

Leadership Journeys: Tracking the impact and challenge of the Top Management Programme

Year four final report

—

**Dr Martin McCracken, Mark McCrory, Professor Heather Farley
and Professor Marie McHugh, Ulster University**

Contents

Acknowledgements	3
The Leadership Journeys research study	4
Data collection	5
The retrospective study	5
The longitudinal study	5
Key findings: Leadership Journeys	9
Introduction	9
Experience of TMP	9
Outcomes of TMP	12
Competence as a leader	17
Impact of TMP	19
Conclusions	25
Appendix 1 – Detailed findings: surveys (TMP and comparator group)	26
Participants at programme outset	27
Participant outcomes	40
Appendix 1a. Survey measures	63
Motivation to learn	63
Developmental readiness	63
Manager support	64
Leader identity	64
Leader efficacy	65
Leader effectiveness	66
Appendix 1b. Survey reliabilities	67
Time 1	67
Scale reliabilities at Time 2 and Time 3	67
Time 2	68
Time 3	69

Appendix 2 – Detailed findings: qualitative interviews (TMP 39 – 43)	70
a. Decision to attend TMP	70
b. TMP experience and suggestions for programme improvement	73
c. Post programme issues	90
Appendix 3 – Detailed findings: story-based evaluation	104
Introduction	104
Background and rationale	105
Participant record and learning	107
Alumni reactions	109
Colleague reactions	112
Findings	115
Innovative leadership practice – challenging convention	115
Promoting collective leadership practice	118
Communication	119
Leading staff through change	123
Engagement and collaboration	125
References	134

Acknowledgements

The research team would like to acknowledge the support of Advance HE in funding this project.

We would particularly like to thank the following members of the Leadership Foundation (now Advance HE), for their continued support and guidance throughout the project:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| + Dr Amanda Aldercotte | + Gary Loke |
| + Tracey Bell-Reeves | + Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck |
| + Dr Natasha Codioli McMaster | + Lauren O’Keeffe |
| + Jade Francis | + Professor Fiona Ross |
| + Helen Goreham | + Melissa Ruxton |
| + Dr Judith Harris | + Carla Startin |
| + Dr Lesly Huxley | + Jack Tidy |
| + Kyra Ingrao | + Will Wade |
| + Steve Llyod | |

We would also like to thank the advisory group for their direction and feedback, namely:

- + Professor John Arnold (Professor of Organisational Behaviour, Loughborough University)
- + Professor Rosemary Deem OBE (Vice Principal [Education] and Dean of Doctoral School, Royal Holloway, University of London)
- + Professor Bruce Macfarlane (Professor of Education and Head of School of Education, University of Bristol)
- + Stephen Marston (Vice-Chancellor, University of Gloucestershire)
- + Professor Gerry McGivern (Professor of Organisational Analysis, Warwick Business School)

Thanks to Dr Karen McGuigan for her support with the statistical analysis.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge the time and support offered by the research participants including the programme facilitation team, programme alumni and their nominated colleagues.

The Leadership Journeys research study

Advance HE's Top Management Programme (TMP) has been running for 16 years and counts more than 800 of the sector's leaders among its alumni. In 2016, Advance HE commissioned a research study, Leadership Journeys: tracking the challenge and impact of the Top Management Programme, to investigate the impact and outcomes from TMP in terms of what such a development intervention means for higher education (HE) as a whole.

This research is being conducted by a team from the Ulster University Business School. The study and its design are underpinned by established leadership development literature, particularly Dopson et al's (2016) review of the literature within higher education. In addition, the transfer literature (see McCracken, 2004 and McCracken et al, 2012), with reference to Baldwin and Ford's (1988) original model of transfer, was used to develop the research objectives and resulting methodology:

RO1: Map the career trajectories of selected TMP alumni to date

RO2: Determine the experiences of participants on the TMP (alumni, current and new as at October 2016)

RO3: Explore whether/how the TMP has contributed to the leadership journey of alumni

RO4: Track the current and new TMP cohorts from October 2016 to October 2019, to include career pathways, aspirations, skills, characteristics and work-life balance

RO5: Identify the types of influence/impact TMP alumni have made in their HE institutions

The project is broken down into retrospective and longitudinal studies.

The findings from the retrospective study were published in the Year 1 report and summarised in a Leadership Insights report (McCracken et al, 2018). The Year 2 report was published in January 2019 with Year 3 published in January 2020. This document details the findings from the completed longitudinal study (which ran until September 2020).

Data collection

The retrospective study

The retrospective element of the study focused on three key elements:

- + One-to-one, one-hour interviews with a random stratified sample of contactable Top Management Programme (TMP) alumni. At the close of this section of the study a total of 50 interviews with TMP alumni were completed.
- + An online alumni questionnaire, sent to all contactable alumni who had not yet been invited to take part in the retrospective study. The questionnaire was live between February and March 2017 and elicited a response rate of 19% (n=95).
- + In February 2017 the team contacted vice-chancellors to explore what motivates these key decision makers in HE institutions to sponsor their senior management colleagues to participate in development programmes such as the TMP. At the close of this section of the study, interviews with 12 sponsors were completed.

Using the in-depth information from the interviews along with the broader data regarding the TMP experience, the team were able to analyse and draw conclusions on the challenge and impact of the programme. The findings were presented in the Year 1 report and summarised in the Leadership Insights publication.

In addition to the publication of Leadership Insights, dissemination of the retrospective study has taken place through conference presentations, including forming the basis for a workshop at Advance HE's 2018 Leadership Summit: Wisdom, Grit and Compassion, alongside a series of pieces on the then Leadership Foundation's (now Advance HE's) blog.

The longitudinal study

The longitudinal study involved five TMP cohorts:

- + TMP 39 (October 2016 – April 2017)
- + TMP 40 (April 2017 – October 2017)
- + TMP 41 (October 2017 – April 2018)
- + TMP 42 (April 2018 – September 2018)
- + TMP 43 (October 2018 – April 2019).

Five key forms of data collection were used in the study:

a) Three-wave surveys

Each participant in the identified cohort(s) was invited to take part in three online surveys. The first survey was sent on the orientation day of the programme, the second three months after completion of the programme and the third 12 months post-participation.

The surveys provided an assessment of the requested variables (RO4) as well as participants' perceptions of the programme (contributing to RO2). A key feature of the three- and 12-month post-programme surveys was to assess the ongoing transfer of learning back into their institutions (including any identified barriers) given our view that such transfer is the primary leverage point for individual, team and organisational outcomes to be achieved. The open questions in the three-month post-programme survey provided an optional, abbreviated form of typical 'learning journal' questions, which assessed: the most significant learning from the TMP; how participants had applied/planned to apply the learning to their work; and any barriers they had experienced in applying the learning. By making these questions optional, it was hoped that participants would feel able to share as much as they were comfortable with. In response to feedback from the TMP facilitation team, this had been removed as a formal 'learning journal' intervention, consequently reducing the guidance for completion (in terms of expectation around depth of reflection, etc) and abbreviating the questions. However, the nature of the participant experience was not significantly changed while still generating sufficient quality data on outcomes.

The survey findings from all three surveys (programme outset, three months post- and 12 months post-programme) are presented in this report for participants from TMP 39-43.

b) Qualitative interviews

The initial plan was to conduct qualitative telephone interviews with a sample of five participants per cohort to help build on the surveys and obtain in-depth insights as participants progressed (RO2-4), including the conscious choices they made to transfer the learning back into their institution. This mixed methodology approach allowed the findings to be confirmed and collaborated (Gilpin-Jackson and Bushe, 2007) and responded to calls (Burke and Hutchins, 2007) for variety in data collection when studying transfer. Unfortunately due to participant access issues we were only able to interview a total of 11 TMP alumni, one year from their completion of the programme (four from TMP 39, one from TMP 40 and two each from TMP 41-43). The findings from these interviews are detailed in this report.

c) Story-based evaluation

The original tender requested consideration of innovative qualitative methods. We therefore proposed the incorporation of a qualitative 360 feedback process which has subsequently been renamed a story-based evaluation (SBE).

During the TMP, participants complete a 360-degree instrument and, similar to this process, the story-based evaluation approach required TMP alumni to each select a small sample of colleagues where each colleague was invited to describe at least three, but no more than six, leadership stories concerning the participant, since the completion of the programme. The leadership stories should be real situations in which they observed the TMP alumnus evidence the expected outcomes ie leadership to improve institutional performance, shaping institutional strategy, bringing about change; and/or working collaboratively for the benefit of the institution. These stories were collated and analysed to identify application of the TMP learning and influence on practice per participant and collective group (RO2 and 5). This was followed by an interview with the TMP alumni to look at the leadership stories reported, their recollection of them and to determine how they felt the TMP had influenced their practice. Ultimately this element of the research was designed to rethink how we might evaluate leadership development programmes more generally and to uncover the often intangible and more emergent benefits and effects of a programme like the TMP.

The original plan was for the story-based evaluation to be conducted with a sample of two participants per cohort. A pilot of this process was conducted with four recent TMP alumni which subsequently informed the longitudinal study. These findings were presented in the Year 2 report. Unfortunately, despite several requests, we were only able to secure the cooperation of one further alumnus. However, despite this, we feel that given the volume of data collected from this SBE exercise some useful findings can be put forward.

d) Comparator study

To fully understand the impact of the programme (RO3 and 5), it is necessary to study others in similar positions who have not participated. With agreement from Advance HE and drawing on the experience of similar studies, we diverged from our initial plans to recruit multiple, small comparator groups. Rather, we recruited one large comparator group using a population of suitable comparators drawn from the Advance HE database.

A comparator group who would have been eligible for the TMP but had not yet enrolled were recruited in Year 3 to the study. These comparator participants were identified from the Advance HE database. A complete dataset for Time 1 and Time 2, combining the TMP participants and the comparator group, was analysed to explore if any statistically significant differences existed. The analysis of the data is presented in this report alongside part a.

Limitations

Leadership Journeys is an ambitious, mixed methods longitudinal study using multiple data sources and therefore some limitations were unavoidable. The biggest issue faced by the researchers was low response rates, especially for the comparator survey. Although a comprehensive Advance HE database was used to identify a suitable population, there was uncertainty surrounding those who were invited to complete the survey and if they were the best 'comparable others' to those who actually undertook the TMP. In many respects those who actively seek to participate in a leadership programme such as TMP may have a very different perception about their leadership qualities and potential in comparison to those who have decided not to undertake such a programme.

In terms of the other data collection methods, the attrition in completion rates over the three-wave survey points as well as the lower than desired uptake in post 12-month interviews and participation in the story-based evaluation element of data collection was disappointing. However, the research team feel that when combined, a large and robust dataset has been collected and the lower-than-desired response rates do not substantially compromise the evaluation of the TMP.

Key findings: Leadership Journeys

Introduction

This study used mixed methods research to look at the experiences of those who had completed the programme in the past (the retrospective element) and appreciate the effects for participants in terms of their leadership practice and career journeys (the longitudinal element). To help fully understand the impact of the programme, data has also been collected from a comparator group of senior HE leaders who have not participated in TMP. The findings from the retrospective study were published in the Year 1 report and summarised in the Year 1 Leadership Insights report. The Year 2 and Year 3 reports and associated Leadership Insights summarised the pilot of our story-based evaluation approach as well an oversight of the survey and initial interview findings from the longitudinal study (running until 2020) as it nears completion.

This key findings section of the final report further discusses the key overall themes which have emerged from the completed set of evaluation surveys and interviews with recent participants in the programme – cohorts TMP 39-43. The success of any leadership or management development programme can be distilled down to three central aspects:

- 1 the participants' *experience* of the programme
- 2 the *outcomes* that have accrued in terms of enhanced skills and competencies
- 3 the *impact* that participation has had for the leaders in terms of their careers and overall development.

These three key issues are explored below. It should be noted that there are three further appendices which provide detailed analysis of the survey data (Appendix 1), the qualitative interview data (Appendix 2) and the story-based evaluation data (Appendix 3).

Experience of TMP

Satisfaction with TMP

The most familiar way that evaluation of training or development is undertaken is through the administration of a survey immediately after the conclusion of formal learning events. In this study, as well as gaining an insight into the participants' immediate reaction directly after the event, they were then asked to complete surveys three and 12 months following completion of the programme. Of the 58 participants who completed these surveys from cohorts TMP 39 through to TMP 43, it was encouraging to note that all but two reported being either satisfied or very satisfied with the programme overall, with the majority (69%) being very satisfied. Indicative of the positive experiences that they had, 49 participants briefly explained their rating of TMP through an open response option in the survey, and seven key themes emerged linked to programme satisfaction:

- + The opportunity for networking with other participants and colleagues from different institutions (n=24)
- + Learning opportunities (variety of opportunities, breadth of topics, specific mentions related to the coaching made available and the overall quality of facilitators) (n=18)
- + The opportunity to improve leadership; learn new material about leadership; build personal confidence and develop identity as a leader (n=15)
- + Exposure to other leadership styles in HE; other institutions; the international trip and guest speakers (n=11)
- + Quality of the programme (structure; organisation; specific mentions regarding the 'high quality' and 'excellence of the course') (n=9)
- + Opportunity to reflect / provision of space (n= 8)
- + Their impact group / action learning experience (n=6).

When questions were posed more specifically about the TMP structure and range of activities during the interviews, the skills of the facilitators in creating an open and honest environment were highlighted. For example, one TMP 40 respondent, making specific reference to the coaching element, simply felt that the facilitators were “second to none”, while a TMP 39 interviewee stated that he was “very impressed by the amount of wisdom that [he] was offered in terms of the coaching”. There was also widespread satisfaction with the structure of the programme, with several commenting on how the sessions had a logical progression allowing participants to build knowledge incrementally over the duration of the programme. A quote from a TMP 39 interviewee clearly represents this viewpoint: “appreciated the assessments that they did right at the beginning ...a 360-degree assessment, they didthis coloured wheel ... joint discussions around that, we talked altogether, not just as an individual ... all very helpful.”

Other interviewees remarked on the value they got from the simulation and role play exercises within the context of the safe and supportive environment that had been created during the programme events. The TMP 40 interviewee paid such activities high praise, noting that the simulation “couldn’t [be] match[ed] in Harvard”. Talks from vice-chancellors and other experts were also highly valued allowing participants to “see [leadership] in action and validate that against our own views”. Many also spoke fondly of the international trips they attended being “great” or in the case of one, something that could “never be replicated” for its power to increase exposure to different HE contexts.

Programme challenge

Returning to the survey responses, 59% of participants (regardless of gender, with no statistically significant differences between males and females) felt the programme was appropriately challenging while 34% felt it was very challenging. Interestingly, the remaining 7% felt the programme was not challenging at all. When this issue of programme challenge was explored in the interviews, participants felt the actual “theoretical” content of the TMP programme was not particularly challenging or “difficult”, but it was more emotionally challenging. A key comment made by one of the interviewees (TMP 42) which ultimately summed up the challenge aspect of the programme, came when she noted that “You can make it as challenging as you want”. This was an insightful comment in many ways, as in order to get the full benefits from this programme one has to embrace the opportunities it offers, move out of your “comfort zone” and take the journey of critical self-reflection. However, ultimately, challenge is a rather subjective issue and an effective summary of this was given by an interviewee from the most recent (TMP 43) cohort, which illustrates that the challenge issue is both complex and multidimensional:

“To be honest, I didn’t find it challenging at all. Well, that’s not true that I didn’t find it challenging. I found some aspects of it difficult. So, role play, for example, I find difficult but can see why it’s a good learning tool. I am completely open to new experiences so for me, this is what this was about, it was just going out and learning as much as I could. So, there were a lot of things about myself that were reinforced by the programme. And then there were a lot of things as I said at the beginning that I was given confidence about that were ok. There was also quite a lot of good critical feedback about things that I need to think about, so hence reflection, giving others the opportunity to shine ... it wasn’t not challenging, if you see what I mean? It was for me at the right level. Nearly everything we did I thought was great. ... So I didn’t find it particularly challenging but that’s not to say that there isn’t challenge. It’s not to say that it’s not challenging enough, if you know what I mean?”

Given the above and throughout the interviews, it would be fair to say that the predominant finding regarding challenge was that the TMP does offer the context and a wide suite of activities, but like many aspects linked to HRD and leadership development activities, personal choice is at the heart of the issue and to quite an extent, what you get out of it is very dependent on what you are prepared to put in.

Direct support

However, for participants to get the full benefits of development programmes like TMP, they should not be the sole translator of their leadership development experiences back into work. Consequently, involving participants’ direct managers in leadership development is an established determinant of successful leadership development. Disappointingly, manager or sponsor support was found to be low across the TMP cohorts and this is something that the researchers feel could be examined going forward. Why do managers at this senior level not engage more with the participants to support their leadership journey? Do they feel this is their place or role? Does this reflect structural and/or institutional characteristics?

Key findings linked to programme experience

- + The composition of the group and diversity in terms of HE sector and institutions is a crucial element of TMP participant satisfaction and must be carefully managed .
- + The TMP programme appears to be calibrated correctly for most participants in terms of challenge. Being able to reflect and think introspectively has been key in all of the data collected to date. Participants valued the opportunity to think in such a way and appreciated the creation of a very honest and open environment where all stakeholders (TMP participants, facilitators and external speakers) approached activities in a collegiate way.
- + Participants were very satisfied with the programme overall and with the main aspects of the programme including the simulations, coaching, vice-chancellor meetings, international trips and impact groups. However, the real value of these activities is linked to the debriefing process where time is given to reflect about how the contextual issues are relevant to participants.
- + How best to engage participants' direct line managers and sponsors into the programme design is an area for review, not just in relation to the programme team but also for the participants themselves.

Outcomes of TMP

In terms of specific outcomes, four main elements were assessed through the surveys with participants, including self-awareness; leader identity; leader efficacy; and perceived competence as a leader. The key findings relating to each of these are discussed below.

Self-awareness

Self-awareness is considered to be fundamental if leaders are to effectively perform their role. In the survey administered at three months post-programme completion (Time 2) it was clear that participants believed TMP had made a considerable impact on all aspects of self-awareness considered in the surveys. This was consistent across TMP cohorts (ie TMP 39 through to TMP 43). In response to the question on the survey 'Increased awareness of how I behave and work', the vast majority of participants reported that the greatest amount of development had accrued for them in this area. Interestingly, when gender was factored into the consideration of self-awareness, it was found that males reported higher development of self-awareness scores than females, although this difference was not statistically significant (the small sample size must be borne in mind when considering statistical significance).

When we asked about gains from the programme in the interviews, the issue of self-awareness was prevalent for many. Most notably, awareness and confidence were boosted in the impact groups when participants were exposed to their peers. For example, a TMP 42 alumnus noted that peer to peer learning allowed others to “ask you questions and you give different perspectives”, while another from TMP 41 emphasised the “open, honest and confidential sharing” from fellow participants. It is important to note that several interviewees from across the more recent cohorts were impressed by the levels of honesty and collegiality that were created in their groups, which helped to build awareness as well as other skills and outcomes. As a TMP 42 interviewee observed: “I felt out of my depth ... the TMP ... was a big component part of a realisation, [its] been really helpful for me in terms of reflection and being able to be more objective ... that increased objectivity has been fantastic.”

Leader identity

Leader identity is defined as the extent to which a person views him or herself as a leader and is thought to be especially important in the development of leadership skills. Taking TMP 39 through to TMP 43 as one group, leader identity was largely unchanged between the surveys distributed at Time 1 (programme outset) and Time 2 (three months post-programme) but by Time 3 (12 months post-programme), leader identity had increased by 13% overall, which was a statistically significant difference.

