (Small Business Loans, 2019)

Peer-to-peer Business Loan (GRID Finance / Linked Finance)

GRID Finance was Ireland's first peer-to-peer lending service and offers business loans from EUR 10k-100k without the same level of information generally required by banks. Applications are fast and draw down of funds can be approved within hours. If GRID take card payments for services going forward, GRID offers a unique model to

pay back funds as a percentage of your card intake, so that you are paying back the loan quickly when you are generating revenue. Interest rates vary depending on the amount borrowed and the loan term. (Info.gridfinance.ie, 2019)

Credit Union

A loan from the local Credit Union could be a great way for CRANN to finance its expansion. Local credit unions are always supportive of community-based enterprises and would be happy to support an organisation like CRANN with a small business loan. They offer business loans up to 50k with rates from 6% and upwards. (Creditunion.ie, 2019)

Fundraising

Another possible option for CRANN would be to raise funds through their community. CRANN offer services to many locals and could raise funds through fundraising efforts. This could be coordinated with CRANN employees and also with volunteers who CRANN have a relationship with. CRANN have also reached out to larger entities in the past for support, perhaps some of those organisations may be in a position to help out financially or to provide a short-term credit facility for the business.

Angel Investors (HBAN - Halo Business Angel Network)

Given the support that CRANN have offered to families and individuals in the past, angel investment is another pathway which could be explored. There are online platforms where proposals can be submitted and distributed to hundreds of potential investors. HBAN is an all-island umbrella group responsible for the development of business angel syndicates and supporting the early stage entrepreneurial community on the island of Ireland, this is an example of one angel investor platform active in Ireland and supported by Enterprise Ireland. (www.webtrade.ie, 2019)

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Proposal

What CRANN Offer

CRANN have established a credible financial and accountancy service specifically tailored for the community and voluntary sector since 2007. CRANN offer a range of services in the area of financial management and specialise in the administration of financial returns for funding received. CRANN ensure through finance management sustainability and good governance for member CCOs and CVSIPs including;

- Administration of accounts to audit stage
- Implement, develop and monitor budgets
- Conduct financial analyses quarterly and on an ad hoc basis
- Identify and analyse risks and opportunities
- Help guide significant adjustments to affect savings and profit opportunities
- Evaluate the compliance of financial systems, policies and processes in conjunction with accounting principles and the Company's Financial Procedure
- Grant/funding applications.
- Preparation of departmental returns.
- Identifying cost cutting measures in order to remain sustainable.

**Today the accounts department administers almost €7M on behalf of member CCOs and CVSIPs.

Proposal

It is proposed that CRANN, as specialists in this area, endeavour to engage and partner with CSR programs in sponsoring organisations, to assist staff members in offering a financial support service tailored to charities' needs. It can be argued that large organisations may be adequately equipped and structured to cater to global businesses and the challenges they face; however, for staff more familiar with this global business environment, it can be difficult to adjust to the needs and challenges of small not-for-profit organisations. CRANN can exploit this opportunity, by providing

training to staff in the specific types of financial supports which are needed by small charities to enable them to fulfil their CSR responsibilities more effectively.

Marketing public Relations and Social Media

CRANN offer a range of services in the area of financial management including tailored bookkeeping services. It prepares accounts to audit stage and specialise in the administration of financial returns for funding received. CRANN ensure through finance management sustainability and good governance for member CCOs and CVSIPs including;

- Administration of accounts to audit stage
- Implement, develop and monitor budgets
- Conduct financial analyses quarterly and on an ad hoc basis
- Identify and analyse risks and opportunities
- Help guide significant adjustments to affect savings and profit opportunities
- Evaluate the compliance of financial systems, policies and processes in conjunction with accounting principles and the Company's Financial Procedure
- Grant/funding applications.
- Preparation of departmental returns.
- Identifying cost cutting measures in order to remain sustainable.

The team recommend that CRANN start to highlight the above services more and market to potential new clients to sell in this service.

**Today the accounts department administers almost €7M on behalf of member CCOs and CVSIPs.

Market Segmentation

- Market to existing clientele but extend nationally.
- Marketing to Government, roll out nationally through the Government.
- Linking with CSR programs of large corporations, whereby these organisations will fund CRANN to train their staff members to roll out services.

Marketing Suggestions

Website Improvements

- Add further information on services and call to action buttons e.g. Our Services > Financial Support Services, improve navigation and user experience so users can explore what services CRANN offer.
- Add data capture feature to capture details of visitors to the website and to track reasons for visiting.
- Online booking tool to allow users to book a consultation with a CRANN financial advisor to funnel potential new clients.
- Financial health check tool for potential clients to identify financial services they may require.
- Add summary of strategic plan and executive summary on website for users who are tight for time.

