

Summary of Roundtable Notes, Breakfast Club 14 December 2022

Here were the key take-aways from the roundtable discussions. They have been broken up into the various themes that emerged.

Engaging young leaders

- If you fail to engage young leaders coming into the sector you won't retain them, something which will exacerbate the already dangerously low number of people working in the sector.
- Not everyone is an extrovert, but the introverted or quieter people who can sometimes have the most innovative ideas.
- It is imperative for senior leaders to maintain '*servant leadership*'. By serving young leaders and employees as a servant leader, servant leaders can foster positive growth in their organisations.
- Engaging new leaders with new innovative ideas leads to positive change in the third sector. New leaders can reinvigorate tried and tested ideas in new ways, leading to more forward-thinking and solution-driven organisations.

How to engage the next generation?

- Educational mandates that engage young people from a 'grassroots' level. Engaging them from a primary level age all the way through to third level on the work and societal benefits that result from work carried out in the third sector.
- A multi-faceted approach – Engaging young leaders of different age, gender, ethnic and religious backgrounds.
- A strong digital approach. Young people devour information primarily through a digital lense. Providing information through the channels that appeal to young people will enable them to obtain information that will inspire them to become future leaders in the sector.
- Engaging passionate people – Leadership is contagious.

Recruitment

- the difficulty recruiting and retaining young future leaders in organisations because of pay and inability to provide more senior roles for them to progress into
- There is a need for the introduction of a complete overhaul of the recruitment process, particularly the antiquated model of '*job descriptions*'.
- Using buzzwords like 'strong' or 'powerful' in job responsibilities and requirements can conjure masculine connotations, something which certainly won't appeal to young female leaders
- Job descriptions are sometimes not accessible to people with disabilities. There is a need to include elements such as environmental factors and possible flexible working arrangements.
- The introduction of something like video stories in job descriptions which can accurately depict the role in question can inform a potential young leader of the exact requirements of the role.

Mentorship

- There is a need for more of a structured space in the non-profit sector for leaders to become mentors and for young professionals
- There was a lot of reception to the presence of graduates at the event. The senior leaders were very receptive to it and supported the idea of creating space for these young professionals as it benefits the organisations for succession planning and for the confidence of the young professionals
- The importance of creating environments in workplaces that are conducive to staff development. By fostering an ethos within an organisation that encourages consistent reflection and feedback, young people would feel more at ease.

- It is key that feedback and mentoring within an organisation leads to actual change. While listening to a young person is important, the value of this exercise is undermined if it doesn't translate into action.
- Use reverse-mentoring as an opportunity to learn
- You learn a lot about yourself as mentor. We grow ourselves by learning what others need to develop
- Knowing and becoming aware of weaknesses as well as strengths in ourselves and others.

Diversity

- The importance of allies within organisations – e.g., having white allies in a company that is predominantly black. One attendee shared a story about his wife moving from a predominantly male company to a predominantly female organisation – both organisations were problematic in their own ways. Diversity ensures meetings do not become echo chambers, and that alternative visions can be presented and considered.
- We discussed anonymising applications so that candidates are assessed purely on their skills / qualifications and our unconscious bias does not play a part in the initial screening of applications. One individual reported that they have seen this in action and while it is challenging, it has been very successful.
- We considered the potential impact of pairing young people with Board members who would be happy to mentor young people; and acknowledged the power of an intergenerational community.