A comparator group of HE leaders who would have been eligible for the TMP but had not yet enrolled were recruited in Year 3 to the study. This comparator group completed surveys at Time 1 and Time 3 within which period a number of measures were completed that were consistent with those completed by the TMP participants: one of which was leader identity. Leader identity for the comparator group increased by 5% over this 18-month period and this increase in leader identity for the comparator group was not statistically significant. Leader identity development for both groups over 18 months is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Leader identity development over 18 months

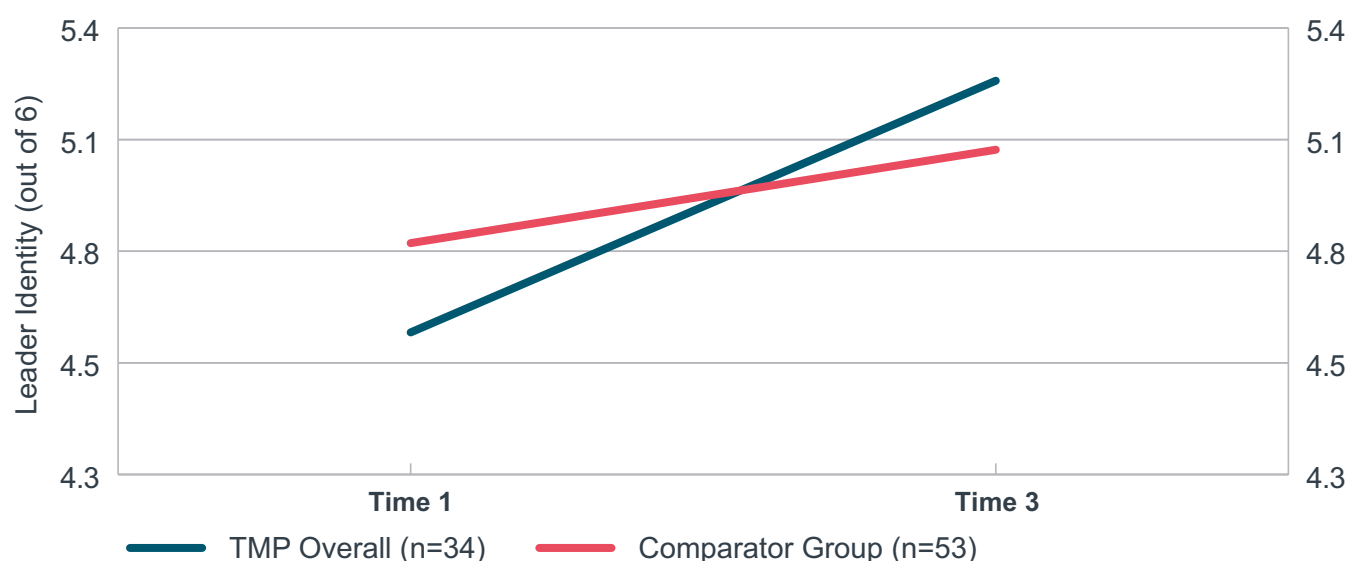
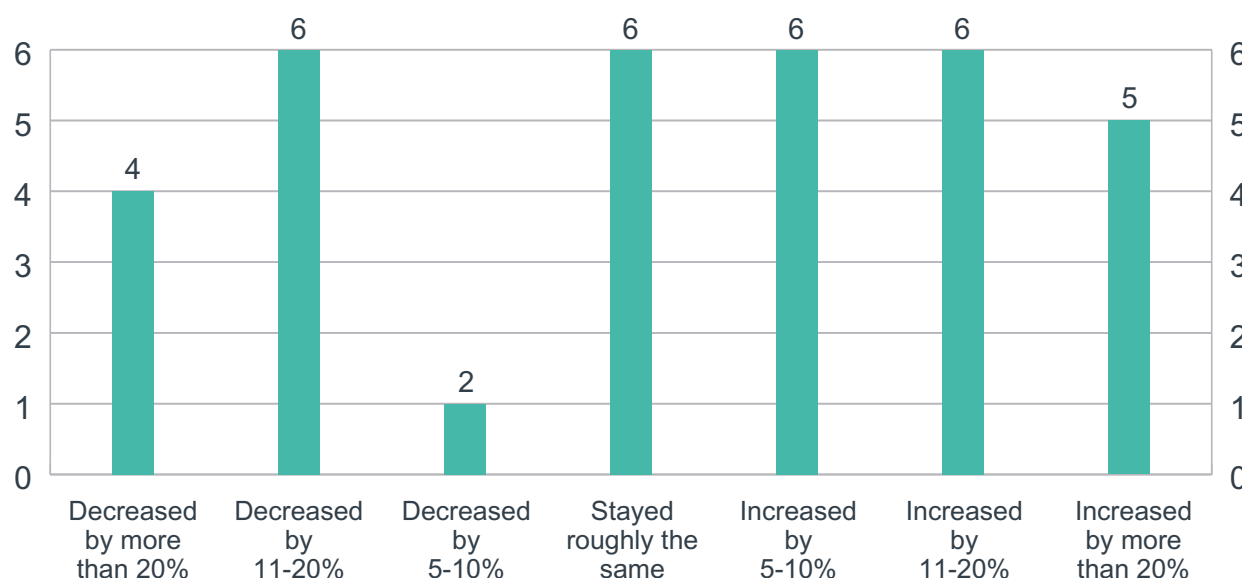


Figure 2. Change in leader identity for TMP participants from Time 1 to Time 2 (n=34)

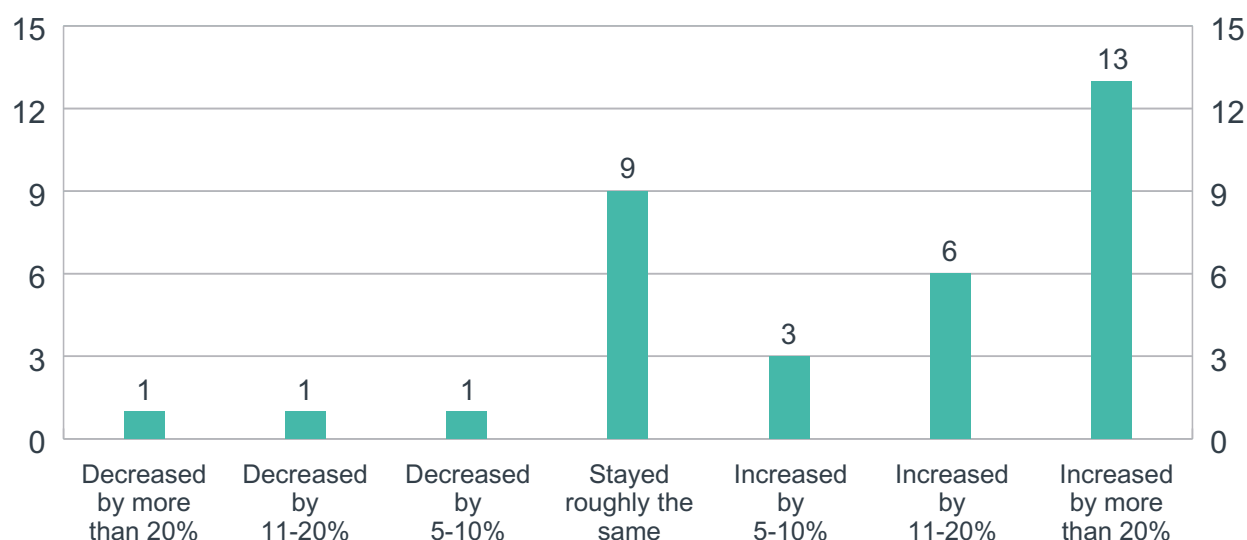


However, looking more closely at the individual TMP participants, the effect that TMP completion has on leader identity may not be as straightforward as it initially appears. A lower leader identity was reported by 32% of the TMP participants at Time 2 than at Time 1 as shown in figure 2.

TMP participants seem to evaluate their identity as a leader during the programme and, for some participants, identity was reported as actually decreasing during this time. This might be due to the programme triggering ‘identity violations’ which initially destabilised participants’ sense of self followed by ‘identity work’ to reconstruct a stronger leader identity, similar to that found by McGivern et al (2015). In the following nine months, of the 11 participants whose identity as leaders decreased from Time 1 to Time 2, three subsequently improved but remained below the level they reported at Time 1, three returned to the level as reported at Time 1 and five increased above the level from Time 1. Figure 3 shows the change in leader identity from Time 1 to Time 3 for all the participants.

An interesting gender difference also emerged in relation to leader identity and it is worth noting that this was the only statistically significant gender difference found in the data. At Time 1, no difference was found in leader identity for males and females. At Time 2, on average males reported lower leader identity scores than females. However, this difference was not large enough to be statistically significant. At Time 3, leader identity increased for both genders in comparison to Time 2 but males again reported lower leader identity scores than females. This difference was found to be statistically significant.

Figure 3. Change in leader identity for TMP participants from Time 1 to Time 3



There is a difference in the development of leader identity for male and female participants, with leader identity for males actually decreasing through the programme before eventually developing. This might link to the greater development of self-awareness for male participants as reported above.

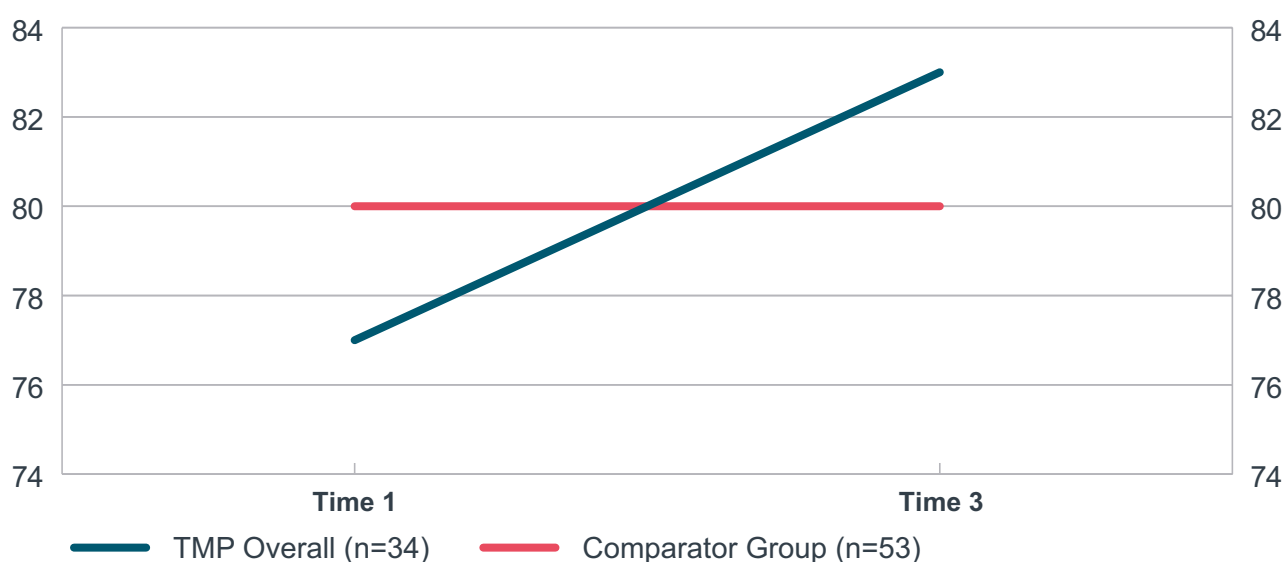
These interesting survey findings were further elaborated on during the interviews where observations were made about how the TMP experience helped participants to affirm personal views about themselves as leaders. For example, when we asked about why alumni wanted to participate in the programme it was clear that being able to understand oneself as a leader was one of the key motivators. As one of the TMP 43 cohort noted, it is all about a “personal journey” which could lead to better understanding of herself to ultimately “extend that really to be a better leader”. For others, TMP interactions were a chance to hold “a kind of a mirror” to oneself and explore the kind of leader that you were. Therefore, we had participants noting how the experience had reinforced their views about the kind of leaders that they were with comments such as “values-based”, “open and fair”, “empowered” or “inclusive”. For many, the experience appeared to reinforce their perceptions with one TMP 39 respondent noting how it felt that “[TMP] reinforced those leadership roles in the way that I operate, and I think it almost gave me a stronger permission to be myself in terms of that environment.” Similarly, another TMP 39 interviewee reflected on how she could now appreciate that although her leadership approach might be “different to other people’s” she could also now “better appreciate where I was different and the strengths and weaknesses of that”.

Leader efficacy (confidence)

Leadership efficacy is broadly defined as the level of confidence in the knowledge, skills and abilities associated with a leadership role. Across TMP 39 to TMP 43, there was an increase of 4% in leader efficacy between the surveys at Time 1 and Time 2 and 9% between Time 1 and 3. These differences were statistically significant.

Leader efficacy for the comparator group was also measured at Time 1 and Time 3 and it remained consistent. Leader efficacy for both groups over 18 months is illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Leader efficacy development over 18 months



The TMP participants' leader efficacy was lower than that of the comparator group at Time 1 and this difference was statistically significant. Conversely, TMP participants' leader efficacy was higher than that of the comparator group at Time 3 and this difference was also statistically significant.

Leader efficacy across the TMP cohorts increased during the programme and was followed by a similar increase in the year post-programme. However, as with leader identity, reported leader efficacy may actually decrease for some individuals during leader development while increasing for others, although this appeared to be much less pronounced for leader efficacy and only observable at the individual level of analysis.

None of the differences between male and female participants at Times 1, 2 or 3 for leader efficacy were statistically significant.

Linked to the above survey results, it is fair to say that one of the most important findings from the interviews was linked to the issue of enhanced efficacy and confidence. Practically every one of the 11 participants we interviewed spoke about the enhanced self-confidence gained as a result of the

experience of TMP. For many, often the biggest motivation for enrolling on the TMP was to allow them to compare themselves against peers in the HE sector who held similar or higher senior leadership roles. This unique opportunity appeared to allow (or even encourage) participants to make an assessment about their own abilities, it provided valuable insights and, for many, it seemed to really boost their self-confidence and belief that they could operate at such levels. As can be seen from the appendix, which outlines the qualitative interviews in detail, we could have included many quotes to illustrate this boost in confidence, but the following four sum up the position:

“...there were a lot of things as I said at the beginning that I was given confidence about that were ok.”

(TMP 43)

“Yes, it’s certainly given me more confidence, that self-awareness has led to more self-confidence really ... taking on being the dean international for the college and I think one of the biggest things it did for me was help me kind of have the confidence to say actually, I don’t have to be, I don’t need to be head of school ... I don’t think I’d have had the confidence to do that before.”

(TMP 39)

“Did the TMP help me with that? Probably. Certainly, the ambition and the confidence to take that on ... Being proactive is a key factor I think in terms of making things happen, you know, ...yeah, I tried to push through a whole load of changes ... So, I guess that tied back to a few things that were within the TMP programme.”

(TMP 41)

“... down the senior management route ... one of the goals was to try and test that, ... which way did I wanna go. I tested it with senior management and my ultimate goal is to be a VC.”

(TMP 43)

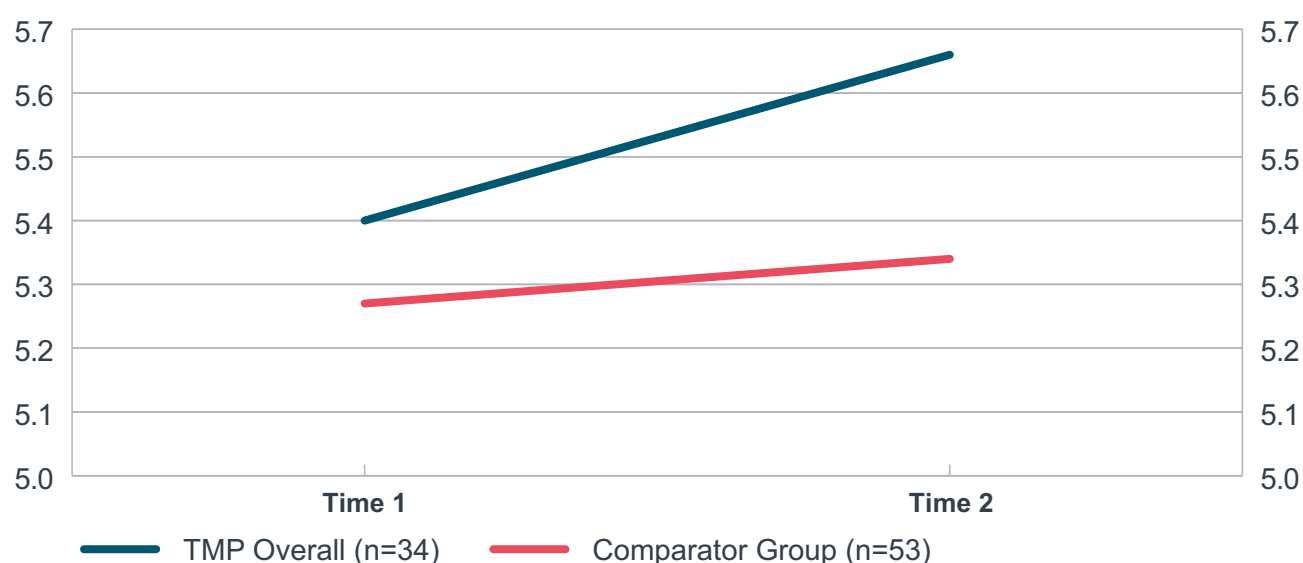
However, as noted above when the key survey results were shown, for some, leader efficacy may also have been impacted negatively, and in the case of one of the interviewees this appeared to be the case. This TMP 41 participant admitted that “If you think about my experience really which was I lost a bit of self-confidence through the programme ...” When we followed up on this it would appear that receiving lower than expected 360-degree feedback scores illustrated that for him there was useful “learning ... but what you’re learning is that you’re not as good as you think you are. And that is very hard learning!”

Competence as a leader

At Surveys 1 and 3, participants were asked to rate their competence in the seven areas developed for this survey, based on characteristics that are consistently mentioned within the literature of HE leadership at senior levels (ie dean, pro vice-chancellor, etc) and which also map to the TMP intended outcomes. Participants across each of the TMP cohorts reported a 5% increase overall, which was statistically significant.

Leader effectiveness for the comparator group was also measured at Time 1 and Time 3 and it increased by 1%, which was not statistically significant. Leader effectiveness for both groups over 18 months is illustrated in Figure 5 below:

Figure 5. Leader effectiveness over 18 months



In contrast to leader identity and leader efficacy, TMP participants' leader effectiveness was slightly higher than that of the comparator group at Time 1, although this difference was not statistically significant. The difference had increased by Time 3 for TMP participants and was statistically significant.

Differences between male and female TMP participants on leader effectiveness at Times 1 or 3 were not statistically significant.

Key findings linked to outcomes of TMP

- + Surveys and interviews indicate that TMP has a positive impact on all four outcomes measured – self-awareness; identity as a leader, confidence as a leader and competence as a leader.
- + Statistically significant improvements in identity as a leader, confidence as a leader and competence as a leader were found for TMP participants but not for the comparator group.
- + One of the most interesting findings illustrated that TMP participants identify as leaders at programme outset and their identity develops over time but this does not really take effect until the year after TMP completion.
- + Leader identity is the only area in which we found a gender difference with male participants particularly going through a re-evaluation of their identities during TMP, possibly in line with an increased level of self-awareness.

- + Confidence develops during the programme but, again, is more pronounced in the year after the programme.
- + In taking the above together, TMP would seem to have a developmental impact for participants, particularly post-programme. Consequently, there may be merit in considering post-programme developmental support and/or mentoring for TMP participants. Presently, post-programme support is limited to impact groups continuing to meet/communicate voluntarily which, according to findings from the retrospective element of this study, may not always happen.

Impact of TMP

To help assess the impact of TMP, two main data collection techniques were used, namely the learning journal responses measured in the survey at Time 2 and, in more detail, through the qualitative interviews held with TMP participants from cohorts 39-43 around one year after they had formally completed the programme. The preceding sections illustrate that these interviewees elaborated on both their experience on TMP and how the programme had developed effective outcomes in terms of leadership values, behaviours, skills and competence. In the interviews we probed for examples illustrating how the TMP experience had impacted on their leadership behaviours and activities when they got back to their universities.

Confidence to practice “new” leadership behaviours and skills

In the learning journal section of the survey at Time 2, participants were asked to comment on the impact and application of learning or their intention to apply the learning from TMP going forward. It was encouraging to see 43 participants providing comments linked to the application of the learning. For example, 54% provided what we have termed broad examples, ie examples relating to a theme, a topic or general practice. For example, a participant from TMP 40 mentioned how he had tried hard to “use the different styles and approaches” going on to reiterate how TMP had “also made me more confident and I think a better ‘presenter’ in meetings, although I feel that also means that I need to ensure I stay flexible in my approach”.

There were comments from 30% linked to specific contexts or situations where they had applied learning from the TMP eg “... the development of strategic planning for research within my institution” (TMP 39); “working with my line manager, the VC, in my appraisal and objective setting as a start” (TMP 41); and “in a major restructure” (TMP 42).

Finally, 14% provided applications of learning to their own team and 12% offered applications in relation to their career. Interestingly, applications relating to career were mentioned by three participants from TMP 39 and two from TMP 40 but not at all by participants from TMP 41 or TMP 42.

When these learning journal issues were followed up in the interviews many interesting responses were received, illustrating that the TMP had real impact and especially, as has been observed above, in terms of boosting confidence and experimenting with newfound practices and strategies in their leadership roles. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the commentary above regarding efficacy and confidence, one interviewee from TMP 39 commented that TMP had simply given him more “confidence to be myself”:

“... we had a recent corporate review of our faculty and I think it’s [TMP] which helped me position myself and the faculty around the future challenges that we had to contribute to and within the health sector. ... I think the TMP did provide strong insights into management of compatibility issues and I feel that I have been able to present them more effectively to senior leadership within the university since I’ve undertaken the programme. So, I think it was a good balance and ... I think TMP gave me some useful tools to progress those, yes.”

As well as providing valuable knowledge and confidence, mirroring the learning journal responses above, other interviewees noted how more specific leadership and management skills had been developed. For example, one TMP 39 interviewee mentioned how she had become more aware of the power of creating “distance” when working with her team, and how it could lead to more effective performance:

“I think possibly I suppose what it might have done was to encourage me to kind of stand back a little and let other people take a little bit more lead. So, to sort of enable and let things off rather than necessarily feeling that I always had to be part of a team to get things done. So, in that sense, a little bit of, when I say distancing, distancing from the operational aspects of things I think has probably helped.”

Continuing on the theme of more concrete leadership skills’ enactment, another interviewee from the later TMP 43 cohort described in detail about how she felt much better equipped as a leader to deal with the more difficult aspects of the role linked to communicating change, as she clarified:

“... those difficult conversations [are] better than I would have done it without the experience I had on TMP. The changes we have enacted in the last 15, 16 months here have been quite substantial and quite difficult actually, but I think we’ve done it reasonably well actually and better as a consequence of my learning I think of dealing with that restructuring and difficult conversations with people.”

A TMP 42 interviewee provided a rich example showing how the learning from the TMP had impacted on her position regarding thinking about engagement and communication practice when leading change:

“I think I started to value more and more the inclusiveness. So, as I went through the restructure and I was told it would never work, ... being told no, it will never work but the richness and the value I got out of that We didn’t get any union issues because how can you respond if it’s actually you’ve designed it, you’ve been part of it. So I think I strengthened my, I think in the application there were words that I used, you know responded to but I actually experienced the power of them.”

Finally, when also reflecting on how the TMP experience had heightened a sense of awareness surrounding effective communication and employee wellbeing, another TMP 39 interviewee described how the element in the programme linked to “modelling appropriate leadership” had piqued her thought processes and ultimately her behaviour. Hence, she described how she “no longer sends emails to people at night and on the weekend because people are allowed to have a family life, their job shouldn’t define everything that they do”. These examples illustrate how elements of the TMP encouraged real introspective analysis which in turn impacted on actual behaviour back at the workplace.

TMP impact on future career progression decision-making

Clearly, when participants attend leadership and management development programmes, career progression or stability are often extremely pertinent issues. With this in mind the impact of the TMP on career direction was explored during the interviews and, for many, it was clear that their experience on the programme had provided the catalyst to actively consider future options. When discussing TMP activities, issues related to career development arose on a number of occasions, particularly surrounding the importance of the impact groups, coaching activities and international trips. For example, one interviewee related how the coaching he received was invaluable regarding understanding future career routes:

“... [TMP] has prepared me for several changes in the university leadership that are ongoing, there are new opportunities for me coming up within the university. I’ll also have to consider what TMP has taught me in preparation for that with my coach.”

Similarly, for other interviewees, it appeared that the TMP experience was a catalyst for reassessment of future career ambitions. For example, another TMP 39 cohort member noted how the general TMP experience had prompted her to “actually wonder whether I do want to go any higher up the greasy pole”, while conversations with two interviewees from TMP 41 and 43 illustrated how they had been inspired to think more seriously about transitioning to different types of universities which seemed to be better aligned to their values. For example, the TMP 41 interviewee asserted that TMP had provided the confidence for him to:

“... continue to be pushed and challenged in my role ... and actually, to say, to really identify what is important to me in terms of cultural values of organisations to understand for me at this point in my career ... to be the best I can be to continue to develop I needed to be in another organisation.”

For the TMP 43 interviewee, the TMP seemed to provide real clarification to the extent that:

“...I remember it one evening just sat there going ‘I’m in the wrong place’. I was enjoying my job, don’t get me wrong... but I thought to be a leader that I want to be I’m in the wrong place.... That really resonated and that was one of the realisations on the TMP programme.”

Impact and transfer challenges

As can be appreciated from the above section on TMP experience, in both the learning journal and the interview responses it was clear that impact on their current practice as leaders as well as considerations on future career direction, had increased for participants as a result of their TMP experience. However, when we asked about impact and transfer at an institutional level, linked to their TMP experience and how that might support transfer of learning, participants from across all the cohorts studied reported a lack of formal follow-up from their sponsoring university. For example, as one TMP 39 interviewee summed up:

“There was nobody in the institution who ever went – so, [name removed], what have you learned, what did you make of that – or anything. So, you know, ... nor was there a conversation [from her line manager] that said right, you’ve done TMP, now what are you thinking, how can we you know, build on that. So, I don’t know whether there’s communication from the TMP team back to the individual participant’s employers to encourage that, but I think it would be a good thing to encourage.”