Social Media & PR

- Move from ad hoc to devised strategy for social media to include CRANN story and information on CRANN services, assign a resource to take responsibility of social media activity and posts.
- Convert Facebook profile to public page (Cause or Community) and start telling a story around CRANN and its services.
- Create a Google business page for more visibility in Google searches and as another avenue to post about CRANN.
- Utilise existing social media channels further by sharing stories from across all CRANN organisations.
- Identify and reach out to social media influencers who can help spread the word about CRANN and its positive impact in the community.

Pay Per Click (PPC) Advertising

- Online ad campaigns targeting charities and childcare sector in order to extend reach and attract potential new clients to use financial services.

Offline / Other Marketing

- Networking events to generate new leads.
- Link with corporates for support with marketing and networking resources.
- Create one-page document to summarise strategic plan and executive summary for the purpose of marketing CRANN to external users (see suggested format in Appendix 1 and 2).

Blueprint for Change

We are recommending that CRANN segregates the responsibilities for the next steps. Using this proposal document the task by the Board is integral to allow CRANN to concentrate on the other recommendations.

CRANN management can concurrently explore the marketing of the existing finance service. The Board should also commit time to exploring the other funding source options which we have outlined in this document and may also explore the CSR recommendation.

With the funding gained by selling the existing finance framework, reinvestment can be focused on the resources that are currently stretched in CRANN and on the marketing plan provided in this document. As time becomes available, we then recommend the submission to Government of the proposal for the replication of the service nationwide.

So, in conclusion we recommend:

Promotion of Finance Service	Management
Marketing Plan	Management
Explore other Funding Sources	Management
Government Proposal	Management

Appendix

Appendix 1

Briefing Note

Crann Support Group (CRANN) is a community voluntary organisation working to improve and enhance the governance and operations of community childcare organisations (CCOs) and community voluntary social inclusion projects (CVSIPs) through the provision of shared business services.

CRANN is responsible for the administration of €6.2 M (as per 2018 audit figures) and maintain assets to the value of €5.6M. CRANN works within the principles of community development and also believes that by working together we can achieve more. Good community development is action that helps people to recognise and develop their own ability and potential and organise themselves to respond to problems and needs which they share. It supports the establishment of strong communities that control and use their assets to promote good governance and sustainability

A total of 20 CCOs & CVSIPs are members of CRANN and avail of some or all of our shared business services. These shared business services include:

- Management of community enterprise services including consultancy and program development
- Human Resource Management
- Finance Management preparation accounts to audit stage
- Education and Training
- Community Employment Scheme
- Catering
- Facilities Management including transport, maintenance, caretaking, and cleaning
- Procurement Management and Reception

CRANN have developed a strategic plan for the period 2019 – 2022.

Vision Statement

Community Childcare Organisations (CCOs) and Community Voluntary Social Inclusion Projects (CVSIPs) attain good governance, are sustainable, and deliver a high-quality service to their local communities.

Mission Statement

Community Childcare Organisations (CCOs) and Community Voluntary Social Inclusion Projects (CVSIPs) are supported by the provision of shared business services in the areas of business management and program development, human resource management, finance management, procurement, catering and facility management.

Purpose

CRANN works as a partnership with CCOs and CVSIPs, working together to improve and enhance the operations of these organisations and projects in their local communities.

CRANN is an independent company employing staff who work across the member CCOs and CVSIP's as part of a shared business services function. CRANN is the employer of some of the member CVSIPs with direct responsibility for their day to day management. Each CCO is an independent company and the employer of their core staff. CRANN has the responsibility for the management of 95% staff employed by CCOs independent companies.

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

Crann Support Group (CRANN) is a community voluntary organisation working to improve and enhance the governance and operations of community childcare organisations (CCOs) and community voluntary social inclusion projects (CVSIPs) through the provision of shared business services.

CRANN is responsible for the administration of €6.2 M (as per 2018 audit figures) and maintain assets to the value of €5.6M. CRANN works within the principles of community development and also believes that by working together we can achieve more. Good community development is action that helps people to recognise and develop their own ability and potential and organise themselves to respond to problems and needs which they share. It supports the establishment of strong communities that control and use their assets to promote good governance and sustainability.

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- Procurement Management and Reception

CRANN have developed this strategic plan for the period 2019 – 2022.