However, it was clear that there was an awareness about the benefits of the TMP for some in the employing universities, particularly those who had a tradition of sponsoring senior leaders on the programme. For example, a TMP 42 interviewee described how there was interest from colleagues in terms of “.. who have you been working with, who do you know, how can we use your networks to help us, have you got anybody at Edinburgh where we can go and pick their brains on this... and did you have any CFOs in your group ...”

In terms of other issues linked to impact post-TMP, among some cohorts there were long-lasting – or as one person from TMP 43 described, “tight” – relationships with fellow participants on the TMP cohort. However, this was not a consistent pattern across the cohorts with some in TMP 41 bemoaning the fact that members in this impact group did not commit to attending post-TMP events and meetings. Given that this aspect of networking and collaboration with colleagues was cited as one of the key benefits of TMP, such a finding is perhaps disappointing and clearly has implications for continued impact for these groups. For example, another of the TMP 39 interviewers noted that although her group had tried to set up formal post-programme meetings, they had to be (in the words of one) “aborted” for a number of reasons, mainly linked to “the practicalities of getting people together physically”.

When we followed up on this in the interviews it was interesting that the TMP 39 alumni suggested that perhaps more support could be given by the TMP facilitators and administrators to establish better quality links in groups. As she observed: “I suppose that’s just down to the people in the group and whether it’s up to TMP to foster that or some notion of TMP 39 going forward in that it never dies, and there’s ways to encourage those sorts of contacts after the programme?” However, the participant from TMP 41 felt that the real onus should be on members of the impact groups to drive post-TMP meetings, given the useful experience they had received as well as the resources that had been allocated from their universities:

“When it came to the impact group meetings after the TMP, so self-organised meetings – nobody was available and you think for God’s sake, it’s the same thing, prioritise it. ... there’s clearly something wrong, people just needed to prioritise it so I called that out with the impact group and said you need to prioritise it but it’s worth thinking about that in terms of commitment of individuals and how it falls away when it’s self-organised.”

However, there were more positive aspects from others in these more recent cohorts who noted that although more formal meetings may not have taken place, constructive relationships had formed which had been extremely useful because “... they certainly gave me confidence to do something, yes.” For example, those in the TMP 42 cohort noted that although physical meetings might not have happened as frequently as desired, the use of technology in the form of a WhatsApp group had produced real benefits post-TMP. As one interviewee described: “I know if I go onto my WhatsApp to my team and I say has anyone got any ideas about this I know that I’ll get some really great responses”. Ultimately, the TMP experience had appeared to broaden social capital among this group with another TMP 39 interviewee summing up the scenario effectively:

“I didn’t know anybody beforehand and it was fantastic to get to know everybody on the TMP. Some, I have kept in touch with, I wouldn’t say, I’m not now daily or weekly speaking to people but that’s me a little bit as well, I know they’re there and it’s always great to touch base with people.”

Key findings linked to impact of the TMP

A substantial amount of data was generated, primarily from the qualitative interviews, linked to the impact for participants in the TMP.

- + Post programme issues: TMP participants related how they had been involved in various initiatives in their universities linked to, for example, strategy and policy development and organisational restructuring. Evidence from the interviewees illustrated that the personal skills and leadership competence that had been gained as a result of the TMP experience had helped them in delivering their leadership roles.
- + As noted elsewhere, critical self-reflection / introspection was a common outcome for TMP participants. As can be seen from the detailed interview findings, for several it was clear that the TMP experience had greatly contributed to their thinking about future career development. The importance of career planning and how TMP interventions had stimulated thought on that aspect was also referred to by some in the learning journal entries of the surveys.
- + Although the impact groups were viewed as the most important element of TMP by many survey responders and interviewees, it was interesting to note that there appeared to be fewer meetings and contacts among some of the later cohorts (39-43) in comparison to some others who were interviewed as part of the retrospective group. This issue of formal impact group follow-up may be something that TMP facilitators could investigate further, ie how might they be able to help promote and encourage post-TMP meetings to really promote sustained impact from the TMP programme.
- + In terms of challenges or obstacles to promoting greater impact from the TMP, the issue of managerial support (or lack of) was mentioned in several learning journal entries as well as the interviews. In these interviews the theme of a relatively “hands off” approach to TMP learning and application of material and learning arose again. However, it was clear that some sponsoring universities were clearly interested in the networks which had been formed as result of TMP participation among their alumni. Going forward, actions regarding the level of support needed from TMP facilitators and sponsors of TMP participants post-programme, to allow the benefits of participation to be fully realised, should be considered.

Conclusions

This findings section of the report has shown that thinking about the TMP in terms of experience, outcomes and impact was a useful way to assess the essence of the programme and to reveal the following key conclusions:

Experience

- + Overall, there is widespread satisfaction with the programme experience, the group composition and the range of activities offered as well as the administration and operation of the TMP – this theme has been consistent throughout all the data collected for the study.

Outcomes

- + Surveys and interviews indicate that the TMP has a positive impact on all four outcomes measured – self-awareness; identity as a leader, confidence as a leader and competence as a leader.
- + Improvement in these outcomes is not linear for all participants. Some leaders' journeys involved small changes, if any, during the actual programme, while for others they may have reappraised these aspects within themselves. However, significant improvements were found in relation to each outcome when measured one year post programme.

Impact

- + Impact is clear and many examples were given – TMP participants described their involvement in various initiatives in their universities (including strategy and policy development, organisational restructuring, etc) and felt that the personal skills and leadership competence that had been gained and/or developed through the TMP experience had helped them in delivering such duties.
- + Although the impact groups were key to the whole TMP project and many spoke favourably about their impact, there appeared to be fewer meetings held and contacts made among the more recent cohorts in comparison to some others as cited in the retrospective group. Given the importance of the one year post-programme time period as shown in the measurement of outcomes in the surveys, the continued role and implications of the impact groups may be an area for the programme team to consider.
- + Linked to this post-programme period, more may be done to help transfer at institutional level going forward, including the issue of managerial support (or lack of) to fully capitalise on the learning that has taken place for TMP alumni as well as the investment made by the host institutions.

Appendix 1 – Detailed findings: surveys (TMP and comparator group)

One of the key data collection methods within the longitudinal study is a series of surveys (using validated as well as bespoke measures alongside open questions) with participants of TMP 39 through to TMP 43. Surveys were administered at the outset of the programme, three months after completion and, finally, 12 months post-programme.

A comparator group of 158 respondents who would be eligible for the TMP but had not yet enrolled were recruited in Year 3 to the study. These participants completed the Time 1 and Time 3 surveys.

Responses to the surveys are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey administration and responses

Cohort	Start	Finish	N	Programme outset (n)	3 months post (n)	12 months post (n)
TMP 39	October 2016	April 2017	21	Oct 2016 (16)	June 2017 (12)	April 2018 (7)
TMP 40	April 2017	October 2017	19	April 2017 (17)	March 2018 (12)*	Oct 2018 (7)
TMP 41	October 2017	April 2018	22	Oct 2017 (19)	August 2018 (17)	April 2019 (9)
TMP 42	April 2018	September 2018	21	May 2018 (13)	Nov 2018 (9)	Sept 2019 (6)
TMP 43	October 2018	April 2019	21	Oct 2018 (14)	June 2019 (8)	April 2020 (6)
Total			104	79	58	35
Comparator				Oct 2018 (158)	n/a	April 2020 (53)

*One participant for TMP 40 only partially completed Survey 2

Detailed survey findings are presented below. If not stated otherwise, any differences were not statistically significant. Gender differences were also explored in relation to some of the key questions and survey measures (as relevant) across time.

Participants at programme outset

Overall, 79 TMP participants completed Survey 1, a response rate of 76%.

There are a number of measures which were unique to Survey 1, these are presented below.

Gender

Of the 79 TMP participants, 53% were male and 47% female. Similarly, the comparator group comprised 56% males and 44% females.

Table 2. Gender breakdown of TMP participants at Time 1

TMP (n=79)	
Male	42 (53%)
Female	37 (47%)

Participants' role and management experience

As can be seen from Tables 3 and 4, participants tended to be in academic roles involving designated management and had 11 years or more management experience.

Table 3. Role at programme outset

TMP (n=79)	
Academic role involving designated management (eg head of department, dean, PVC)	66 (84%)
Academic role predominantly involved in teaching/research (eg lecturer, senior lecturer, professor)	2 (3%)
Non-academic professional or administrative role	10 (13%)
Not stated	1 (1%)

Table 4. Years of experience directly managing individuals, teams or departments

TMP (n=79)	
Less than 3 years	1 (1%)
3 to 5 years	4 (5%)
6 to 10 years	24 (31%)
11 years or more	48 (62%)

The number of respondents reporting 11 years or more experience in directly managing individual employees, team or departments is substantially higher in the comparator group and should be borne in mind.

Participants also reported having undertaken four different types of management or leadership development, on average, across their career out of a possible eight (eg short courses, formal mentoring, action learning, etc).

Decision to attend TMP

Table 5. Decision to attend TMP

	It was my idea initially to attend the Top Management Programme	The idea to attend the Top Management Programme was suggested to me
TMP 39 (n=16)	7 (44%)	9 (56%)
TMP 40 (n=17)	7 (41%)	10 (59%)
TMP 41 (n=19)	7 (37%)	12 (63%)
TMP 42 (n=13)	1 (8%)	12 (92%)
TMP 43 (n=14)	7 (50%)	7 (50%)
Overall (n=79)	29 (37%)	50 (63%)

Whether the idea to attend the TMP was the participant's or was suggested to them was consistent for cohorts 39, 40, 41 and 43 with between 37% and 50% stating that it was their idea. This is also consistent with the survey of 95 TMP alumni from the retrospective study.

However, as can be seen in Table 5, this is not the case for cohort 42 for which only one participant (8%) reported that attending the TMP was their idea.

Motivation to learn and developmental readiness

Table 6. Motivation to learn and developmental readiness

	Motivation to learn		Development readiness	
	Mean (out of 5)	Standard deviation	Mean (out of 5)	Standard deviation
TMP 39 (n=16)	4.20	0.39	3.85	0.45
TMP 40 (n=17)	4.29	0.46	3.98	0.59
TMP 41 (n=19)	4.09	0.52	3.92	0.48
TMP 42 (n=13)	4.33	0.46	4.03	0.36
TMP 43 (n=14)	4.45	0.50	3.91	0.61
Overall (n=79)	4.26	0.47	3.93	0.50

Motivation to learn has been found to have an important relationship with outcomes (Grossman and Salas, 2011). Chiaburu and Lindsay (2008) suggest that this relationship is due to the influence of motivation to learn on participants' behaviour during the development programme. Within the TMP cohorts, motivation to learn at programme outset was high, with a mean of 4.26 out of 5. Furthermore, this high level of motivation to learn was consistent across the TMP cohorts, including TMP 42 for whom most had attendance at the TMP suggested to them.

Developmental readiness is a related and somewhat overlapping concept which is seen as important in leader development. Chaimongkonrojna and Steane (2015) note that participants attending leadership development programmes need to clarify developmental goals and expectations with supervisors, which in turn helps foster ownership of the learning process. DeRue and Ashford (2010) highlight that personal agency is a critical component in leader development and that leaders must engage themselves in terms of seeking and processing information about their leadership in order to accelerate their development. Developmental readiness is 3.93 out of 5 overall and remarkably consistent across cohorts. Survey items for these and other measures are provided in Appendix 1a. Survey reliabilities are provided in Appendix 1b.

Importance of TMP outcomes

Participants were asked to rate the importance of different TMP outcomes to them in their career. As can be seen in Table 7, each of the outcomes was perceived to be important, this was consistent across all outcomes and broadly consistent by TMP cohort.

Table 7. Importance of TMP outcomes (1 – Not important; 5 – Of great importance) to participants at programme outset

	Help me undertake effectively a leadership role I already have	Help me prepare for a leadership role I aspire to have	Better shape institutional strategy, position or culture	Bring about change through engaging people	Better work through collaboration and diversity	Build a network of peers	Build a knowledge of what other institutions are doing
TMP 39 (n=16)	4.06	4.47	4.13	4.00	3.81	4.31	4.44
TMP 40 (n=17)	4.41	4.41	4.53	4.53	4.24	4.18	4.35
TMP 41 (n=19)	4.39	4.06	4.42	4.33	4.22	4.58	4.32
TMP 42 (n=13)	4.50	4.64	4.64	4.57	4.21	4.07	4.14
TMP 43 (n=14)	4.43	4.54	4.79	4.64	4.50	4.79	4.69
Overall (n=79)	4.35	4.40	4.48	4.40	4.19	4.38	4.37

Gender differences in participants at programme outset

No gender differences in the results at programme outset were found.

Experience of managing employees

With regard to years of experience of managing individual employees there was very little difference between the groups. All males (100%) reported they had three or more years of experience, while 97.1% of females reported three or more years of experience managing individual employees.

Idea to attend TMP

Of the 42 male respondents, 14 reported it was their idea to attend the TMP (33.3% of male respondents); while 15 females (40.5% of female respondents) reported it was their idea to attend.

Survey measures at programme outset

Table 8: Descriptive statistics for males and females at programme outset

	Motivation to learn	Dev. readiness	Importance of outcomes
Male			
Mean (Standard dev)	4.24 (0.45)	3.89 (0.53)	4.34 (0.42)
Female			
Mean (Standard dev)	4.28 (0.51)	3.99 (0.46)	4.44 (0.37)

Table 8 reports mean scores and standard deviations scores for males and females across the measures reported in this section. No statistically significant differences were found between males and females on these measures at programme outset.

Participant reaction to TMP

Survey 2, conducted at three months post-programme, captures the following aspects relating to participant reaction to the programme:

- + programme satisfaction
- + opportunity to reflect
- + programme challenge.

Fifty eight participants completed Survey 2, a response rate of 73% in comparison to those participants who could have completed the second survey (completion was only partial for one participant from TMP 40).

Programme satisfaction

Table 9. Satisfaction with the TMP (Very dissatisfied; Dissatisfied; Neither; Satisfied; Very satisfied)

	Satisfied	Very satisfied
TMP 39 (n=12)	2 (17%)	10 (83%)
TMP 40 (n=12)	4 (33%)	8 (66%)
TMP 41 (n=17)*	4 (24%)	12 (71%)
TMP 42 (n=9)	5 (56%)	4 (44%)
TMP 43 (n=8)**	1 (13%)	6 (75%)
Overall (n=58)	16 (28%)	40 (69%)

*1 participant was very dissatisfied

**1 participant was dissatisfied

97% of participants reported being either satisfied or very satisfied with the programme overall with the majority (69%) being very satisfied. The only two exceptions to this were one participant from TMP 41 who reported being very dissatisfied and one participant from TMP 43 who reported being dissatisfied.

Participants had an opportunity to briefly explain why they had rated the programme as they did. Forty nine took the opportunity to provide an explanation and seven themes emerged. Many comments covered multiple themes eg

“Excellent course which provided space for learning some new material on leadership skills, networking with others in the sector, learning about leadership practices, policies and cultures at other institutions, and building close support with an impact group. Together these learning forums and materials provide the basis for reflection, advice and self-development concerning one’s own leadership and career plans.”

(TMP 39)

A breakdown of themes by TMP programme is presented below.

Table 10. Emergent themes from comments regarding programme satisfaction

Theme	Times mentioned
The other participants and opportunity for networking	24
Learning opportunities (variety of opportunities, breadth of topics, specific mentions eg coaching, quality of facilitators)	18
Opportunity to improve leadership; learn new material about leadership; build personal confidence; develop identity as a leader	15
Exposure to other leadership styles in HE; other institutions; the international trip; guest speakers	11
Quality of the programme (structure; organisation; specific mentions eg ‘high quality’, ‘excellent course’, etc.)	9
Opportunity to reflect/provision of space	8
Impact group/action learning	6

During the interviews with 50 TMP alumni from the retrospective study, interviewees were, in general, impressed with the diversity of the groups of which they were a part, in terms of talent, geographical spread, senior level leaders and institutional types, with only two participants (one from TMP 31 or below and the other from TMP 32 and above) reporting concerns with the diversity of their cohorts. Similarly, their fellow TMP participants and networking value emerged as one of the key themes in relation to programme satisfaction:

“It was also a privilege to be a member of such a great and support cohort.”

(TMP 39)

“I appreciated the opportunity to meet and spend time with colleagues from a number of different universities across the sector.”

(TMP 40)

“Extremely positive experience. Excellent facilitators and amazing cohort.”

(TMP 41)

“I got a lot out of the programme particularly in relation to networking with colleagues from different parts of the sector, and the impact groups.”

(TMP 42)

One participant, while complimentary of their fellow participants, did not feel they had sufficient institutionally wide remit/experience within their current roles to facilitate the discussion they had hoped for:

“The group: although it was a brilliant, friendly and collegiate environment, the majority of participants did not share the challenges associated with institutional challenges and their roles limited their concerns to a small school, or unit of operation/service. The challenges facing a PVC’s leadership to resolve a complex institution in crisis, is fundamentally different to a smaller unit of operation. I would have liked to have dealt with larger and more complex challenges and stories.”

(TMP 40)

Some participants who stated they were satisfied with the programme (rather than very satisfied) took the opportunity to elaborate on their rating and, while overall their comments were very positive, there were some indications of areas that may have moved their rating away from very satisfied to satisfied:

- + Work commitments interfering with their ability to engage with the programme fully (TMP 39)
- + That the programme was not challenging enough (TMP 39)
- + Some of the material covered was felt to be readily available outside the programme already (TMP 40)
- + Disappointment with the international trip (TMP 40, 41 and 42).

During the retrospective study, we interviewed 50 TMP alumni. Many of the participants interviewed mentioned the opportunity to reflect offered by the TMP as a significant personal gain. Alumni discussed being unable to focus on reflection while at work and believed the TMP provided them with the time to do so. Consequently, we sought to assess opportunity to reflect within the longitudinal study.

Participants were asked to rate on a 5-point scale (1 – Not at all, 3 – To some extent, 5 – A great deal) the extent to which participation in TMP provided them with an opportunity to reflect on:

- + themselves as a leader
- + their career goals
- + their institution
- + other institutions/the HE sector.

Scores were averaged to produce an overall measure of opportunity to reflect and as can be seen below, this was high overall and consistent across cohorts.

Table 11. To what extent would you say participation in the TMP has provided you with an opportunity to reflect?

	Opportunity to reflect	
	Mean (out of 5)	Standard deviation
TMP 39 (n=12)	4.52	0.56
TMP 40 (n=12)	4.44	0.63
TMP 41 (n=17)	4.53	0.35
TMP 42 (n=9)	4.50	0.42
TMP 43 (n=8)	4.28	0.63
Overall (n=58)	4.47	0.45

Programme challenge

Participants were asked to rate how challenging they found the programme using the following scale:

- 1 not challenging at all
- 2 not challenging enough
- 3 appropriately challenging
- 4 very challenging
- 5 excessively challenging.

In the retrospective study, the term that surfaced most in the interviews to describe the challenge associated with TMP, was “about right”, with over 70% of the alumni survey respondents selecting this option. As can be seen from Table 10 below, a similar pattern was evident for TMP 39 through to 43 with 93% of the participants considering the programme to be appropriately challenging or very challenging.

Table 12. How challenging did you find the programme?

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean out of 5 (Standard deviation)
TMP 39 (n=12)	1 (8%)		9 (75%)	2 (17%)		3.00 (0.74)
TMP 40 (n=12)	2 (17%)		6 (50%)	4 (35%)		3.00 (1.04)
TMP 41 (n=17)			12 (71%)	5 (29%)		3.29 (0.47)
TMP 42 (n=9)	1 (11%)		7 (78%)	1 (11%)		2.89 (0.78)
TMP 43 (n=8)				8 (100%)		4.00 (0.00)
Overall (n=58)	4 (7%)		34 (59%)	20 (34%)		3.21 (0.77)

Four participants felt the programme was not challenging at all and each took the opportunity to explain this view:

- + Need for more challenging role plays as completed in the first residential focusing on: “how do you present yourself and win through when operating with the VC, senior colleagues and the board?” (TMP 39)
- + “More intellectual content, input from expert speakers” (TMP 40)
- + Mirroring an earlier comment by this participant around the level of other participants, the need for more consideration of institutional challenges and consideration of leadership at the executive level (TMP 40)

- + “Maybe more technical challenges around specific case studies... eg motivating a group that has lost its way; practical guidance/experience on handling dysfunction; writing for different audiences etc.” (TMP 42)

The remaining participants were asked to explain in what ways they found the programme challenging with two main themes emerging.

The majority of participants reported that the programme provided an opportunity to reflect, develop personal insight or reconsider practice:

“We were challenged to reflect on our own practices, to develop explicit goals and to build growth and stretch through considering different approaches based on a combination of the material the facilitators introduced us to, the site visits and the shared experiences and advice from the other TMP participants.”

(TMP 39)

“Much of the focus was on the self. I think we all found that at least surprising, and something to adjust to. It is not a criticism – in fact it is very important.”

(TMP 41)

“I had to look at how I was doing things, and found the challenge in the impact groups really helpful for this.”

(TMP 42)

A number of participants commented on how the TMP exposed them to new material and thinking:

“It took me outside of my comfort zone and made me think about things that I would normally not consider.”

(TMP 39)

“I was forced to think about things that I had not thought of before, things that I would not normally consider as being important to leadership.”

(TMP 40)

“Challenged my thinking.”

(TMP 41)

“Working with large groups of people from a wide range of universities.”

(TMP 43)

These themes reflect many of the alumni views from the retrospective study concerning the opportunity provided by the programme for “deeply personal” reflection and in helping participants to move out of their respective comfort zones.

Manager support

Blume et al (2010) found supervisor support to be one of the strongest predictors of learning transfer. Supervisor support has been linked to the level of motivation when going on to a development programme; the confidence to learn from a programme; and the motivation to apply what has been learnt back in the workplace (Chiaburu and Tekleab, 2005; Chiaburu, Van Dam and Hutchins, 2010). One of the key findings during the alumni interviews of the retrospective study was that 54% of alumni indicated that their line manager did not show an interest or provide any significant support during the programme, while 34% of alumni interviewed reported experiencing more positive support ranging from informal discussion on occasion through to experiencing clear interest and support. Given that individuals should not be the sole translator of leadership development experiences, we have suggested this as a potential area of consideration for the programme, in terms of how to better foster engagement with the participants' direct line managers.

Within the current study, manager support was measured using six items (available in Appendix 1) assessing the extent to which participants believed their managers discussed TMP with them before, during and immediately after the programme. Results are shown in Table 13 below.

Table 13. Manager support

	Manager support	
	Mean (out of 5)	Standard deviation
TMP 39 (n=12)	3.08	1.08
TMP 40 (n=11)	2.11	0.92
TMP 41 (n=17)	2.60	0.80
TMP 42 (n=9)	2.52	1.01
TMP 43 (n=8)	2.33	0.84
Overall (n=58)	2.56	0.95

Manager support overall was relatively low with a mean of 2.56 out of 5 although there was considerable variability around this mean with a standard deviation of 0.95, indicating that some managers were perceived to engage with TMP participants more so than others.

Gender differences in participant reaction to TMP

Programme satisfaction

Of the 58 participants at Time 2, 29 were male and 29 female. Only one male (3.4% of males) and one female respondent (3.4% of females) reported being less than satisfied with the TMP programme. All remaining respondents reported they were either 'Satisfied' (34.5% of males; 20.7% of females) or 'Very Satisfied' (62.1% of males; 75.9% of females). On average, males reported slightly lower programme satisfaction scores (4.51) than females (4.69). However, this difference was not statistically significant: $t(56) = -.88, p > .05$.

Programme challenge

Three males (10.3%) and one female (3.4%) reported TMP was 'not challenging enough'. Eight males (27.6%) and seven females (24.1%) reported the TMP to be 'appropriately challenging'. Fourteen males (48.3%) and nineteen females (65.5%) reported that they found TMP to be 'very challenging'. All others (13.8% males; 6.9% females) reported TMP to be 'excessively challenging'. On average, males reported slightly lower programme challenge scores (3.66) than females (3.76). However, this difference was not statistically significant: $t(56) = -.52, p > .05$.

These findings are summarised in Table 14.

Table 14: Descriptive statistics for males and females at programme completion

	Programme satisfaction	Programme challenge
Male		
Mean (Standard deviation)	4.51 (0.83)	3.66 (0.86)
Female		
Mean (Standard deviation)	4.69 (0.66)	3.76 (0.64)

Opportunity to Reflect

Table 15 reports mean scores and standard deviations for males and females regarding opportunity to reflect and line manager support.

Table 15: Opportunity to reflect and line manager support for males and females at programme completion

	Opportunity to reflect	Line manager support
Male		
Mean (Standard deviation)	4.54 (0.48)	2.70 (1.02)
Female		
Mean (Standard deviation)	4.40 (0.51)	2.41 (0.89)

On average, males reported a slightly higher opportunity to reflect scores (4.54) than females (4.40). However, this difference was not statistically significant: $t(56) = -1.12, p > .27$. Males also reported higher line manager support (2.70) than females (2.41). Again, this difference was not statistically significant: $t(55) = 1.17, p > .27$.

Participant outcomes

Four specific outcomes were assessed through the surveys:

- + self-awareness
- + leader identity
- + leader efficacy
- + perceived competence as a leader.

With the exception of self-awareness, each of these outcomes was measured in two or three of the surveys, allowing change to be assessed over time. Where a measure was repeated in multiple surveys, participants are only included for whom data is available at each measurement.

Consequently, the number of participants varies in the analyses below for Surveys 1 and 2 compared to numbers presented earlier eg for TMP 39, seven participants completed the final survey, so while 12 participants completed the measure of leader identity in Survey 2, only seven are presented in the tables below.

Self-awareness (measured in Survey 2)

Self-awareness is considered by many to be fundamental to leaders' performance (Avolio and Hannah, 2008) and, hence, it occupies a key concern in their development (Reilly et al, 2014). Self-awareness generally relates to having a deep understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses, one's own behavioural preferences and insight into one's impact on others (McCauley et al, 2010 cited by Day and Dragoni, 2015). In the retrospective study, throughout the alumni interviews, self-awareness was the most consistently cited gain from the programme for participants. Table 16 below shows that participants believed the TMP had made a considerable impact to all aspects of self-awareness considered in Survey 2.

Table 16. Perceptions of developments in self-awareness through participation in the TMP (1 – Not at all, 3 – To some extent, 5 – A great deal):

	Mean out of 5 (Standard deviation)				
	A better understanding of my strengths and weaknesses	Increased awareness of how I behave and work	Insight into my impact on others	A clearer understanding of my values	Gain in self-awareness (composite measure)
TMP 39 (n=12)	4.75 (0.45)	4.58 (0.67)	4.33 (0.65)	4.17 (0.83)	4.46 (0.51)
TMP 40 (n=11)	4.36 (0.67)	4.45 (0.69)	4.36 (0.67)	4.00 (1.00)	4.30 (0.63)
TMP 41 (n=17)	4.24 (0.75)	4.53 (0.62)	4.53 (0.72)	4.06 (0.83)	4.34 (0.51)
TMP 42 (n=9)	4.56 (0.53)	4.67 (0.50)	4.22 (0.83)	4.33 (0.87)	4.44 (0.53)
TMP 43 (n=8)	4.25 (0.71)	4.25 (0.89)	4.25 (0.71)	3.88 (1.36)	4.16 (0.61)
Overall (n=58)	4.42 (0.65)	4.51 (0.66)	4.37 (0.70)	4.09 (0.93)	4.35 0.54

Gender differences in self-awareness

Males reported higher development of self-awareness scores (4.45) than females (4.25). However, this difference was not statistically significant: $t(55)=1.38, p>.05$.

Table 17. Gender differences in the development of self-awareness

	Gain in self-awareness (out of 5)	
	Males	Females
Mean (Standard deviation)	4.45 (0.54)	4.25 (0.53)

Leader identity (measured in Surveys 1, 2 and 3)

Leader identity is the extent that a person views him- or herself as a leader and it is thought to be especially important in the development of leadership skills (Day and Dragoni, 2015). Assuming a strong leader identity has been found to function as a co-variate of leadership effectiveness over time (Day and Sin, 2011).

Leader identity was measured in each of the three surveys as shown below. It was also measured in the two surveys distributed to the comparator group.

Table 18. Leader identity

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
TMP 39 (n=7)			
Mean (out of 6)	5.14	5.29	5.64
Percentage change from time 1		3%	10%
TMP 40 (n=7)			
Mean (out of 6)	4.75	4.29	5.04
Percentage change from time 1		-10%	6%
TMP 41 (n=8)*			
Mean (out of 6)	4.28	4.38	5.19
Percentage change from time 1		2%	21%
TMP 42 (n=6)			
Mean (out of 6)	4.33	5.04	5.46
Percentage change from time 1		16%	26%
TMP 43 (n=6)			
Mean (out of 6)	4.79	4.58	5.04
Percentage change from time 1		-4%	5%
Overall (n=34)			
Mean (out of 6)	4.65	4.70	5.27
Percentage change from time 1		1%	13%
Comparator group (n=53)			
Mean (out of 6)	4.87		5.10
Percentage change from time 1			5%

*For TMP 41, an outlier whose change from time 1 to time 3 was so dramatic (400%) that it skewed the rest of the results has been removed taking the number of responses from nine to eight.

For TMP 39 and TMP 41, leader identity did not increase much between Time 1 and Time 2 (3% and 2% respectively). For TMP 40 and TMP 43 leader identity decreased from Time 1 to Time 2 (by 10% and 4% respectively).

In contrast, there was a sizable increase in leader identity of 16% for TMP 42. It is worth noting that TMP 42 was the only cohort for whom the majority had the idea of attending TMP suggested to them, which may in part explain this finding.

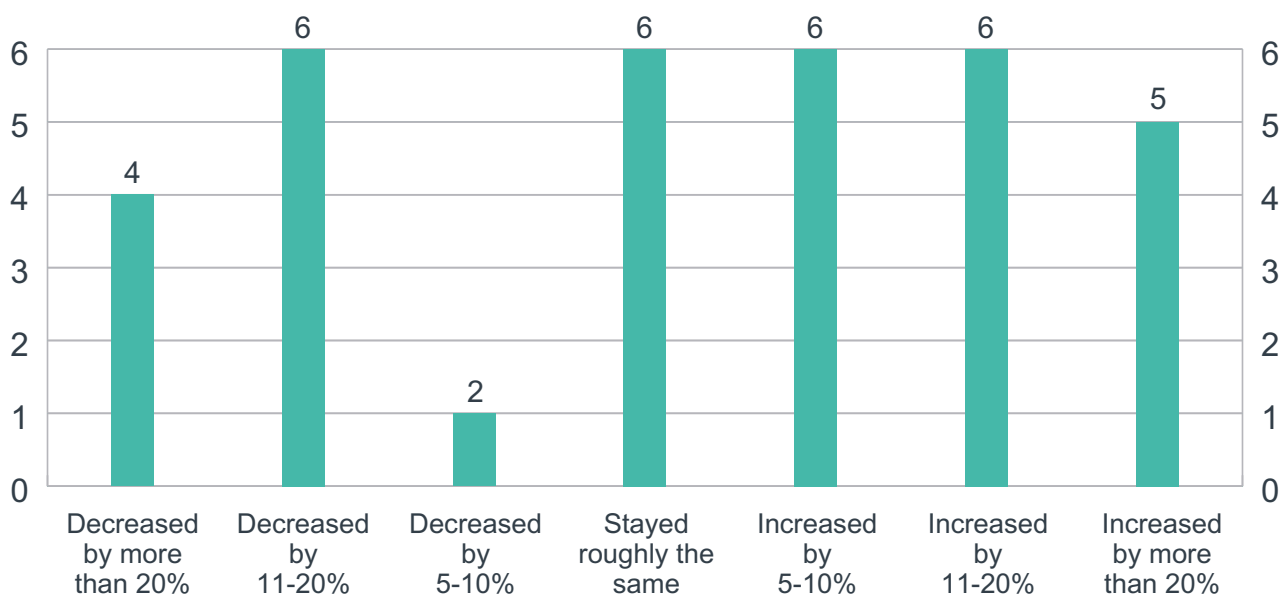
Leader identity increased between Time 1 and Time 3 for all TMP cohorts with the increase ranging by 5% to 26%.

Across all the TMP cohorts, leader identity increased by:

- + 1% from Time 1 to Time 2 from 4.65 to 4.70, this difference was not statistically significant
 $t(33) = -.27, p > .05$
- + 12% from Time 2 to Time 3 from 4.70 to 5.27, this difference was statistically significant
 $t(33) = -3.78, p < .05$
- + 13% from Time 1 to Time 3 from 4.65 to 5.27, this difference was statistically significant
 $t(33) = -4.91, p < .05$

Looking more closely at the individual TMP participants, 11 (32%) of the participants actually reported a lower leader identity at Time 2 than at Time 1 as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Change in leader identity for TMP participants from Time 1 to Time 2 (n=34)

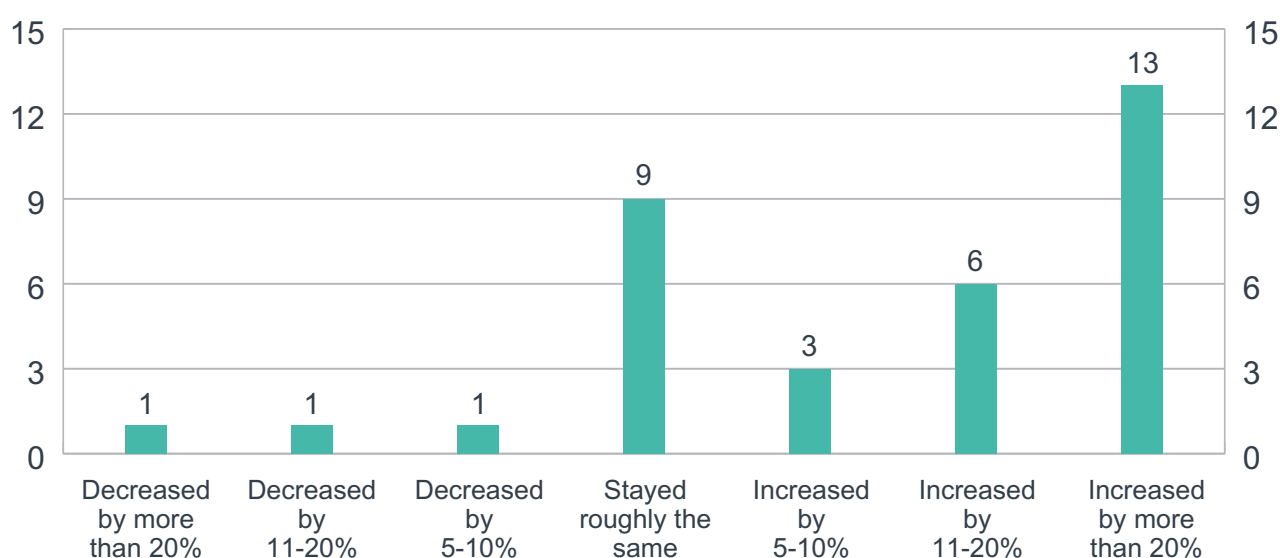


TMP participants evaluate their identity as a leader and some participants identity actually decreases.

In the following nine months, of these 11 participants whose identity as leaders decreased from Time 1 to Time 2, three improved but remained below the level they reported at Time 1, three returned to the level as reported at Time 1 and five increased above the level from Time 1.

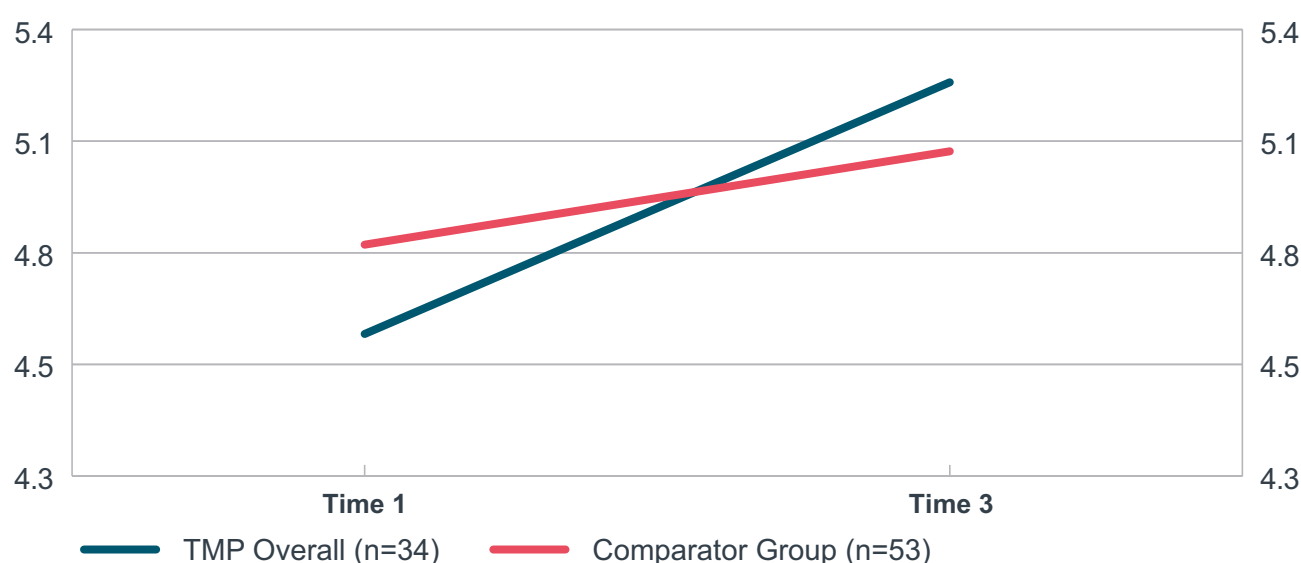
Figure 7 below shows the change in leader identity from Time 1 to Time 3 for all the participants.

Figure 7. Change in leader identity for TMP participants from Time 1 to Time 3



Leader identity for the comparator group was also measured at Time 1 and Time 3 and it increased by 5% from 4.87 to 5.10. The differences in leader identity at Time 1 and Time 3 for TMP participants and the comparator group are not statistically significant ($t(85) = -1.02, p > .05$ and $t(80) = 0.93, p > .05$ respectively). However, the increase in leader identity for the comparator group was not statistically significant ($t(52) = -1.32, p > .05$) but, as reported above, that for the TMP participants was. Leader identity development for both groups over 18 months is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Leader identity development over 18 months



Taken together, these findings indicate that many TMP participants evaluate their identities as leaders during the programme and for some it actually decreases. Day and Dragoni (2015) describe how spirals of leader identity develop over time. With a positive identity development spiral, an individual becomes more likely to participate effectively in leadership while, with negative identity development spirals, individuals become less willing and able to participate in effective leadership processes. These findings partly support this suggestion as half of the TMP participants followed identified as leaders at programme outset and a positive spiral developed. However, for just over 30% of the participants tracked, negative identity development did not spiral and it is reasonable to assume, given their subsequent leader identity development, that they were willing and able to participate in effective leadership processes in the year after the TMP.

The data show that TMP participants showed a statistically significant increase in leader identity development whereas the comparator group did not. Finally, the majority of the development as leaders happens in the year after the programme, specifically between three and 12 months post-programme. Completion of the TMP leads these participants to develop their identities as leaders much further in the time after the programme than during.

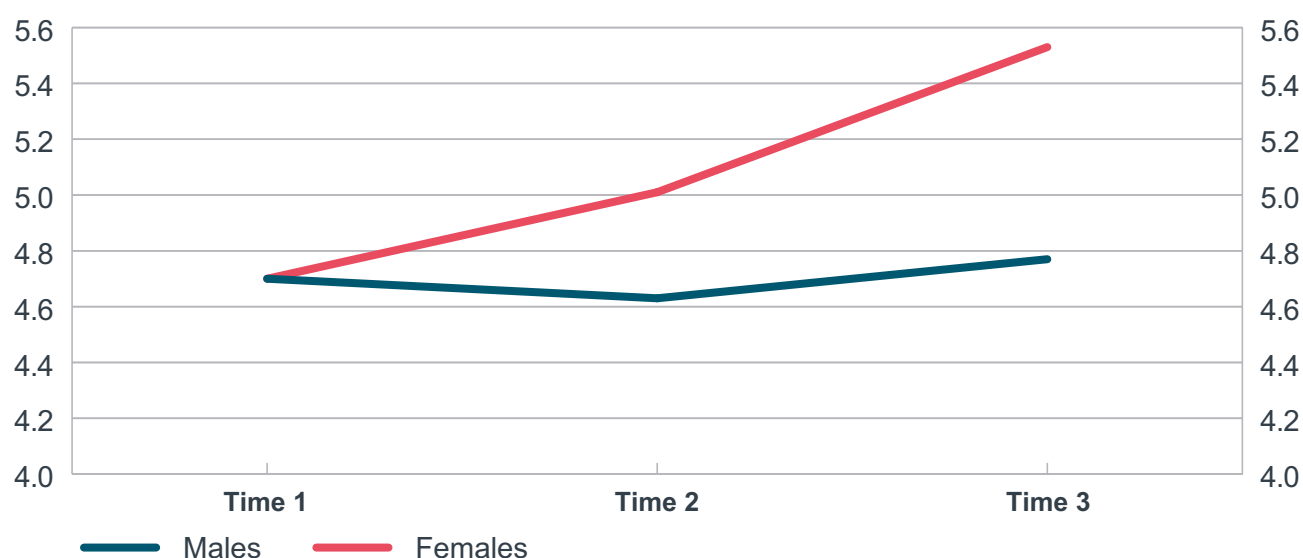
Gender differences in leader identity

Table 19. Gender differences in leader identity

	Leader identity (out of 6)	
	Males (Mean, standard deviation)	Females (Mean, standard deviation)
Time 1	4.70 (0.79)	4.70 (0.89)
Time 2	4.63 (0.93)	5.01 (0.97)
Time 3	4.77 (0.97)	5.53 (0.44)

At Time 1, no difference was found in leader identity for males and females (4.70 for both groups, $t(77) = -.00, p > .05$). At Time 2, on average males reported lower leader identity scores (4.63) than females (5.01, $SE = 0.18$). However, this difference was not statistically significant ($t(55) = -1.52, p > .05$). At Time 3, males (4.77) reported lower leader identity scores than females (5.53). This difference was found to be statistically significant: $t(33) = -2.68, p < .05$.

Figure 8. Change in leader identity for male and female TMP participants from Time 1 to Time 3



Males would seem to re-evaluate their identity as leaders during TMP differently than female participants. Interestingly, males reported a greater development in their self-awareness than females during TMP which may relate to the initial decrease in their identity as leaders.

Leader efficacy (measured in Surveys 1, 2 and 3)

Leader efficacy is broadly defined as the level of confidence in the knowledge, skills and abilities associated with a leadership role (Hannah et al, 2008; Paglis, 2010). Many of the alumni interviewed in the retrospective study felt the TMP had significantly increased their confidence.

Leader efficacy was measured in each of the three surveys as shown below.

Table 16. Leader efficacy

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
TMP 39 (n=7)			
Mean (out of 100)	71	78	80
Percentage change from time 1		10%	14%
TMP 40 (n=7)			
Mean (out of 100)	81	78	84
Percentage change from time 1		-3%	4%
TMP 41 (n=9)			
Mean (out of 100)	78	81	88
Percentage change from time 1		4%	13%
TMP 42 (n=6)			
Mean (out of 100)	77	80	83
Percentage change from time 1		3%	8%
TMP 43 (n=6)			
Mean (out of 100)	77	80	79
Percentage change from time 1		5%	4%
Overall (n=35)			
Mean (out of 100)	77	80	83
Percentage change from time 1		4%	9%
Comparator group (n=53)			
Mean (out of 100)	80		80
Percentage change from time 1			0%

For TMP 39, TMP 41 and TMP 42, leader efficacy increased from Time 1 to Time 2 (by 10%, 4% and 3% respectively) and by Time 3 these increases had grown further (by 14%, 13% and 8% respectively overall).

For TMP 40 there was a slight decrease in leader efficacy of 3% between Time 1 and Time 2 however overall there was an increase of 4% by Time 3.