CRANN works towards the five national outcomes¹ for children, young people and adults in Ireland. These national outcomes promote that children, young people and adults are:

1. Are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing
2. Are achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development
3. Are safe and protected from harm
4. Have economic security and opportunity
5. Are connected, respected and contributing to their world.

CRANN works within CCO's towards attaining positive play-based learning. Babies, children and young people have access to safe, high quality, developmentally appropriate, integrated early learning and care (ELC) (and school aged childcare) which reflects diversity of need. Parents, families and communities are supported to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment for their children and young people. Children and young people are supported in their transitions to and through ELC settings and onwards to primary (and secondary) schooling.

CRANN works with CCO's to achieve standards as set out within Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education, developed by the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education on behalf of the **Department of Education and Skills**. Síolta is designed to define, assess and support the improvement of quality across all aspects of practice in early childhood care and education (ECCE) settings where children aged birth to six years are present. These settings include: Full and Part-time Daycare; Childminding; Sessional Services; and Infant classes in primary schools.

CRANN works with CCO's and CVSIP's towards and plays their part in attaining A Healthy Ireland (HI) where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility.

We believe that this strategic plan, with its accompanying operational plans, will assist our organisation in achieving our goals, implementing the various improvements, collectively have a positive impact on the lives of children, young people and adults.

Vision Statement

Community Childcare Organisations (CCOs) and Community Voluntary Social Inclusion Projects (CCSIPs) attain good governance, are sustainable, and deliver a high-quality service to their local communities.

Mission Statement

Community Childcare Organisations (CCOs) and Community Voluntary Social Inclusion Projects (CVSIPs) are supported by the provision of shared business services in the areas of business management and program development, human resource management, finance management, procurement, catering and facility management.

Purpose

CRANN works as a partnership with CCOs and CVSIPs, working together to improve and enhance the operations of these organisations and projects in their local communities.

CRANN is an independent company employing staff who work across the member CCOs and CVSIP's as part of a shared business services function. CRANN is the employer of some of the member CVSIPs with direct responsibility for their day to day management. Each CCO is an independent company and the employer of their core staff. CRANN has the responsibility for the management of 95% staff employed by CCOs independent companies.

Values and Principles

Our values are the following:

- **Integrity** By our actions being honest, truthful, moral and reliable.

- **Person centred** By being respectful of, and responsive to, the preferences, needs and values of children, young people, adults and their families and communities and our staff members who work with us.
- **Innovation** By having an open mind and supporting new ways from the community and voluntary sector to respond to the emerging needs of our communities and member organisations.
- **Inclusion** By embracing diversity and recognising that all community members have a right to be heard and participate, in processes that affect their lives.

Our principles in relation to CCOs are:

1. The child and young person's individuality, strengths, rights and needs are central in the provision of quality childhood experiences⁵.
2. Play is central to wellbeing, development and learning⁶.
3. The safety, welfare and wellbeing of all children and young people must be protected⁷.
4. The best interests of the child and young person are the primary consideration in decision making.
5. The ordinary needs of the child and young person and their family and community have to be met, as well as, their additional needs⁹.
6. Cooperation, communication and mutual respect is essential in the provision of services¹⁰.
7. Parent(s) and Guardian(s) are the primary carer of the child and young person and must be treated as equal partners.
8. Risks to child and young person, their Family and Community must be managed in ways that provide safety and a good quality of life
9. Communities are supported to be self-determining and making decisions that are right for them.

Our principles in relation to CVSIPs are:

1. That each person's individuality, strengths, rights and needs are central in the provision of the service.
2. The safety, welfare and wellbeing of each individual must be protected.
3. The best interests of each individual are the primary consideration in decision making.
4. The ordinary needs of the individual must be met, as well as, their additional needs.
5. Cooperation, communication and mutual respect is essential in the provision of services.
6. Risks to individual(s) must be managed in ways that provide safety and a good quality of life
7. Communities are supported to be self-determining and making decisions that are right for them.