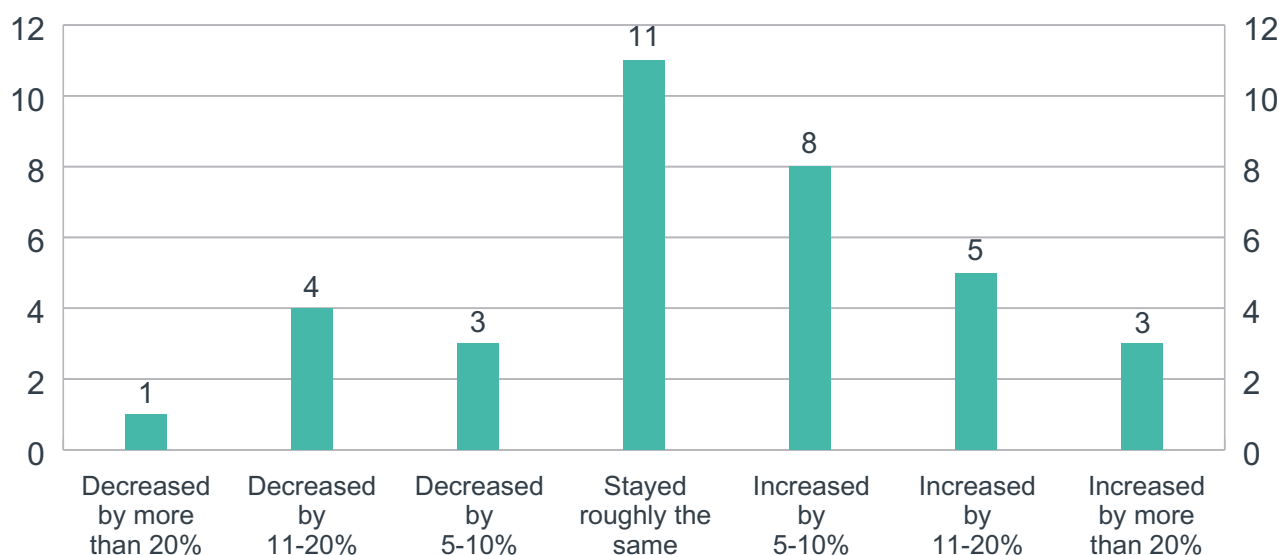
For TMP 43 there was an increase in leader efficacy of 5% between Time 1 and Time 2 however by Time 3 this had reduced to 4%. This indicated that this group's leader efficacy did not increase between Time 2 and 3 (ie between three to 12 months post TMP) unlike all the other groups.

Across all the TMP cohorts, leader efficacy increased by:

- + 4% from Time 1 to Time 2 from 77 to 80, this difference was statistically significant $t(34) = -2.09, p < .05$
- + 4% from Time 2 to Time 3 from 80 to 83, this difference was statistically significant $t(34) = -2.61, p < .05$
- + 9% from Time 1 to Time 3 from 77 to 83, this difference was statistically significant $t(34) = -5.05, p < .05$

Looking more closely at the individual TMP participants, eight (23%) of the participants reported a lower leader identity at Time 2 than at Time 1 as shown in Figure 9.

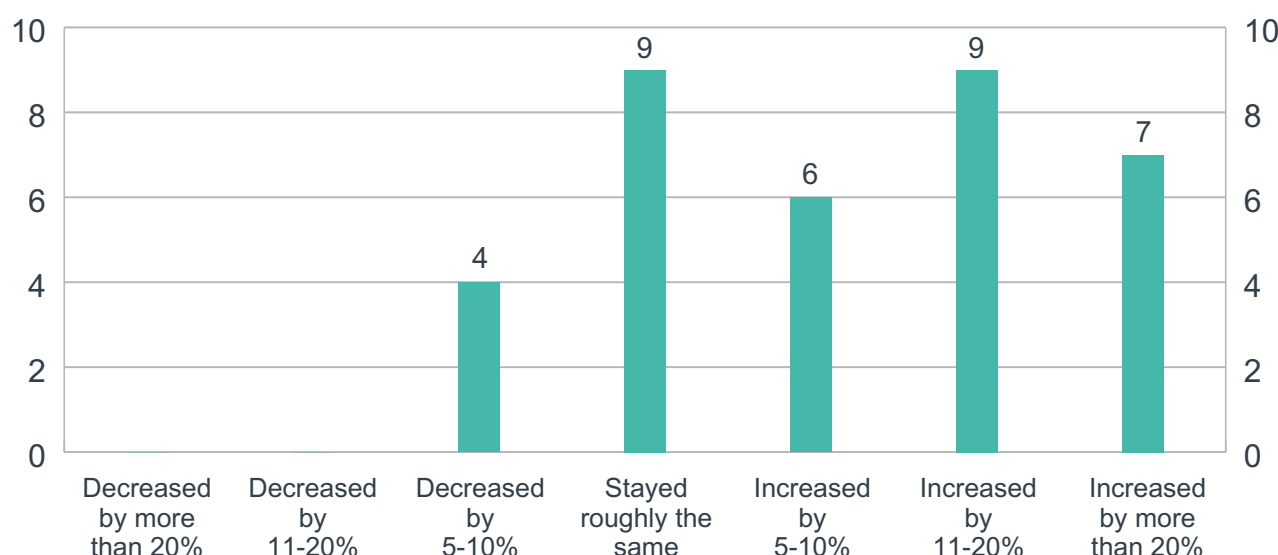
Figure 9. Change in leader identity for TMP participants from Time 1 to Time 2



This indicates that the TMP led some participants to re-evaluate their leader efficacy but, in terms of a decrease, this was less than for leader identity. In the following nine months, of these eight participants whose leader efficacy decreased from Time 1 to Time 2, four improved but remained below the level they reported at Time 1 and four returned to the level as reported by them at Time 1.

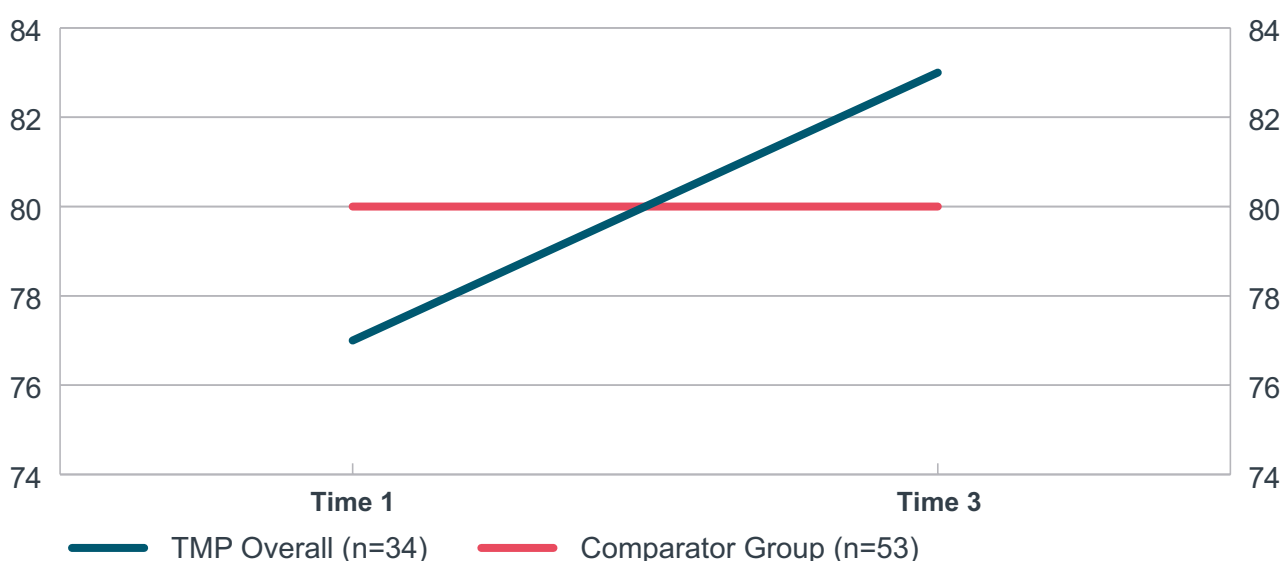
Figure 10 below shows the change in leader identity from Time 1 to Time 3 for all the participants.

Figure 10. Change in leader identity for TMP participants from Time 1 to Time 2



Leader efficacy for the comparator group was also measured at Time 1 and Time 3 and it remained consistent at 80. In comparison, leader efficacy for the TMP participants increased from 77% to 83% – an increase of 9% which, as reported above, was statistically significant. Leader efficacy for both groups over 18 months is illustrated in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Leader efficacy development over 18 months



TMP participants' leader efficacy was lower than that of the comparator group at Time 1 (77 versus 80), this difference was statistically significant ($t(53)=1.79, p<.05$). Conversely, TMP participants' leader efficacy was higher than that of the comparator group at Time 3 (83 versus 80), this difference was also statistically significant ($t(53)= -1.68, p<.05$).

Leader efficacy across the cohorts increased during the programme and was followed by a similar increase in the year post-programme. However, as with leader identity, leader efficacy may actually decrease for some individuals during leader development while increasing for others.

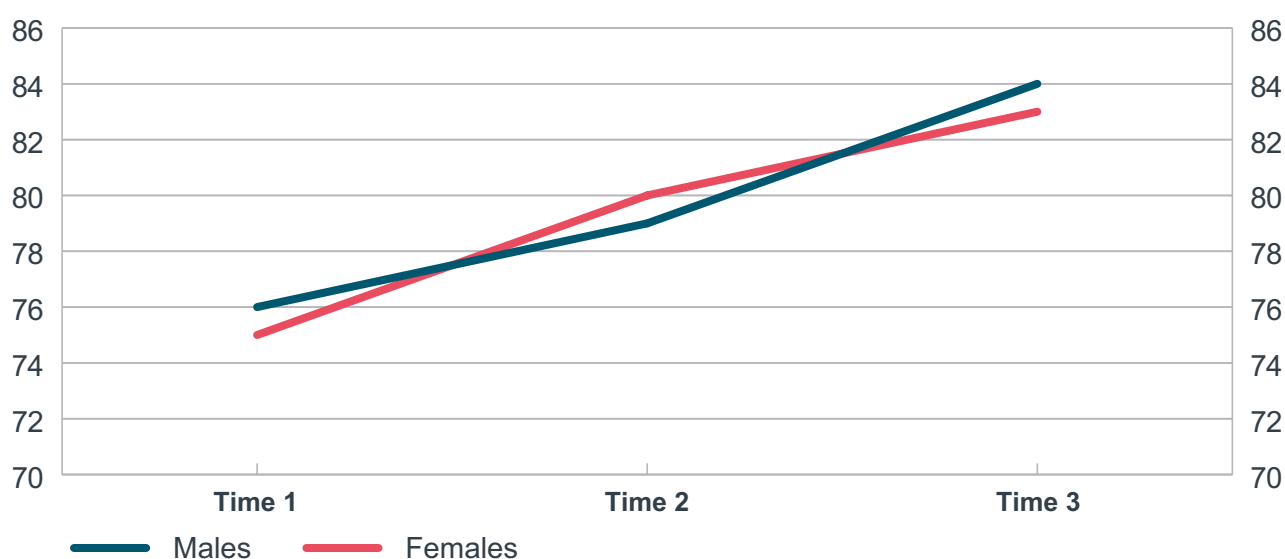
Gender differences in leader efficacy

Table 19. Gender differences in leader efficacy

	Leader efficacy (out of 100)	
	Males (Mean, standard deviation)	Females (Mean, standard deviation)
Time 1	76 (10)	75 (9)
Time 2	79 (11)	80 (7)
Time 3	84 (8)	83 (7)

None of the differences between male and female participants at Times 1, 2 or 3 were statistically significant ($t(77)=.41, p>.05$; $t(55)= -.60, p>.05$; $t(33)=.59, p>.05$ respectively).

Figure 11. Change in leader efficacy for male and female TMP participants from Time 1 to Time 3



Competence as a Leader (measured in Survey 1 and 3)

At Survey 1 and 3, participants are asked to rate their competence in the seven areas developed for this survey, based on characteristics that are consistently mentioned within the literature of HE leadership at senior levels (ie dean, PVC, etc) and which also map to the TMP intended outcomes.

The full measure can be found in Appendix 1, but items include: 'Balancing the demands between administrative control and faculty autonomy' and 'Maintaining an appropriate balance between top-down, bottom-up and lateral communication and influence'.

For each, participants rated their competence using a 7-point scale from 1 'Not very effective' to 7 'Highly effective'.

Table 20. Competence as a leader

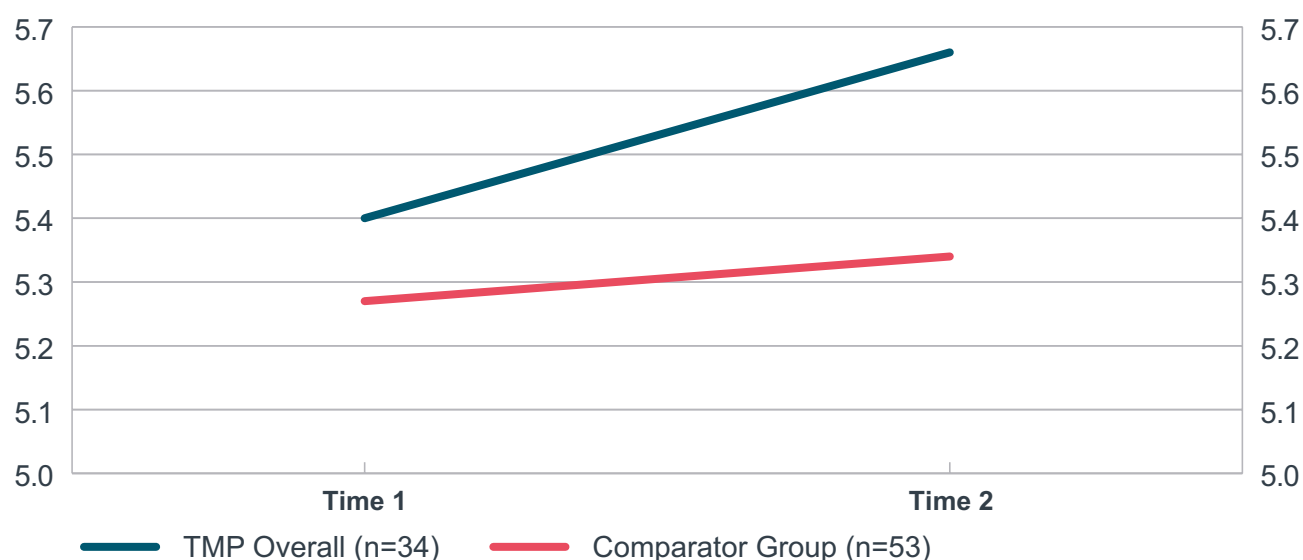
	Time 1	Time 3
TMP 39 (n=7)		
Mean (out of 7)	5.08	5.46
Percentage change from time 1		8%
TMP 40 (n=7)		
Mean (out of 7)	5.59	5.63
Percentage change from time 1		1%
TMP 41 (n=8)*		
Mean (out of 7)	5.70	6.05
Percentage change from time 1		6%
TMP 42 (n=6)		
Mean (out of 7)	5.56	5.78
Percentage change from time 1		4%
TMP 43 (n=6)		
Mean (out of 7)	5.54	5.72
Percentage change from time 1		5%
Overall (n=34)		
Mean (out of 7)	5.40	5.66
Percentage change from time 1		5%
Comparator group (n=53)		
Mean (out of 7)	5.27	5.34
Percentage change from time 1		1%

*For TMP 41, an outlier whose change from time 1 to time 3 was so dramatic (125%) that it skewed the rest of the results has been removed.

Participants across each of the TMP cohorts reported an increase in competence as a leader ranging from 1% to 8%. Overall, there was a 5% increase from 5.40 to 5.66 which was statistically significant ($t(34) = -2.34, p < .05$).

Leader effectiveness for the comparator group was also measured at Time 1 and Time 3 and it increased by 1% from 5.27 to 5.34, which was not statistically significant ($t(52) = -0.65, p > .05$). Leader effectiveness for both groups over 18 months is illustrated in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5. Leader effectiveness over 18 months



In contrast to leader identity and leader efficacy, TMP participants' leader effectiveness was slightly higher than that of the comparator group at Time 1 (5.40 versus 5.27) but this difference was not statistically significant ($t(76) = 0.84, p > .05$). The difference had increased by Time 2 with the TMP participants' mean leader effectiveness score at 5.66 compared to 5.34 for the comparator group. This difference was statistically significant ($t(76) = 2.62, p < .05$).

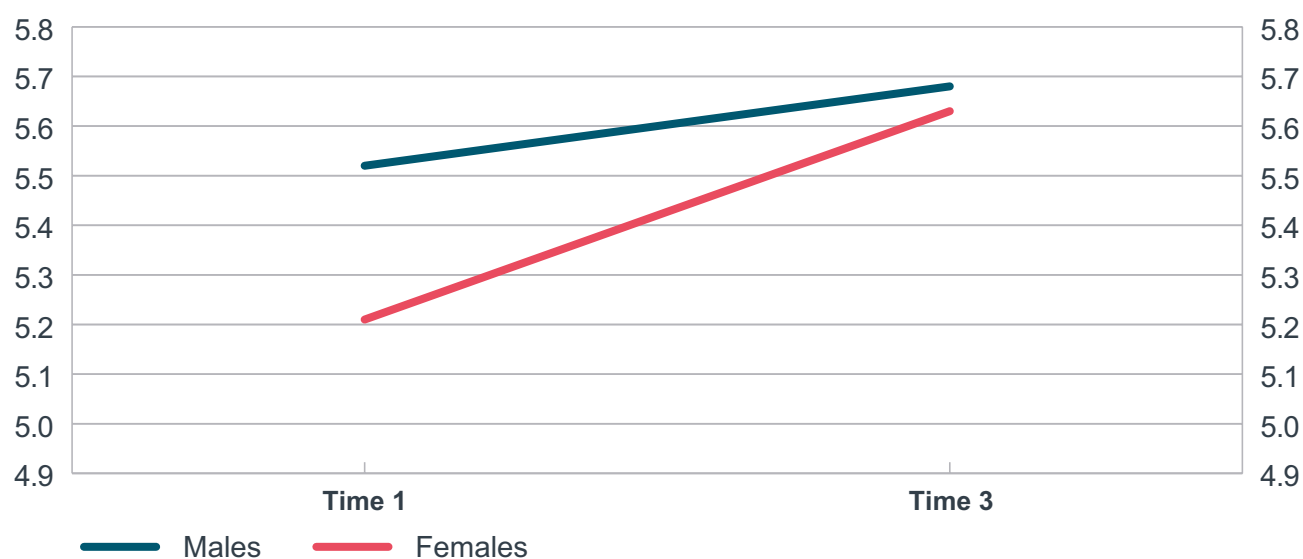
Gender differences in leader effectiveness

Table 21. Gender differences in leader efficacy

	Leader effectiveness (out of 7)	
	Males (Mean, standard deviation)	Females (Mean, standard deviation)
Time 1	5.42 (0.62)	5.21 (0.78)
Time 3	5.68 (0.63)	5.63 (0.52)

Neither of the differences between male and female participants at Times 1 or 3 were statistically significant ($t(67)=1.25, p>.05$; $t(33)=.26, p>.05$ respectively).

Figure 12. Change in leader effectiveness for male and female TMP participants from Time 1 to Time 3



Development against TMP outcomes

Finally, participants were asked to rate the extent to which they felt the TMP had helped them to achieve outcomes aligned to the programme objectives as at TMP 39.

Table 22. Achievement against TMP outcomes (1 – Not at all; 5 – A great deal)

	To what extent do you feel TMP has helped you to:						
	Undertake effectively a leadership role I already have	Undertake a leadership role I aspire to have	Better shape institutional strategy, position or culture	Bring about change through engaging people	Better work through collaboration and diversity	Build a network of peers	Build a knowledge of what other institutions are doing
TMP 39 (n=7)	3.86	4.00	4.14	4.00	3.71	4.14	4.57
TMP 40 (n=7)	4.14	4.00	3.86	4.14	4.14	4.00	3.71
TMP 41 (n=9)	4.33	4.22	4.11	4.00	4.11	4.67	4.44
TMP 42 (n=6)	4.33	4.17	3.67	3.67	3.50	4.50	4.17
TMP 43 (n=6)	4.33	4.33	4.17	3.83	3.67	5.00	4.83
Overall (n=35)	4.20	4.14	4.00	3.94	3.86	4.46	4.34

Participants were positive that the TMP had helped them to achieve each of the outcomes with this being clearest for building a network of peers and least clear for better work through collaboration and diversity.

Learning journal responses (measured in Survey 2)

Participants at the end of Survey 2 had the option to provide more detail in a number of areas relating to what they gained from the programme, through a shortened version of a learning journal.

These open questions focused on:

- + What has been the most significant learning for you from the TMP?
- + Have you applied or do you plan to apply any learning from the TMP to your work?
- + Do you feel there are any barriers in applying the learning from the TMP to your work?

Most significant learning

Participants commented on what had been the most significant learning for them from the TMP with leadership style and associated skills mentioned most frequently:

“To accept that I don’t have to always be the one with big ideas. But that I can play a fundamental role in evolving the concept to actual actions.”
(TMP 40)

“How to approach different situations and use different styles to increase my influence.”
(TMP 40)

“How to trade off the need to be yourself against what might be expected in leadership roles.”
(TMP 41)

“Understanding that my role is increasingly one of enabling others to do theirs to the best of their ability. Also, that there is a happy medium when presenting myself in key leadership situations – does not have to be full on competitive, nor does it have to be passive... a quiet, determined confidence works well.”
(TMP 42)

Self-awareness including comparison to others emerged as the second most common theme:

“It has provided a way of calibrating my skills and capabilities as a management and leader within a high quality cohort”.
(TMP 39)

“Comparing my situation to that of others. Self reflection on abilities and weaknesses.”
(TMP 40)

“The coaching I received; this encouraged me to reflect on my values and how these are embedded at work.”
(TMP 42)

Themes and how often they were mentioned are presented in Table 23.

Table 23. Most significant learning themes mentioned by TMP participants

	TMP 39 (n=10)	TMP 40 (n=11)	TMP 41 (n=14)	TMP 42 (n=9)	TMP 43 (n=6)	Overall (n=50)
Leadership style and associated skills	3 (30%)	7 (64%)	11 (79%)	2 (22%)	1 (17%)	24 (48%)
Self-awareness	3 (30%)	6 (55%)	5 (36%)	5 (56%)	0 (0%)	19 (38%)
Confidence	3 (30%)	0 (0%)	2 (14%)	3 (33%)	3 (50%)	11 (22%)
Clarity around career (eg goals or aspirations)	3 (30%)	1 (9%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	2 (33%)	7 (14%)
Other (eg insights into senior level realities; strategy within HE, etc)	3 (30%)	1 (9%)	0 (0%)	3 (33%)	1 (17%)	8 (16%)

Note: A participant could mention more than one theme, consequently percentages relate to the percentage of participants who mentioned a theme and do not add up to 100%.

Application of learning or intention to apply

A number of participants provided comments regarding how they have applied or intended to apply the learning from the TMP.

Table 24. Application of learning or intention to apply themes mentioned by TMP participants

	TMP 39 (n=12)	TMP 40 (n=10)	TMP 41 (n=13)	TMP 42 (n=8)	TMP 43 (n=6)	Overall (n=49)
Broad example	4 (33%)	4 (40%)	11 (85%)	4 (50%)	4 (67%)	24 (49%)
Specific examples	4 (33%)	3 (30%)	2 (15%)	4 (50%)	2 (33%)	15 (31%)
Application of learning to own team	3 (25%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	2 (25%)	0 (0%)	6 (12%)
Career applications	3 (25%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (10%)

Note: A participant could mention more than one theme, consequently percentages relate to the percentage of participants who mentioned a theme and do not add up to 100%.

The most common theme was what we have termed broad examples, relating to a theme, a topic or general practice eg:

“Yes – used material around employee engagement and followership.”

(TMP 39)

“I have tried to use the different styles and approaches. It has also made me more confident and I think a better ‘presenter’ in meetings, although I feel that also means that I need to ensure I stay flexible in my approach.”

(TMP 40)

“Being able to develop different ‘styles’ to adapt to how a situation is evolving based on people’s reactions to and handling of a given problem.”

(TMP 41)

“I apply a lot of the learning regularly – in terms of how I operate, how I relate to people, and how I inspire people to achieve.”

(TMP 42)

“I try to embed what I have learnt in practice, from team development, to broader leadership across the institution. I am more aware now, as a leader, as to the effect I can have on people and I am more mindful of what I say and when.”

(TMP 43)

The second most common theme has been termed specific examples in that they refer to specific contexts or situations:

“The development of strategic planning for research within my institution.”

(TMP 39)

“My confidence is certainly much stronger. This includes my confidence that my next steps will become clear and that I don’t have to ‘hang onto’ my current role. As a result, I will cease most of my current role at the end of the academic year and have indicated in the university my intent to be available for other opportunities – I would not have had the confidence to do so previously.”

(TMP 40)

“I am beginning to in my work with my line manager, the VC, in my appraisal and objective setting as a start.”

(TMP 41)

“In a major restructure.”

(TMP 42)

“I have also talked with colleagues about their own ambitions and plans more frankly than I might have done prior to TMP having seen the value of such frank and interested feedback for myself!”

(TMP 43)

Interestingly, applications relating to career were mentioned by three participants from TMP 39 and two from TMP 40 but not at all by participants from TMP 41 through TMP 43. An example of a reference to this type of application is:

“To make the decision to apply for, and to prepare for interview, for internal promotion to the [removed] which was successful and I move into post in [removed].”

(TMP 39)

Barriers to applying learning

Thirty nine participants from across TMP 39 to TMP 43 commented on whether they encountered any barriers in applying the learning from the TMP to their work. Encouragingly, 26% of these participants felt there were no barriers.

Barriers related to organisational inertia or to their senior management team were felt by 24%:

“Some of the suggestions for how to change the leadership style of the executive team are difficult to execute alone if the rest of the executive team are in completely different starting points concerning self-reflection on leadership styles, etc.”

(TMP 39)

“What was very powerful about TMP was the fact that the cohort was developed together, and everyone gained a greater appreciation of each other’s strengths and working styles. We don’t do that kind of immersive development as a senior team in my own institution, so the group dynamic perhaps is not as understanding and trusting as on TMP.”

(TMP 40).

“There is so much our institution could learn from TMP, starting with a review of our top team and how we relate to each other, our respective strengths etc. But I am not sure if our leadership would wish to ‘go there’.”

(TMP 41)

“In my institution an exec dean has authority on paper but in reality are often bypassed, I can’t achieve all that I would like to hear as a result and am often put under pressure to work in ways that are counter my values but without the route to changing the ways of working.”

(TMP 42)

Other barriers mentioned included a lack of time; being able to apply the concepts and material from the TMP to their own contexts (sometimes termed far transfer); personal barriers (eg mindset, lack of confidence); lack of opportunity; difficulties in keeping the learning fresh/available; and finally, gender:

“The only barriers are the social barriers for women. Every day I am subtly left out of discussions. I’m not treated as if I am a significant part of the team.”

(TMP 40)

Table 25. Barriers to applying learning themes mentioned by TMP participants

	TMP 39 (n=10)	TMP 40 (n=10)	TMP 41 (n=11)	TMP 42 (n=7)	TMP 43 (n=1)	Overall (n=39)
None	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	3 (27%)	2 (29%)	0 (0%)	10 (26%)
Organisational inertia / senior management team	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	1 (9%)	3 (43%)	0 (0%)	9 (23%)
Lack of time	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	4 (36%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	8 (21%)
Applicability (ie applying learning to a different context)	0 (0%)	3 (30%)	1 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (10%)
Difficulties in keeping the learning fresh/available	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (27%)	1 (14%)	0 (0%)	4 (10%)
Personal issues	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	1 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (8%)
Lack of opportunity	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	1 (14%)	0 (0%)	3 (8%)
Gender issues at senior level	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (4%)

Note: A participant could mention more than one theme, consequently percentages relate to the percentage of participants who mentioned a theme and do not add up to 100%.

Straightlining

Straightlining refers to the process by which respondents give the same answer to a series of questions presented in a grid or Likert scale format (Schonlau and Toepoel, 2015). Straightlining is of concern due to its indication of poor quality responses, thus affecting conclusions drawn from this type of data (Greszki, Meyer and Schoen, 2014; Zhang and Conrad, 2014). Straightlining is usually identified in a number of ways: a) by simply 'eyeballing' the data to detect patterns or a lack of variation in responses; b) by using web-analytics for online surveys to check how long the respondent has spent completing the questionnaire to give some confidence in the responses received and consideration given to each question; c) through the use of standard deviation (SD) to test within-subjects SD. This final approach was employed within the dataset, with respondents who gave the same answers to all questions on a measure having a SD of zero across this set of questions. This can allow some conclusions to be drawn about straightlining. However, the information must be considered in line with the responses given on other measures and those reflected by their fellow participants.

Standard deviation in respondent answers was assessed across all measures used within the TMP grouping at Time 1, Time 2 or Time 3. Variation in responses was recoded (1) and those respondents with no variation in responses on one measure were recorded and assessed against other measures to identify patterns in responses.

Time 1: No variation in responses

Learning orientation and leader identity in this larger sample, perhaps due to the small number of items on these measures, showed higher numbers of non-variation in response (n=21 and n=20 respectively). Leadership self-efficacy and Leadership effectiveness both showed little evidence of straightlining with non-variation in response only seen in two cases and three cases respectively (out of 79).

Time 2: No variation in responses

Only a small number of cases lacked variation in response at Time 2. Again leadership self-efficacy showed the least evidence of straightlining with non-variation in response only seen in one instance.

Time 3: No variation in responses

Even with a larger sample, only a small number of cases lacked variation in response at Time 3. Leadership self-efficacy showed no evidence of straightlining at Time 3.

Appendix 1a. Survey measures

Motivation to learn

Motivation to Learn was measured through four items taken from Noe and Schmitt (1986) with slight alterations to wording to match the TMP context.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

Response options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither, Agree, Strongly Agree

- + I will try to learn as much as I can from the Top Management Programme
- + The knowledge and experience I gain in the Top Management Programme will advance my career
- + I volunteered for the Top Management Programme as soon as I could
- + The reason I decided to attend the Top Management Programme was to learn how I can improve my skills.

Noe, R A and Schmitt, N (1986). The influence of trainee attitudes on training effectiveness: Test of a model. *Personnel Psychology*, 39, 497-523.

Developmental readiness

Developmental readiness was measured through five items developed for this survey based on the work of Chaimongkonrojna and Steane (2015) and Hannah and Avolio (2010).

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

Response options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither, Agree, Strongly Agree

- + I am clear on my developmental goals coming on to the Top Management Programme
- + I have thought through what I would like to achieve through completing the Top Management Programme
- + I have discussed my reasons for attending the Top Management Programme in detail with my sponsor (ie vice-chancellor/principal).

In the year prior to commencing the Top Management Programme, to what extent would you agree that you have been:

Response options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither, Agree, Strongly Agree

- + Working on improving my leadership skills and approach
- + Actively working on my leadership shortcomings.

Manager support

Manager support was measured using six items developed for this study. *Participants rated each item on a 5-point scale (1- Not at all, 3 – To some extent, 5 – A great deal).*

Before commencing the TMP, my sponsor discussed:

- + The importance of TMP to my role/work within our institution
- + Potential goals I should consider in relation to the programme.

During the TMP, my sponsor discussed:

- + The programme content in relation to me personally
- + How programme content might relate to my role/work within our institution.

Since completing the programme, my sponsor has:

- + Enquired about what I have gained from the TMP
- + Met with me to review how the learning from the TMP relates to my role/work within our institution.

Leader identity

Measured by four items taken from Hiller (2005).

To what extent do the following statements describe you:

Response options: 6-point scale from 'Not at all descriptive' to 'Extremely descriptive'

- + I am a leader
- + I see myself as a leader
- + If I had to describe myself to others, I would include the word leader
- + I prefer being seen by others as a leader.

Leader efficacy

Thirteen items taken from the Leadership Efficacy Questionnaire (Hannah and Avolio, 2013), slight alterations to wording to match context.

Think about yourself as a leader in your institution and for each item below, indicate your level of confidence. A score of 100 represents 100% confidence, whereas a score of 0 means no confidence at all.

Responses options: 11-point scale from 0 'Not at all confident' to 50 'Moderately confident' to 100 'Totally confident'

- + Motivate my followers to achieve their best
- + Develop agreements with followers to enhance their participation
- + Coach followers to assume greater responsibilities for leadership
- + Inspire followers to go beyond their self-interests for the greater good
- + Get my followers to meet the requirements we have set for their work
- + Get followers to identify with the central focus of our institution
- + Determine what leadership style is needed in each situation
- + Motivate myself to take charge of groups
- + Remain steadfast to my core beliefs when I'm challenged
- + Motivate myself to perform at levels that inspire others to excellence
- + Develop detailed plans to accomplish complex objectives
- + Strive to accomplish the targeted goals set by my superiors (eg vice chancellor/principal)
- + Think up innovative solutions to challenging leadership problems.

Leader Efficacy Questionnaire Copyright (c) 2013 by Sean T Hannah and Bruce J Avolio.
Published by Mind Garden, Inc. www.mindgarden.com

Leader effectiveness

Seven items developed for this survey based on characteristics that are consistently mentioned within the literature of HE leadership at senior levels (ie dean, PVC etc) that also map to the TMP intended outcomes.

How would you rate your competence in each of the following areas:

Response options: 7-point scale from 1 'Not very effective' to 7 'Highly effective'

- + Balancing the demands between administrative control and faculty autonomy
- + Maintaining an appropriate balance between top-down, bottom-up and lateral communication and influence
- + Effectively influence the behaviour of academics
- + Navigating and utilising informal paths and networks within your institution.
- + Balancing your role/identity as an executive and as an academic.
(NOTE: If you are not an academic, you do not need to reply to this item)
- + Delivering strategies and outcomes across faculty or departmental boundaries
- + Promoting and fostering collegiality.

Appendix 1b. Survey reliabilities

Scale reliabilities were calculated using responses provided by the largest sample across time, eg comprising all cohorts at Time 1 (TMP and comparator group). General guidelines suggest reliability analyses may not be advisable among samples of fewer than 30 respondents (Yurdugül, 2008). Although opinions on the acceptable values for Cronbach's alpha (measure of reliability) differ, the generally accepted value for cognitive tests is 0.8, with cut-off points for ability tests indicating values of 0.7 to be acceptable (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011; Kline, 1999). However, some suggest values lower than 0.7 may also be regarded as acceptable (Nunnally, 1978).

Time 1

Motivation to learn and developmental readiness

Analysis of the reliability of the scores on the motivation to learn scale (four items) among the current sample of 79 respondents, was found to have relatively low reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha=.53$). In the current sample of 79 respondents the reliability of the scores on the developmental readiness scale (five items) was found to be acceptable with a Cronbach's α of .70.

Learning orientation

In the current sample of 229 (valid) respondents the reliability of the scores on the learning orientation scale (five items), was found to be acceptable with a Cronbach's α of .79.

Leader identity

In the current sample of 237 respondents, the reliability of the scores on the leader identity scale (four items) was found to be acceptable with a Cronbach's α of .87.

Leadership efficacy

For this current grouping of 237 respondents the reliability of the scores on the leadership self-efficacy scale (11 items) was found to be acceptable ($\alpha=.87$).

Leadership effectiveness

For this current grouping of 133 (valid) respondents the reliability of the scores on the leadership effectiveness scale (eight items) was found to be acceptable ($\alpha=.86$).

Scale reliabilities at Time 2 and Time 3

Reliabilities of the scores on scales used at Time 2 and Time 3 are reported below. However, in some instances due to the smaller sample size, results should be interpreted with caution.

Time 2

Opportunity to reflect

For the grouping of 58 (valid) TMP respondents the reliability of the scores on the opportunity to reflect scale (four items) was found to be approaching acceptability ($\alpha=.70$).

Development of self-awareness

In the current sample of 57 (valid) TMP respondents, the reliability of the scores on the development of self-awareness scale (four items) was found to be acceptable with a Cronbach's α of .70.

Line manager support

In the current sample of 57 (valid) TMP respondents, the reliability of the scores on the line manager support scale (six items) was found to be acceptable with a Cronbach's α of .90.

Leader identity

In the current sample of 57 (valid) TMP respondents, the reliability of the scores on the leader identity scale (four items) was found to be acceptable with a Cronbach's α of .83.

Leadership efficacy

For this current grouping of 57 (valid) TMP respondents the reliability of the scores on the leadership self-efficacy scale (11 items) was found to be acceptable ($\alpha=.88$).

Time 3

Leader identity

In the current sample of 88 respondents, the reliability of the scores on the leader identity scale (four items) was found to be acceptable with a Cronbach's α of .87.

Leadership efficacy

For this current grouping of 88 respondents the reliability of the scores on the leadership self-efficacy scale (11 items) was found to be acceptable (α =.86).

Importance of TMP outcomes

In the current sample of 35 TMP respondents, the reliability of the scores on the importance of TMP outcomes scale (seven items), was found to be approaching acceptability (Cronbach's α =.90).

Leadership effectiveness

For this current grouping of 75 respondents the reliability of the scores on the leadership effectiveness scale (eight items) was found to be acceptable (α =.70).

Overall, reliabilities of scores on the repeated scales appear relatively stable.

Appendix 2 – Detailed findings: qualitative interviews (TMP 39 – 43)

In order to obtain detailed information on the experience of TMP alumni, in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with a sample of participants from each of the TMP cohorts 39-43 (in total 11 interviews). The questions were designed to build on the surveys and provide richer insights on the participants' experience, (the main rationale of Research Objectives 2-4), as well as gaining insights into the conscious choices participants made to transfer the learning back into their institution. This mixed methodology approach allows the findings to be confirmed and collaborated (Gilpin-Jackson and Bushe, 2007) and responds to calls (Burke and Hutchins, 2007) for variety in data collection when studying transfer.

Not surprisingly, many similar themes that have already been reported in the retrospective study also arose among members of these more recent cohorts. In essence the findings from these latest cohorts illustrate the enduring nature of many of the aspects of TMP that have made it such a prominent senior leader development programme in the higher education sector.

In the sections that follow, the findings from these interviews are presented according to the three key stages in the TMP participant journey:

- a.) Decision to attend TMP
- b.) TMP experience and suggestions for programme improvement
- c.) Post programme transfer issues

a. Decision to attend TMP

The prevalent theme which arose, both among those who took part in the retrospective and longitudinal studies, surrounding their decision to attend the TMP was linked career progression. In the main the interviewees put forward personal motivations where they recognised the need to continue to develop and avail of leadership opportunities was key. Indeed, many felt that participation in a programme such as TMP would allow them to gauge if they were ready for the next career move, assess their leadership qualities and determine if they were ready to move up the hierarchy. This was a common theme among all cohorts. For example, an interviewee from TMP 41 viewed his participation as a way “to improve capability in terms of being on track to a more senior position, perhaps VC at some point in time but also to learn and to do leadership better.” Relatedly, several interviewees commented that TMP was a way to gain confidence in one's own abilities, as one TMP 39 participant described: “... I suppose a little bit more confidence about my own strategic development capabilities and just general broader sector understanding”. Another TMP 39 interviewee suggested that evaluating herself against others was the primary motivation where she wanted to “... think about what future opportunities there might be or how I might be thinking about

future opportunities. Would I be up for the next level of leadership and things like that? So, that's how it came about". In a similar vein an interviewee from the final cohort we studied (TMP 43) noted how he felt that TMP could act as a major milestone on his "personal journey ... just trying to understand myself I guess, the limitations of what I knew and my skillset and looking to try and extend that really to be a better leader".

In our discussions with other interviewees, it became clear that, like the above participant, many had spent considerable time thinking about the qualities of the TMP and why it, as opposed to others, offered the right opportunity at that particular point in their career. For example, one of the interviewees from TMP 41, when asked about her motivation, described her initial reluctance because of her perception that the TMP was a "finishing school for future VCs". However, she went on to describe how, when she investigated the contents and rationale of the programme in more detail, she decided that it would be worth undertaking "to give [her]self that challenge." For another of the TMP 39 cohort, after investigating its merits, it was felt that TMP provided a unique career development opportunity:

"... universities are always evolving, it was really just in terms of me hoping to look at opportunities beyond my role as executive dean in terms of university leadership and I saw TMP as an ideal way to develop my skills and give me greater insights into what the nature of those opportunities might be and how I could position myself more effectively."

As well as personal development motives, across all the cohorts there was evidence that other factors influenced the decision-making process. A prevalent theme was linked to the disruptive strategic changes that the higher education sector now faced, which was clearly a catalyst for senior level staff to actively participate in a programme such as the TMP:

"I guess (university name) is on a big strategic journey generally and, therefore, that's sort of a big backdrop to people attending TMP and the university has been very supportive of senior members of staff coming on TMP programme."

(TMP 39)

"... the other piece that we embarked on as soon as I took up that mantle of provost was a restructure of the university. So an academic restructure and in the impact groups that was my scenario that I was working through as the TMP went on. It wasn't about the restructure, it was about how to lead the restructure but I definitely wasn't looking for here's a model to do it, as soon as I had gone through orientation day that's where I knew I was to lead a big change piece. So quite a stimulus."

(TMP 42)

“I’d taken on a new portfolio which is a brand-new portfolio at [university name removed] when I started and so there was a big desire for institutional change around partnerships, more generally, how you work with external partners, especially local government and councils and so on and how we worked with business in particular. So, there was a real desire institutionally to do that and to push the enterprise issue and gender a lot more and working with female students and staff, enterprise and all that kind of stuff. So, it was a big shift for [university name removed] actually and it was my job to try and lead it.” (TMP 43)

Not surprisingly, others spoke about a combination of both personal and more institutional motivations when deciding on TMP participation, as another TMP 39 interviewee noted: “it was self-initiated ... but I was coming up to a career juncture as well in terms of thinking what to do next, so it was driven by myself and obviously supported by my line manager (vice chancellor)”. This issue of having a supportive senior sponsor in place was clearly a key factor for many others and we could have included many quotes illustrating their influence, but the following illustrate the importance of a supportive leader in the TMP participation decision:

“My vice-chancellor had a very good relationship with TMP and the leadership development programme. He put me up for TMP because I was not really familiar with it, I’d done a lot of leadership programmes, I’d been to a Harvard Leadership Programme, [but] he said it is great because next time [on TMP] you’ll be networking.”

(TMP 40)

“The reason I landed up on TMP was so I was the international director and we created a new role for PVC International which I’d applied for and didn’t get but kind of came second and the university, the process of the university was we want to keep you and we’ll support you in your development and in conversations with the deputy vice-chancellor he said there’s a range of leadership programmes, the one you should focus on is TMP. ... So that was the kind of driver as to why I was supported by the university to go onto that programme.”

(TMP 42)

“I wanted to do it because I’d not really done any formal leadership and development and had talked about it for a couple of years with my manager, the vice-chancellor and she strongly recommended TMP because I think she was TMP 5, so she had the experience and had found it very, very valuable so she thought it would be something that would suit me given that she knew me and where I was and also, for my place in my career.”

(TMP 42)

As well as looking to support individuals, it appeared that in some institutions there was a long history of TMP participation among senior leaders which made it seem as if participation in the TMP had become a rite of passage:

“[University name removed] is quite good at, their senior team have pretty much all done TMP so informally there had been conversations I’d had with other people that said oh, I did TMP a couple of years ago or I did it 10 years ago, just that advice that said TMP was a very useful process to have gone through in terms of career development from a HE development.”
(TMP 42)

“No, as an institution, well our vice-chancellor is committed to Advance HE and TMP and all of our senior management, all of our vice-chancellors’ executive group have been through TMP and it was just basically my turn, I’ve only been at [university name removed] for 2.5 years, when I started I asked for some senior management training because I hadn’t had it in my previous role and was told yes, I would be going on TMP in the February which is when I started, February 2019 I think.”
(TMP 43)

Finally, two participants from TMP 39 and 40 spoke about the potential in the TMP to enhance their networks and acquire a new “peer group in terms of understanding [and] getting a better network around the sector, [and] I suppose a little bit more confidence about my own strategic development capabilities and just general broader sector understanding”. Indeed, the TMP 40 participant who we interviewed summed up the motivation of enhanced peer learning as a key motivator for him to participate: “I got to look at the four or five people who are surrounding me but also the 40 people who are doing completely different things in a different style”.

b. TMP experience and suggestions for programme improvement

When we asked the 11 interviewees from TMP 39-43 alumni about their overall experience, not surprisingly their comments echoed earlier rounds of data collection, illustrating that on the whole there was widespread satisfaction with the TMP experience. The sections below summarise the key issues.

Enhanced self-confidence and awareness

When asked to reflect openly on the most important take away from the TMP experience, the most common reflection centred on the enhanced self-confidence and self-awareness. Numerous examples of these were put forward, illustrating how the programme offered the ideal scenario to allow participants to compare themselves to peers and how engagement with TMP colleagues allowed them to consider their own abilities. For example, one TMP 39 interviewee noted how undertaking this programme to “rub shoulders with other people from other institutions of the same level” had meant he was much more confident when “engaging and engagement with other colleagues in the institution when trying to develop strategy, when trying to implement strategy”.

For others, participation in the TMP enhanced awareness of leadership styles with some confiding how confidence was augmented by simply observing how other TMP participants behaved in the various activities:

“Yeah, I think seeing different leadership styles at play at TMP was really very interesting, you know, different styles and approaches to the same sort of task I thought was fascinating. I mean, one of the final exercises was the kind of role play exercises around a particularly fictional university and it was fascinating to see how that got played out by different groups and different approaches.”

(TMP 39)

And:

“Oh, I think it gave me a lot of confidence. I was very, very unsure. It does bill itself as being for future VCs I’m not gonna, I’m not really even sure I want to be in the company of people who think they are that, You know, it kind of got me over that very self-imposed kind of sense of pushing away, rejecting what the kind of more senior leadership in the universities might be about and things.”