2. CRANN Shared Business Services, Community Services Programme

CRANN provides shared business services supporting a more efficient method of delivering necessary ancillary services at an affordable cost for member CCOs and CVSIPs as follows:

Management of Community Enterprise Services including consultancy and program development

Management Services ensures CCOs and CVSIPs are managed in line with legislative policies and procedures while meeting the requirements of relevant funding organisations. CRANN ensures:

- *Good Governance:* Meetings are held individual Board of Directors (BODs) bi-monthly and management committees meet as required. CRANN provides day to day operational management of CCOs and CVSIPs.
- *Management Support:* CRANN are responsible for the day to day operation of CCOs and CVSIPs including supervision of senior staff and staff members in line with the strategic direction of the organisation or project.
- *Advisory consultancy services:* CCOs and CVSIPs are provided with advice and support when they are setting up or changing direction services in the local community in line with identified and changing needs and funding requirements.
- *Shared business services:* Leading out on shared business processes of benefit to organisations and social inclusion projects when promoting efficiency and effectiveness of shared services.
- *Program Development:* Development of innovative and evidence based best practice for service provision.
- *Funding:* Sourcing and completing applications for funding.
- *Advocacy:* Representing CCOs and CVSIPs at national and local fora such as Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DC&YA)-National Collaborative Forum for the Early Years Care and Education Sector including Early Years Forum for the Professionalisation of the Early Years Sector, County Childcare Committees (CCCs), National Childhood Network (NCN), Community Childcare Services. Other statutory agencies such as, the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) -Children and Young People Services Committee, the Drugs Task Force, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Department of Rural and Community Development, Department of Justice and Equality and the Health Service Executive

Human Resource Management

Human Resource Management provides support to 10 CCOs and 6 CVSIPs directly managed by the CRANN ensuring the organisations and social inclusion projects are compliant with employment legislation. In addition, 5 other CVSIPs are supported who require Human Resource (HR) support on an adhoc basis. As part of HR function, CRANN ensures:

- *Recruitment* – Development of the workforce within CCOs and CVSIPs; advertising job postings, sourcing candidates, screening applicants, conducting preliminary interviews and coordinating hiring with the Managers and Boards of Directors of the individual CCOs or CVSIPs.
- *Safety* – Supporting individual CCOs and CVSIPs to be compliant with the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and to increase awareness of their obligation to provide a safe working environment for employees.

- *Employee Relations* – Supporting CCOs and CVSIPs with strengthening the employer-employee relationship through measuring job satisfaction, employee engagement, collective bargaining and resolving workplace conflict.
- *Compensation and Benefits* – Supporting CCOs and CVSIPs to develop a competency-based pay scale that will assist in professionalising the sector.
- *Compliance* – Actively advising CCOs and CVSIPs to ensure their individual service is compliant with employment laws and are prepared at any time for an inspection from the Workplace Relations Commission. In addition, the HR function supports CCOs and CVSIPs to ensure their staff handbook and employment contracts are up to date.
- *Training and Development* – Support CCOs and CVSIPs by providing supervisors and managers with training on topics such as performance management, grievance and disciplinary procedures and how to handle employee relations matters.

Finance Management: preparation of accounts to audit stage

The Accounts Department offers a tailored bookkeeping service to 15 CCOs and CVSIPs. It prepares accounts to audit stage and specialise in the administration of financial returns for funding received. CRANN ensures finance sustainability and good governance for member CCOs and CVSIPs including;

- *Payroll*
- *Purchasing*
- *Sales*
- *Grant/funding applications.*
- *Administration of accounts:* Administration of accounts to audit stage
- *Budgeting: Income and Expenditure.* Implement, develop and monitor budgets. Including preparation of departmental returns.
- *Finance Analysis:* Conduct financial analyses quarterly and on an ad hoc basis. Help guide significant adjustments to affect savings and profit opportunities.
- *Risk Management:* Identify and analyse risks and opportunities. Identifying cost cutting measures in order to remain sustainable.
- *Finance Compliance:* Evaluate the compliance of financial systems, policies and processes in conjunction with accounting principles and the Company's Financial Procedure

Today the accounts department administers almost €7M on behalf of member CCOs and CVSIPs.

Education and Training

The dedicated Training Department ensures CRANNs commitment to working with CCOs and CVSIPs to ensure high quality standards are met in all areas of service provision. As part of the Education and Training function, CRANN has ensured a skilled workforce:

- *Childcare*: Staff members are qualified to deliver childcare at QQI standards, level 5, 6 and 7.
- *In-service training*: Staff members have ongoing in-service training according to identified need.
- *Health and Safety*: Staff members are skilled in dealing with child protection through Children First training. Staff members are skilled in their ongoing responsibilities in first aid and manual handling.
- *Supervision and Governance*: The Board and Managers are skilled in Governance and Supervisory Management.
- *Sourcing training* which cannot be provided in-service.