(TMP 39)

Reflecting what some said about their motivation to participate, it was clear that another key benefit received from the programme was linked to the very open and honest feedback given by fellow participants. For example, one TMP 39 interviewee observed “some of the activities were very useful at reflecting back to you from other people’s perspectives what they thought you were good at or not good at, so in that sense it was actually quite interactive and very useful”. A more recent participant from cohort TMP 41 echoed such sentiments: “... that’s probably the primary focus of the TMP really is to see one’s own...well it’s behaviour because that’s what other people are seeing, to see one’s own behaviours from other people’s perspectives, it’s that inside out sort of thing”.

When pressed further on this aspect of peer-to-peer learning, this interviewee described how the whole TMP experience had adjusted his “mental maps”:

“the main learning is in changing one’s paradigm and that the changes to one’s paradigm come in lots of different forms, so this is basically what happens with learning, isn’t it? The sort of shifts in one’s mental map of the world or outlook arise through many shifts that happen as a function of the programme. And I think there’s lots of examples of that. So, it’s not the case that there’s any one main learning but certainly where you kind of revise your own mental map of the world, that’s the main point, I think.”

Relatedly, other interviewees outlined the powerful learning that they benefited from as a result of the honest yet collegial feedback from their colleagues who openly shared ideas and experiences:

“I alluded to the fact that I worked in industry before academia, it's a long, long time ago but I couldn't ever imagine going to a cross-industry training session where people were so honest about their own organisations – warts and all. And it took me a little bit of time to actually get over that, so I could get to the point where I shared things myself but it was a very, very open and honest environment where people were willing to share in order to learn, ...it was a very good environment in that respect.”

(TMP 39)

The fact that cohorts mixed participants from different hierarchical levels and positions was also seen as a powerful catalyst for learning. For example, a TMP 40 interviewee described how he began to see things from others' perspectives while undertaking activities with fellow participants:

“They [fellow TMP 40 members] were dealing with the issues that were not as high-level strategic level, visionary level as the provost chancellor level. That was my first thing. I'm not saying I was negative about it, I was saying that they kind of engaged with the type of conversation that would be at faculty and school level rather than a strategic and executive level. But I felt that my approach to that probably helped me actually to try to adjust my approach and I'm going to do engagement activities with a completely different view.”

This interviewee described at length how reflecting on this experience stimulated new insights and strategies linked to developing interpersonal and influencing skills which he could use in the future:

“When I stepped up to the vice-principal research and enterprise, I had to influence people that practically could tell me buzz off – ‘I report to somebody else, I have nothing to do with you, why should I listen to you in the first place’. That was an interesting... I don't call it shock but an interesting wake up call to me, in that you need to bring people along with a different approach. That was quite I think helpful halfway through with TMP which allowed me to see people there. But again, it's not a criticism of TMP but again, I was associated with people in TMP which they were very much like a dean like or head of a school. Then I said all right, this is the case, then tried to influence them in your group and in your structure. So that then became a more exciting engagement with TMP and helpful one in the TMP, because I could test ideas. I could experiment ideas without fear of failure that might affect my proper job expectations.”

Such views were echoed by a TMP 43 alumni who spoke about the fact that in the TMP groups there was “no power structure, you’re all at the same level and that’s a really interesting environment to be in whether there is no hierarchy and as I said, you can’t take charge because everybody is in charge and that’s huge learning”. He went on to note that such an environment was clearly alien for others in his impact group who:

“just suddenly realise actually, I can’t tell these people what to do, I’m going to have to negotiate with them to get what I want and that had been forcing people to go through that skill has got to make us all better managers, it really does.”

Remaining on the subject of personal introspection and learning, other interviewees made interesting observations about how the TMP experience confirmed their previously held beliefs about their own leadership styles and behaviours. For example, another TMP 39 interviewee observed how several of the interactions and experiences he had proved to him that he was doing the right things as a “values-based leader”, which he felt made sure he stayed grounded in the HE sector where leaders need to “increasingly view the economic imperative and financial issues as core drivers”. He ultimately felt that “[TMP] reinforced those leadership roles in the way that I operate, and I think it almost gave me a stronger permission to be myself in terms of that environment.” Similarly, another TMP 39 interviewee reflected on how the TMP had positively impacted on her self-concept of leadership and enabled her to learn a lot about her approach, which might be:

“different to other people’s, the same as well, you know, it was an opportunity to compare my approaches, my values base with other people and to recognise an awful lot of commonality but also to better appreciate where I was different and what the strengths and weaknesses of that are.”

Ultimately it was clear that being able to have such reflection was possible because of the facilitative environment that had been created on the programme and, interestingly, another of the TMP 39 interviewees, who came from outside the UK and hence saw himself as something of an “outsider”, reinforced this view by noting how open those on the programme were, despite the fact that they moved in similar HE circles in the UK:

“... I was an outsider in a way because I didn’t know any of the people and I don’t work in the UK higher education system, so it might have been less of an issue for me in the sense of I’m thinking I’m not going to see most of these people again. But, I think for most of the people on the programme they would have all known about each other in the sector and would continue to know about each other and about the challenges that they were facing and what their skills were. ... My observation of them building trust with each other in the same way that I felt I’d built trust with people seemed to work well. It could be a scenario where you’ve got quite senior people who in the future some of them will be competing with each other for more senior roles in either their own or other universities.”

Other interviewees mentioned how their TMP experience and also more specific interventions provided powerful, and at times uncomfortable, learning which aided development of self-awareness as well as promoting critical evaluation of roles and skills. A central activity mentioned was the 360-degree evaluation, impact group appraisal and coaching process. These activities clearly made a real impact on this TMP 41 participant who was surprised at the lower evaluation ratings which he received from his cohort:

“By the end of it I was surprised that I hadn’t sort of come out as a sort of go-to person or something like that, you know. I hadn’t come out as the centre of the group and that surprised me really and that was part of the learning on the TMP, on the 360 I scored myself marginally more highly than people on the 360 had scored me right across the board. Mind you, I did put six for everything [laughs]. ... So I lost a bit of self-confidence but also position within the group I think because I felt it afterwards. When we did this interesting process of speaking about each other in the impact group with the chairs turned away from the centre of the table, so one person at a time would turn away from the centre of the table and other people would then speak about them, what I heard wasn’t as [laughs] as positive as what I thought, as I’d anticipated. So that’s a kind of learning but it’s not a positive learning, it’s actually...you know, if you think about the 360 feedback, I got a five and not a six out of six. If you think about the feedback from others when your chair is turned away from the table, you’re learning that you’re basically not having the impact or the social position that you anticipate to have. So that’s a difficult learning. It is learning but what you’re learning is that you’re not as good as you think you are. And that is very hard learning.”

An opposite view linked to critical self and peer learning was shared by another TMP 41 participant felt that one of the key advantages of participating in the TMP was how constructive feedback could be obtained:

“a kind of the mirror [was] reflected back on me and I got very positive reinforcement about my skill set and I thought that was very good at that time and that has empowered me to take the bold step and say actually, now is the time to move organisation and to think about new challenges.”

Not surprisingly this interviewee went on to describe how her TMP experience gave her renewed confidence to take herself “beyond a comfort zone almost and to have a group of peers and experts with facilitators actually say no, you’re absolutely bang on here”. She went on to describe the experience as:

“almost like an out of body experience and that peer group and empowerment that came as a result of it.... So for me, that’s the bit where I got a lot of the confidence, that actually it’s okay for me to be me but I must strive to improve but actually that authenticity is actually quite stand out... So it’s not imposter syndrome, it’s this other aspect. ... it’s that human essence in it and that stopped me as someone who authentically cares about the people around them but there was a bit of a disconnect there and that’s the stuff that I’ve been working on and taking that time and actually it’s really, really been very, very helpful.”

We could have included many other quotes illustrating the enhanced confidence that participants felt as a result of TMP but the following from a TMP 42 illustrates the life and career changing value of it:

“I feel more confident in everything. I feel I’ve grown into the role. Now, whether or not that is purely TMP, that is purely from going through a big change management process purely from time and now being seen in that role. But there is something, I didn’t feel at the start of TMP that I was provost. I had the imposter syndrome, I was looking over my shoulder going, I don’t know how this has happened. I don’t feel that now. I feel I’m the provost and I’m an excellent provost.”

Other TMP 42 and 43 participants also gave interesting comments illustrating how their confidence grew during the TMP. For example, one TMP 42 interviewee noted how at the outset of the programme he felt “massively out of [his] depth because I’m kind of going into this programme surrounded by PVCs and DVCs and people who had 20 years experience on me so there was that sense of is this the right thing for me and have I got anything to bring to this”. This person went on to describe how his “imposter” and “vulnerability” feelings soon subsided as he began to see that all participants face similar scenarios:

“... realising being able to develop close working professional and personal relationships with a people working at VC level, you realise everybody else’s problems are the same as your own and you realise that every other institution is going through exactly the same as you. You always worry that the [university name removed] way of doing things isn’t the right way and other people have got it right and actually realising they don’t was incredibly valuable. ... So, getting that comparability of view was incredibly helpful ...you realise that the good thing about the content of the programme is that you realise there are lots of different ways of skinning the cat and there’s validity in the approach that I had and there’s a whole bunch of validity in a whole range of other approaches around leadership and around management.”

This interviewee also spoke at length about the ongoing issues he had with mental health, but again illustrated how the TMP experience had really allowed him to confront these issues. To illustrate he related how “on the last day there was the opportunity for people to present ... so I did a piece on leadership and mental health ... there’s no way on God’s green earth that I would have done that at the start of the course, ... confidence I had something valuable to add in that space.”

Comments from another interviewee in this TMP 42 cohort, chimed with the above views. This particular participant felt that she benefited from having a “really good facilitator in the impact group”, who she gelled very quickly and who was able to identify the need for her to promote “personal resilience”. She further described the relationship she had with the coach and how:

“she nailed it for me within minutes of knowing me. So, there was a lot about personal resilience. But what I then unpacked and discovered what that was about for me from my personal resilience was about my moral compass and of always acting within my moral compass and not being influenced by others and also being authentic. And I found that those two factors underneath improved my personal resilience. Does that make sense?”

For the participants from the final cohort (TMP 43) who were interviewed it was clear that the TMP also helped to build personal resilience. For example, one interviewee summed up how his self-awareness, had been heightened “...on steroids basically” and how the main thing that he gained from TMP was clearer “insight into what matters”. When asked to elaborate on this he went on to explain how the TMP had shaped his career shaping and profoundly led him to question what type of organisation he wanted to be work in:

“I think I’d summarise it like that and what matters in terms of my own personal journey and the kind of institution I wanted to work at and the kind of institution I wanted to lead and that resulted in me leaving my job and taking another job [laughs] because I realised the importance of...it sounds really silly looking back actually but at the time it was a revelation. But the absolute importance of working with an institution whose values I share. That became so clear on TMP, it really did. We did a whole session around values and the strategy and that kind of stuff and it was quite a revelation and I learnt about myself. I was in the wrong university. I guess we’ve been talking about this throughout, there’s this idea of self-awareness and I think if we could sum that up, just of what you’ve been saying up until now, the gist of what you’ve been saying up until now, the moving of university to move civic based, value based ideas. That’s all about self-awareness and again, I think that’s one of the key objectives to TMP is to promote that self-awareness so you would agree that that has happened for you then?”

For the other interviewee from the TMP 43 cohort we interviewed, when asked about the impact that the TMP had made for her, it was clear that as well as the gaining of “an absolutely brilliant network”, she had gained “confidence” that her style of leadership reaffirming that it was appropriate for her role:

“I had always thought that my style of management was a bit brutal, a bit blunt and through the work we did with TMP and you know, the impact groups and also the wider discussion, I was getting feedback that actually it wasn’t. It was honest and appropriate. Open and fair. Going onto the course I suppose I’d still describe myself as being open and fair but perhaps slightly more reflective now than what I would have been then.”

However, even though colleagues in her impact group did help her to appreciate that her leadership style was, in her words, “attractive – they liked it”, she did note that the whole experience was very useful because it had urged her to look inwardly and examine her style: “But the one thing that I did, the evolution – coming out of TMP is just a bit more reflection and less bull in a china shop.”

TMP facilitators, structure, activities and challenge

Throughout the data collection for this study (from the retrospective to the more longitudinal element) our findings have clearly shown that some of the most enduring aspects of the TMP, such as the impact groups, coaching and the international trip, are still viewed very positively by alumni and are seen as vitally components of the programme. When interviewees were asked in more detail about the range of activities in the programme there was overwhelming agreement that they were appropriate and stimulated much learning among their cohorts. Regardless of the activities that were under investigation in the interviews, a key factor that was frequently mentioned, which was felt to contribute to their success, was the talents and skills of the TMP facilitators who from the very start of the programme were able to create an open and honest environment which allowed participants to fully engage. Relatedly, several TMP 39 interviewees praised the logical structure, flow and type of activities which they felt created a trusting atmosphere among participants and provided the catalyst to effective and engaging discussions:

“... there were a number of sessions where we travelled away together and stayed overnight, those things really helped people to, in a way, get the most out of a 24-hour day when you’re travelling and working and eating and so on with people. You get to work on the homework in a way of the 9 to 5 part.... I think that was kind of important, people had to trust each other a bit more, I guess.”

“I really appreciated the assessments that they did right at the beginning, so they did a bit of a 360-degree assessment, they did a particular, I can’t for the life of me remember the name of it, but this coloured wheel. And the discussions around that and the joint discussions around that, we talked about some of that altogether, not just as an individual so that was all very helpful.”

However, it was clear that although how the various activities were structured and facilitated were important ingredients of success for the TMP, much value of the programme was linked to the synergistic power and diverse nature of the impact groups to really stimulate learning. For example, a TMP 43 participant noted how working with the impact group raised his awareness of the need to appreciate the importance of context when fulfilling the role of department head:

“I look back now on some of the things I did as head of department and go, god, I was naive. I really was because I didn’t understand the context. And the TMP I think helped me understand both, in terms of the sessions, they were informative but more importantly I think from the conversations that I’d had with people on the programme and subsequently that network that built up in our little groups was invaluable and we had loads of discussion outside the formal setting, loads of discussions and they were critical really in that kind of shift and that move from being what you might say was a research focused academic to the more management, the leadership side. You absolutely did feel it and TMP did help.”

Another TMP 41 praised the diversity of the impact groups as well as their ability to “provide a forum of open, honest and confidential sharing”, while a TMP 42 interviewee noted that in the impact group of which he was a member “... if it had all been you know, deputy vice-chancellor’s education all with the same background I don’t think it would have been as rich. ... we had finance, HR in there and they really brought different ways of thinking and questions that I wouldn’t naturally have gone to so I think that added richness to it.”

For another TMP 43 participant we interviewed a similar picture emerged linked to the importance of the impact group, which she described as the “absolute standout” aspect of the programme for her and advised us that “if I had to say don’t do away with anything it would be don’t do away with the impact group and the work that we did there which was great.” Another TMP 42 interviewee emphasised that her ability to “assimilate the learning at the end” was clearly linked to the “process of impact group and the relationships were very, very powerful”. Similarly, a TMP 43 interviewee spoke about the power which “discussion outside the formal setting” in her impact group had allowing her to understand “that kind of shift and that move from being what you might say was a research focused academic to the more management, the leadership side. You absolutely did feel it and TMP did help.”

As well as the clear importance of the impact groups, many of the other specific activities and events in the programme were singled out by interviewees. For example, several spoke at some length about the learning that had resulted from the simulation and role play exercises. A particular focus of comments here was linked to the safe environment which the TMP created among groups that allowed for experimentation and trying out things. A TMP 39 interviewee summed this up noting:

“... the simulation exercise which I thought was, you know, really fascinating. It was working under a time pressure, it was adopting roles, there was quite a lot of jockeying for those roles and I know I was looking to sort of take on the VC role, which was what I wanted to do, partly because I wanted to actually, you know, see how it was in that safe environment.”

Still on the subject of specific activities, two interviewees in particular were very complimentary. For example, a TMP 42 member felt that “running the university simulation was also really, really powerful as well”, while a TMP 40 participant pointed out that the simulation exercise provided quality learning opportunities because it was unique to TMP and could not be easily replicated in other leadership programmes which he had also participated in:

“However, one thing I really couldn’t match in Harvard with [TMP], I’ll give you one example. The one that we did the simulation of the university. When we do role play, that one you could have not got it in Harvard, you could not get into anywhere, and for me, that was the highlight of the leadership development because it clearly identified my weaknesses as a leader. I could have not got it anywhere else.”

As alluded to above, interviewees from TMP 39-43 were complimentary about the TMP facilitators and the positive learning environment they co-created with participants in the structured impact group activities. For example, a TMP 41 interviewee praised the fact that the TMP allowed him to “look outside-in at other institutions” producing “incredibly powerful” learning:

“... because you can diagnose problems in a nano-second, whereas when you’re inside an organisation you kind of can’t see the wood for the trees and why that is the case, I think it’s a matter of scale, to be honest, when you’re looking outside in at another institution you’re not really interested in the minutia and the detail, you’re just focusing on the bigger scale issues.”

Additionally, several facilitators were singled out for special praise in relation to the more individualised coaching and mentoring sessions they delivered. We could have included many examples in relation to this but the following quotes from interviewees from several cohorts illustrate how TMP facilitators were able to create value:

“I think it was probably the coaching and I think that was, I was very impressed by the amount of wisdom that I was offered in terms of the coaching, I think it was very thoughtful and I’ve actually had a coach since and it’s been quite a satisfactory process with my own coach and all the senior executive but it’s not the same depth that I’ve found with TMP. I feel in terms of value that it’s more stereotyped whereas I felt within TMP it was highly personalised.”

(TMP 39)

“I think the coaching element and I think that’s about the chemistry between people, that’s what makes it work. I was very, very fortunate to have an absolute fantastic coach and me and that individual are now friends, professional friends and we remain in touch with one another and we have got one another’s mobile and regularly touch base and it’s really great just to have another colleague that you respect to be able to talk about anything. It’s great.”

(TMP 41)

“The second point I would say, the role that Paul played in terms of managing our team and the way he listened to us and the type of coaching he provided to the group and engaging with the staff, that was second to none.”

(TMP 40)

In terms of other specific activities mentioned in this series of interviews, there appeared to be much learning taken from the international trips for the more recent cohort participants. For example, one of the TMP 39 participants remarked how the trip to Scandinavia “was very, very interesting” and had helped him to understand a completely different HE context, while another from that cohort felt that trips are vitally important because of the tendency of UK HE leaders to:

“become quite insular just looking at issues in our immediate environment and I particularly thought the visits in Denmark and Sweden were some compelling case studies that I learned from and it caused me to reflect more broadly in terms of the educational position that we have and our educational policy frameworks as well as looking at my own personal development and how that might advance my career. So, I think it gave me a broader perspective which I thought was very enriching.”

This view was confirmed by others with a TMP 43 participant noting that the international trip to Singapore could “never be replicated ... it was just really interesting to learn about another education system.” However, further reflecting the diversity of experience of those who complete the TMP, one TMP 42 participant reflected that although the international trip was “great”, because she was a more seasoned international traveller than others in her group “it’s probably less impactful for me than it might be for others who don’t get to spend half their life on a plane” She went on to note that the trip to “Toronto was great, I think the way that we assimilated the learning at the end was really good but I think the process of impact group and the relationships were very, very powerful.” Meanwhile for one of the TMP 43 cohort the fact that the international week to Singapore was “probably the least structured environment that I’ve ever done any management, any leadership training in at all and it worked really well”. However, she went on to acknowledge that such flexibility and lack of structure in such an intense activity could be a problem for some “... I know others were completely pissed off the whole way through that we weren’t being told what we were supposed to be achieving at the end whereas I was all – let’s wait and see”.

For others, the meetings with current and past VCs were particularly enlightening, again because of the safe space and inclusive environment that characterised TMP. For example, one TMP 39 interviewee felt the VCs sessions were:

“... very interesting because in a sense, it was probably a situation where people were talking and responding in a way that they pretty much didn’t ever, you know, given the environment they were in, you know, as a vice chancellor you’re normally getting questions, you have to answer them as per your role whereas you’re in a safe environment being asked quite direct questions about work/life balance and all sorts of different things. I thought that was very interesting indeed.”

Resonating the above, one of the TMP 41 participants commented on how the VCs who spoke to her group were "... open and reflective, very responsive to the sorts of questions that we felt were pertinent to us and to the programme learning. ... we were able to really see it in action and validate that against our own views".

Ultimately, we sought to establish what the interviewees from TMP 39-43 felt about the programme as a whole in terms of challenge. In summary, the comments chimed with those previously collected in the study, where it was fair to say that for many TMP alumni the actual academic content in the programme was not particularly challenging or "difficult". However, as can be appreciated from the above sections, on a more emotional level, especially if participants fully engaged in the opportunity to embark on a journey of critical leadership self-reflection, then it was extremely challenging. We could have put forward many quotes to illustrate this view but those shown below in particular sum up the scenario. Firstly, with specific reference again to the coaching element and how the impact groups worked, a TMP 39 member noted how:

"... it had an appropriate level of challenge as well. I think that the coaching was excellent, and I think that was about challenging your own perceptions and assumptions and I found it very useful. I think as we begun to know each other more I think the group was also able to provide challenge to sort of hold a mirror up to ourselves as well and encourage us to accept responsibilities to self-challenge as well but content was of varying degrees and some of it was more challenging than others but I think overall it was an appropriate balance and I did feel as if there was challenge there and that was satisfied and necessary really."

Secondly, a TMP 40 participant spoke about the contribution of the programme in "helping to identify my mistakes, my weaknesses and guided me to through practice and experiment, how I can adjust myself to be able to be a better leader, to where I am and also where I was before."

Thirdly, three interviewees from TMP 41, 42 and 43 summed up the general consensus regarding the challenge of TMP when they spoke about the potential for the programme to take participants out of their comfort zones:

"I think the personal challenges are there, you did have opportunity to go out in a supportive way beyond an immediate comfort zone, but it was done in a very supported way. So, I think that's a really great strength never mind the content, I think that's a really good strength because it really does cause you to think." (TMP 41)

“To be honest, I didn’t find it challenging at all. Well, that’s not true that I didn’t find it challenging. I found some aspects of it difficult. So, role play, for example, I find difficult but can see why it’s a good learning tool. I am completely open to new experiences so for me, this is what this was about, it was just going out and learning as much as I could. So, there were a lot of things about myself that were reinforced by the programme. And then there were a lot of things as I said at the beginning that I was given confidence about that were okay. There was also quite a lot of good critical feedback about things that I need to think about, so hence reflection, giving others the opportunity to shine ...it wasn’t not challenging, if you see what I mean? It was for me at the right level. Nearly everything we did I thought was great. ... So I didn’t find it particularly challenging but that’s not to say that there isn’t challenge. It’s not to say that it’s not challenging enough, if you know what I mean?”