Community Employment Scheme

In partnership with the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, CRANN Sand its Member, Ballivor Community Childcare provide a dedicated high-quality Community Employment (CE) Scheme for CCOs and one for CVSIPs. As part of their function, CRANN and Ballivor Community Childcare ensures:

- Childcare as a Profession is highlighted.
- Training is provided to support the long term unemployed.
- Participants achieve a recognised qualification which equips them to avail of a professional career.
- Local CCOs in Co Meath are supported to deliver affordable quality childcare; Ballivor CC, Trim CC, Navan CC, Athboy CC, Kells CC, Kilmainhamwood CC, Baconstown CC, Duleek CC, Dunshaughlin CC, Laytown CC, Ratoath CC and Summerhill CC.
- Local CVSIPs in Co. Meath are supported to deliver quality services such as Trim Tidy Towns, Trim Charity Shops, Vincent DE Paul, River Rescue, Trim Family Resource Centre, the Heritage Project, Dunderry Parish, Trim Parish, Trim Town FC and Citizens Information and other Community activities.
- Participants are enabled to enhance and develop both their technical and personal skills which can be used in the workplace.

The scheme is responsible for a total of 111 participants:

- 83 participants in CCO's
- 29 participants in CVSIP's

Catering

Catering services are provided directly to 4 CCOs and indirectly to other member organisations. As part of catering function, CRANN ensures:

- Training: Caterers are trained to HACCP qualifications standards.
- *In service Training*: Members organisations avail of training in *Healthy Ireland Smart Start Training Programme* ensuring the provision of healthy, nutritional meals to children daily, improving the general health of children, while assisting to combat our ever-rising percentage of obese children in Ireland.
- *Children (530) are provided with healthy meals daily*, many of whom come from vulnerable and disadvantaged families within their local community.
- *Coordination and distribution of initiatives*: such as the *Food Cloud* for Member Organisations. This offers a fast and efficient way for businesses to donate surplus food to charities within their communities. Surplus food is food that is perfectly fit for human consumption but cannot be sold for a variety of reasons (e.g. fresh produce that will not be sold the next day, short dated product, slightly damaged packaging or mistakes in ordering). This food was used within the Community Childcare Organisations and Community Voluntary, Social Inclusion Projects but was also distributed to 80 families weekly within a highly deprived area in Co. Meath.

Facilities Management including Transport, Maintenance, Caretaking, and Cleaning

The Maintenance Team provide non-specialised maintenance services to 11 CCOs and CVSIPs. As part of facilities management function, the CRANN ensures:

- *Transport* is provided in a cost efficient and effective way according to the need of the member organisation.
- *Transport standards*: A fleet of vehicles are maintained and up to date according to the need of the member organisation.
- *Training*: Drivers have the appropriate qualification and ongoing training and support to provide the Transport service.
- *Premises standards*: Premises are altered according to new and changing needs of the facility that is cost effective.
- *Premises maintenance*: Premises are well maintained through general upkeep, painting and decorating.

- *Cleaning and Hygiene standards: Premises* are clean and hygienic.
- *Grounds maintenance: Grounds* are maintained through appropriate horticulture.
- *Custom build childcare equipment* is manufactured in a cost effective way.
- *Security of premises: Premises* are secured through caretaking. Alarms are procured and monitored appropriately for the need of the member organisation.

Procurement Management & Reception

Centralising buying reduces the cost per unit for products and services. This creates efficiencies reducing how much CCOs and CVSIPs pay in the long run for supplies and products and ensures sustainability. As part procurement management and reception function, CRANN ensures:

- *The employment of Receptionists* for member organisations. The receptionists play an active role in procurement management service.
- *Central buying prices for goods* e.g. food, cleaning products, office and stationary products.
- *Central buying of utilities* such as energy, heating, waste disposal.
- *Central buying of services* such as accountants, auditors and solicitors.
- *Central buying of equipment* such as toys and childcare related furnishing.

CRANN provides shared business services to a total of 20 CCOs & CVSIPs as follows:

MEMBERS OF THE CRANN SUPPORT GROUP CLG

Ballivor Community Childcare CLG

Ballivor Community Childcare CLG Community Employment Scheme

Ballivor National School

Crann Support Group CLG Community Employment Scheme

Crann Support Group CLG Community Service Programme

Duleek Community Childcare CLG

East Coast Family Resource Centre & Laytown Resource House

Kilmainhamwood Childcare CLG

Lagore Road Community Childcare CLG
Meath Community Drug and Alcohol Response
Meath Job Club
Navan Community Childcare CLG
Meath Travellers Workshop CLG
Poppintree Early Education Centre CLG
Simonstown Childcare Facility CLG
South Meath Area Response to Teenagers
Springboard Services Navan CLG
Summerhill Community Childcare CLG
Trim Community Childcare CLG
Ronanstown Community Childcare CLG

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