(TMP 43)

The key aspect to note from both of the above quotes is a need to commit to fully immerse oneself in the activities. A final quote from a TMP 42 participant summed up the challenge issue, where it is a personal decision regarding how challenging you make the programme and, ultimately, that will determine the value you take from the TMP:

“You can make it as challenging as you want, I would say. And where I got the challenge was by being vulnerable in the impact group. I think it was quite interesting at the orientation when we started with our seven, a couple of us started and I just got the feel and I thought deep breath, just go for it, let’s just put ourselves out there. And I think that a few members of the impact group went – oh my god, is that what it’s going to be like! ... I think by putting yourself out there you’re challenging yourself as to what you can get out of it. Did I always find the activities challenging? Not necessarily. ..., to me, it was the impact group. I found the other stuff interesting. I’m not complaining about any of it but it didn’t necessarily always challenge me as much because I think had perhaps had the opportunity to experience some of those things where not everybody in the room had.”

Suggestions for programme improvement

In the interviews we also asked all the interviewees to comment on how the TMP programme might be improved. As we have observed throughout this report, the vast majority of interviewees were extremely positive about their experience. However, several did have some thoughts and comments on enhancing the programme for future participants.

Firstly, in this sample of 11 interviewees, six worked at universities outside of the UK at the time of data collection, and it was important to get their perspective on potential improvements as international participants. For example, in TMP 39 one international participant in particular was quite vocal in terms of how things might be improved if the international market is a target for the TMP in the future. For him two key areas needed to be examined to ensure that international participants really benefit from the experience, especially when they returned to their host university. Most importantly he felt that more needed to be done to educate senior leaders in universities about the value of the TMP so that all the learning could be fully realised. He observed that:

“They [his university] definitely took an interest in how things were progressing and what value I’d gained out of it but I think once again because it’s not part of the Australian context it probably wasn’t as fully capitalised on as it would have been if I’d been in a UK university where others may have been through the programme, there may have been alumni, an understanding of the programme, its status and more recognised. Here, it’s something that I think could have been one of many professional development activities and there was a level of interest in, but I don’t think it aligned with what the TMP actually is I think one of the issues for me as someone who is not in the UK is that maybe TMP wasn’t well understood and I don’t think I may have sold it to my supervisor and others within the university in a way that I could eventually capitalise on further down the track.”

The second aspect that this interviewee felt needed to be addressed was linked to the perceived welcome that international participants get and noted that there was a lot of symbolic value in small things. He noted that because he was unable to attend the initial event, he did not receive the same programme resources as others, which he felt identified him as an outsider to the group:

“... because the group has met personally and I wasn’t there and everyone got a notebook that they were writing in and I never got a notebook and I know this sounds completely trivial but when you’re welcomed to a group I felt like I was outside already just in terms of like a transitional object, it’s a symbol of belonging. In the end I thought it’s that attention to detail that’s important ... I think if there is an international market in that TMP setting it needs to be thought through, what’s the experience from the participant’s point of view rather than an add-on. How do you actually make someone feel part of that programme in the fullest sense.”

Related to this issue of the TMP market, one of the TMP 41 cohort felt that there were real opportunities for Advance HE to revisit the alumni market and re-engage those who had completed the programme previously:

“I think that Advance HE should resell to their cohorts. So, there’s this idea that the TMP is a single intervention and once you’ve had that then everything is all well and good and off you go and advance in your career. But the truth is that there’s a massive self-made market there for advanced programme and they should resell to their TMP cohorts.”

This participant elaborated on his point arguing that that from his viewpoint “institutions would probably chip in £2,000 or £3,000 for a follow-up with TMP and there’s an opportunity there for Advance HE to sell again to their existing cohorts.” To him the value of “getting people back together again for a week” would be something many would “jump at” especially if it involved some innovative activities such as “a leadership exchange in Australia ... it’s just a one-week intervention after three or four or five years, that would be a great opportunity”.

As well as issues linked to the promotion and internationalisation of the TMP, other suggestions were made by those interviewed. For example, a TMP 39 interviewee felt that the area of leading transformational change could have been covered in more depth. This participant felt that change was more than simply embarking on a planned engagement process, as she summed up:

“I felt that was glossed over a little bit, there was the assumption that you could go out, engage, consult and then it would all be ok and that’s just not right. You can go and engage until the cows come home but if what needs to happen to the organisation to survive isn’t aligned with what people want then that’s difficult.”

Indeed, this viewpoint resonated with a participant from a later cohort (TMP 41) who spoke about the need to reflect and ensure that the programme continually “evolves” to truly reflect “what really matters to a 21st century university”.

As noted above, one of the key challenges of the TMP programme is the emotional investment that participants need to make to ensure that they fully benefit from the experience. Not surprisingly, this issue of emotional wellbeing arose in the interviews and some commented that facilitators need to consider how much support they give to ensure that participants can safely contribute in this way. For example, participants from TMP 41 and TMP 43 made some interesting comments surrounding programme engagement and self-confidence, especially when dealing with very personal psychological issues and emotional resilience, noting that:

“If you think about my experience really which was I lost a bit of self-confidence through the programme, ... I did feel that I was part of the group but clearly emotionally I was withdrawing a bit and so, people will be doing that variously, different people will be either 100% engaged, loving it etc. or they will be falling to the back a bit and that has to do with how everybody on the programme is looking out for everybody else. So I think given that it’s a cohort, more could be done around inclusion and making sure that everybody feels okay, checking in, that sort of thing. And it’s not specific to me, I’m pretty robust, to be honest, I’m a bit long in the tooth, been round the block, done lots of programmes. So I’m... Now whether that was intentional or stochastic, just serendipity that we ended up with a very, very good psychologist I’m not sure but she got underneath and if you’re going to start exposing people and getting underneath people you need to create a very safe space for doing that. So the connectivity between the group needs to be very strong in order to explore those kinds of feelings.”

(TMP 41)

And:

“Yeah, because that’s part of the journey I think when you’re reflecting on yourself, you start to feel uncomfortable because you realise things about yourself, the fact that I quite actually really need to be better and that’s quite uncomfortable because you thought you were okay at it, and that realisation of oh, I’m maybe not as good as I thought I was. ... People were going through lots of, and that shared the experience I think because you do get quite close to the people quite quickly. It’s quite weird if I’m honest, actually. I’ve not experienced anything quite like it, it’s a bit odd. The amount of trust you put in someone you don’t know that well so quickly is quite remarkable and people were sharing stuff that you know, was very difficult, in the group. And we helped people work through that and that was uncomfortable in that respect because you’re outside the comfort zone of, because you don’t know that person that well but you’ve obviously formed a very strong bond quite quickly and they’re happy to share.”
(TMP 43)

Similar comments were made by a TMP 39 participant who singled out the final simulation event proposing that “a bit more of a debrief around that and things, at an individual level” would have been helpful given that, although it went well, it was from her perspective quite a “disconcerting ... quite a difficult experience in a way so it would have been useful if they’d been around more immediately to kind of go whoa, what was all that about”.

Another issue which came to the fore was linked to the selection of the participants for the TMP. As was noted previously, while for many the fact that there was a diversity among the cohorts was clearly a positive element of the programme, one interviewee did caution that for the experience to be truly valuable organisers need to ensure that selection is appropriate:

“... I think a couple of people on that programme if there had been a discussion with one of the lead facilitators they would have been deemed not suitable and I think those were kind of, one particularly bad apple and the other was quite disruptive in a group and that continued for that group and for the wider cohort for the whole time. And I think that’s just about in terms of challenging the team to select.” (TMP 41)

Ultimately the two interviewees from the TMP 43 cohort helped to sum up the pragmatic viewpoint which seemed to be prevalent among many of those who have participated in this study. So, while there was overall widespread satisfaction, some questions were raised regarding a small number of the activities. Firstly, a talk from a VC which was “slightly controversial and didn’t land very well”. The interviewee did note that after some complaints this issue was “dealt with ... and it was fine”. Secondly, he described how there could have been better management of the final “worst case scenario role play exercise”:

“...one of the coaches played a particular role which didn’t play out very well with some of the people in the room and there was a little bit of tension and argument and I think that could have been handled better. And I think they probably just need to think through the role playing in that particular exercise which is the crisis management one and I think that probably needed a little bit of revision, I would say. It was okay but it got quite tense and I think the people facilitating didn’t help. And I think they could have handled this one differently, I think.”

Such concerns were aired infrequently by those we interviewed as part of this study and, as can be appreciated from the above sections, it would be fair to say that there was widespread satisfaction. Ultimately, the situation was summed up in the words of another of the TMP 43 interviewees who gave a very pragmatic overall opinion on the programme:

“I didn’t get very much out of my individual coaching, if I’m honest. In fact, I only had one session... Others might have got tonnes of stuff out of coaching. Would I change anything? I don’t think I would actually. I don’t know why you would muck with it really. It’s run Tuesday to Friday, that seems reasonable. You’re not out for the whole week unless, of course, you go to Singapore or Australia which the next one went to. So yeah, I’d leave it. There are some things when I think back now which I really enjoyed, we had a session with the unions and that was really, really helpful because I do a lot of work with the unions. We had some sessions with vice chancellors which weren’t brilliant but were helpful because I could then compare, I wouldn’t say do away with them because I see that other people get a lot out of them. Nah, I don’t think there’s anything that I’d change.”

c. Post programme issues

Evidence of learning transfer

As can be appreciated from the preceding sections, in this set of interviews we focused on development of effective leadership values, behaviours, skills and competence. Additionally, a key line of questioning was designed to establish how the TMP experience had influenced their leadership behaviours and activities back at their universities. Throughout the different cohorts many interesting responses were received illustrating the impact of the TMP. Returning to the issue of boosting confidence, for example, a TMP 39 participant noted how he had grown and now had more “confidence to be myself”, and elaborated on this by describing how he now felt better equipped to carry out a faculty review:

“... we had a recent corporate review of our faculty and I think it’s helped me position myself and the faculty around the future challenges I think the TMP did provide strong insights into management of compatibility issues and I feel that I have been able to present them more effectively to senior leadership within the university since I’ve undertaken the programme. So, I think it was a good balance and ... I think TMP gave me some useful tools to progress those, yes.”

As well as providing useful knowledge and confidence, other interviewees noted how they had become much more skilled in terms of leadership and management skills. For example, one noted how she had become better at asserting herself in relation to pursuing career goals:

“Yes, it’s certainly given me more confidence, that self-awareness has led to more self-confidence really. So, one of the things that I did pretty much straight away was uhm negotiate taking on being uhm the dean international for the college and I think one of the biggest things it did for me was help me kind of have the confidence to say actually, I don’t have to be, I don’t need to be head of school forever, so kind of indicated to the university that I would cease that role. I don’t think I’d have had the confidence to do that before. So, a little bit reverse in a way, I stepped out of the role, but I stepped out of the role in order to create other opportunities and see what came of that and that, for me, was quite a big thing to do.”

(TMP 39)

Others provided examples showing how the TMP had clearly influenced their style in relation to engagement and that communication had been enhanced. For one, this enabled him to more effectively manage and lead major change and transitions at the university:

“I think I started to value more and more the inclusiveness. So, as I went through the restructure and I was told it would never work, I don’t know what you’re doing, you’re mad but I actually did it as a co-design with the university, did a lot of focus groups co-design work etc., etc. and I was constantly, as I say, being told no, it will never work but the richness and the value I got out of that and I think there is a lot that we got at the end, everyone is now going oh, well that’s good. We didn’t get any union issues because how can you respond if it’s actually you’ve designed it, you’ve been part of it. So I think I strengthened my, I think in the application there were words that I used, you know responded to but I actually experienced the power of them.”

(TMP 42)

Another example of how transfer back at the workplace had happened was put forward by a TMP 43 interviewee who described how the “major change [in her behaviour] has been to step back” when it comes to her leadership and employ a more empowering style:

“... okay, well I can see a solution, but others might see a different and better solution so let’s have a conversation around that. And I consciously do that much more often than I used to. In some instances, I don’t and it’s not because I forget, it’s because something’s got to be done and therefore, you send out an instruction or you do it yourself but there is that sort of awareness of just letting others have an opportunity to contribute. And that’s come from TMP.”

Another interviewee in TMP 39 reflected how the TMP experience had enhanced her awareness regarding communication and how her practices as a senior leader could potentially negatively impact on employee wellbeing and work life balance. She described how the element in the programme linked to “modelling appropriate leadership” impacted on her, and as a result she “no longer sends emails to people at night and on the weekend because people are allowed to have a family life, their job shouldn’t define everything that they do”. Therefore, small elements of the programme clearly have the potential to stimulate real introspective analysis and in turn realign leader behaviours. This interviewee described in more detail how she was “more conscious of the signals that I’m sending. I think it’s also, [made me more aware to] look after my physical health more effectively as well ... I think it was sufficient to give me food for thought.”

This issue of understanding work life balance in a more holistic way also mentioned by another interviewee whose comments illustrated how TMP had had a profound effect on how he worked and clearly impacted on his wellbeing leading him to understand the importance of stepping away from work and stop taking “a lot of that stuff home with me”:

“So I felt out of my depth ... and I took a hell of a lot of that stuff really personally and I think the TMP process wasn’t necessarily the only thing that led me to this but was a big component part of a realisation that yes, because while I was getting a lot of feedback, especially in the impact groups was Jesus Christ, they’re asking me to do a lot and realising that I could be successful in what I was doing without having to own it in such a personal way. That’s been really helpful for me in terms of that reflection and being able to be a bit more objective with what I was being asked to do and what I was delivering, and that increased objectivity has been fantastic.”

(TMP 42)

The fact that these leaders were often at the centre of complex and challenging people management issues in their universities meant that they really valued how the TMP enhanced such skills, which were clearly in high demand back to the workplace. For example, a TMP 43 interviewee described how:

“those difficult conversations [are] better than I would have done it without the experience I had on TMP. The changes we have enacted in the last 15, 16 months here have been quite substantial and quite difficult actually but I think we’ve done it reasonably well actually and better as a consequence of my learning I think of dealing with that restructuring and difficult conversations with people.”

The same interviewee also spoke about how, when he arrived at his current university, there were many issues that needed to be addressed, including the introduction of a new people resourcing system as well as managing a major change programme. He reflected on his new role, which encompassed:

“responsibility for basically all income generation, any strategic development – all that is under me. ... so we went through quite a painful process of discussions, difficult conversations, restructuring, the hiring, and we’re just about out the other side and we’re in a much better place than we were when I arrived.”

When asked if he felt the TMP experience had impacted on this role, he remarked how he was in a meeting with colleagues who had also been through the TMP and who had commented “... Yeah. Well, we had that exact conversation yesterday. This thing we’ve just discovered, I said, it’s like being in one of those role plays on TMP, isn’t it? And of course, everybody just laughed because we all remembered what we were like.”

This comment, linked to the utility of the role plays back at the workplace, was echoed by another of the TMP 43 interviews who felt she could clearly link her newfound ability to delegate work tasks to the practice she had in TMP role play scenarios:

“I realised this towards the end, I don’t actually like asking people to do work, I find it really difficult to say, I’m sorry but I need you to do this. So, one of the role plays actually on TMP for me so we were doing some role play and it was like what do you need to do, well I need some practice in actually finding ways of asking people to do work without apologising for it. So that’s the combination of actually now you have to delegate and this is how you might do it and the practice around well, this is how you might actually do it and look upon it as a development opportunity, give people a chance to make their mark. So that was really helpful. Now, whether I would have got there without TMP, maybe, but certainly not as quickly, not as fast. So I’ve got a very good colleague who is part of our senior team who is exceptionally good at delegation to the point where I’m not entirely sure he does any work. So eventually I want to be picking up tips from [name removed]. That delegation thing has given absolute clarity for me through TMP.”

Continuing this theme of using specific skills from the TMP back at the workplace, another interviewee from TMP 40 explained how learning about the theory of leadership had clearly helped him to understand and “experiment” with balancing the right behaviour and style for the right situation:

“I think this was the magical thing that I benefited from TMP because I could experiment and see how I can manage my behaviour in the right way. Not too extrovert, not too introvert but hopefully right in the centre, in a very balanced way. ... a true exemplary way of seeing the difference between theory and practice in leadership. ... TMP allowed me to see how the theory and practice could not agree with each other if you are the leader.”

As well as informing their leadership practice in their home universities, other interviewees discussed how the increased confidence they had gained since completing the TMP had in turn led to more acknowledgements from external audiences regarding their skills and behaviours. A graphic example was given by a TMP 42 participant who described how the whole TMP experience had provided a solid foundation and contributed to her giving a successful keynote presentation:

“As far as accolades go, I got invited to do a presentation keynote to a national group of leaders, academic leads about you know, leading transformation and I based it around my learnings from TMP and kind of the tweets and the commentaries and the follow up from that were everyone was just like, and people were saying, “could you mentor me, please” and I was so privileged that I could share the experiences I’ve had and how I put them into action and people seemed to value them and say ah yeah, I like that. And I’ve also had a few comments from people here to say that they’ve seen how I’ve grown over the last year, year and a half. So that’s been nice. And people on the back of that are asking if they can do the TMP so they must have seen something that they’ve liked in my development that they’ve kind of gone oh... I felt I was still, you know, definitely at the beginning of TMP I was growing into [the provost role], now there was a peer that was saying oh, well maybe you’re growing out of that role! I don’t think I have but obviously from comments of people saying you still need to claim the role but they’ve seen a shift.”

Finally, in terms of transfer, it was clear for some that the TMP experience had led to heightened appreciation of their role as leaders, role models and mentors to others in their workplaces. Although the issue of delegation and empowerment was mentioned above, it was clear from the following quote that, as a result of her experience of the TMP, this interviewee from TMP 43 now better appreciated the importance of giving others opportunities to shine to enhance the university:

“So I suppose at the same time we were a senior member of staff down and most of whom work in my remit and so, trying to manage two thirds of a remit was tricky and through the process of TMP talking to others but also through the speakers that we had it became very clear to me that I needed to be pushing more work out. Just for my own sanity but also because as you said, it’s about empowering people, giving others an opportunity to develop. But also, an opportunity to be in the limelight. So, if I’m constantly writing papers and presenting them other people, my directors aren’t having an opportunity to do that. So it took me quite a long time to get around to doing that properly and that was certainly driven by TMP.”

TMP impact on decision making linked to future career progression

As well as impacting on current leadership and management behaviours, it was clear that the TMP experience had also impacted on future career direction. For example, one TMP 39 interviewee related how he had made use of the coaching he received from the programme to think in more detail about how his career could develop in the future:

“the coaching helped and I enjoyed sharing accounts with my team and the university leadership more broadly but I don’t know if it’s actually improved my future options within the university I’m in, so I guess that’s an issue I still need to revisit and that’s one I have been in terms of learning from TMP, in fact now that I think about it I did take them to my coach just in terms of what I thought I’d really benefited out of TMP and how that was still a work in progress for me. ... [TMP] has prepared me for several changes in the university leadership that are ongoing, there are new opportunities for me coming up within the university that I think I’ll also have to uhm, I’d consider what TMP has taught me in preparation for that with my coach.”

For one of the TMP 41 interviewees it was clear that her participation in the TMP affected her decision to help her university during a time of transition, by taking on an interim deanship (while still carrying out her duties as dean in another faculty) was linked back to the TMP experience:

“Did the TMP help me with that? Probably. Certainly, the ambition and the confidence to take that on was there and probably helped by having done the range of programmes including the TMP, probably. Being proactive is a key factor I think in terms of making things happen, you know, ...yeah, I tried to push through a whole load of changes within the faculty knowing that I would be handing over to a new dean after the year and that was the right approach, I think. So, I guess that tied back to a few things that were within the TMP programme.”

Relatedly for another interviewee, it appeared that the TMP was a catalyst for her to reassess future career ambitions. Reflecting on the programme she confided that her involvement had prompted her to “actually wonder whether I do want to go any higher up the greasy pole”. Ultimately, this period of reflection resulted in her deciding to stay at the same level. However, she was at pains to point out that this was not a negative outcome linked to the TMP:

“I’m not saying TMP hasn’t been useful [because] I think there is an expectation that you just keep going up and that’s almost the trap that they set for you, that yeah, I’ve decided I’m looking up and I don’t actually want to go any further because of the work/life balance issues... But I just needed to reconcile that aspiration with some of the...well, what did that actually mean and things. So, for me, TMP was great. It really helped kind of debunk some of the assumptions I had [laughs].”

(TMP 39)

Some of the most interesting conversations held regarding career implications of the TMP were with interviewees from TMP 41 and 43 who felt really empowered to move to other universities where they felt there was better value alignment. For example, the TMP 41 interviewee asserted that the TMP had provided the confidence for him to:

“take time out, the time to think that for me, I wanted to continue to be pushed and challenged in my role and I felt able to sort of complete or finish what I wanted to do at [university name removed] and actually, to say, to really identify what is important to me in terms of cultural values of organisations to understand for me at this point in my career ... to be the best I can be to continue to develop I needed to be in another organisation. I just think there was such empowerment for me personally through TMP and the support I had afterwards with the directors and so on that I was able to do that and it's been very successful.”

For the other interviewee, his participation in the TMP provided the clarity for him to enact a genuine change in career and transition to a new university which he felt better suited his personal ethos:

“... you have all the time to talk to people and because of the way TMP mixes up people from different universities which I think is brilliant and there's real strength I think of that. Because I'd been in the Russell Group for 14 years ... So that realisation of actually what did I want to be when I grew up sort of thing, you know, along with the values, along with talking with people through issues and then that realisation. I remember it one evening just sat there going “I'm in the wrong place”. I was enjoying my job, don't get me wrong, I was enjoying it absolutely but I thought to be a leader that I want to be I'm in the wrong place.... That really resonated and that was one of the realisations on the TMP programme.”

(TMP 43)

For others who we spoke to there seemed to be a more pragmatic attitude towards the TMP and its influence on career progress since completion. For example, a TMP 39 alumni described how even though she felt that the programme had made a difference, she was aware that nothing tangible had really changed in terms of career movement:

“I hope they [sponsoring university] know anyway that I'm very grateful for the opportunity, it has made a great difference to me but I'm not yet seeing that playing out fully, it's not like I've rushed off and applied for the vice chancellor post or something, but I'm not adverse to thinking about that now whereas before, I was very diffident about it.”

Meanwhile, another TMP 41 graduate felt that while the TMP is clearly viewed by many as the vehicle that offers the route to higher level positions in the sector, she was conscious that, simply by the law of averages, not everyone who attends will be able to make it to the highest level:

“... what’s the impact of TMP on individuals and I think I haven’t found that I’ve been able to progress in my career. Now, whether that’s just me, it probably is given what I’ve been saying or whether TMP has been able to make a difference to that situation. Well, it clearly hasn’t but whether that’s any fault of TMP or not, I’m not sure. But there is a deeper point that’s important to get across and that is that there’s a hell of a lot of people getting on these types of programmes and they just can’t all realise their ambition. So if you think about the number of people that have been TMP and the available spaces in terms of VC ships across the country. ... that the expectation needs to be a bit nuanced somehow ...It’s a tremendous programme, I’m very supportive and that should definitely be my reflection on it, and I’d be very supportive of others going on it and if I’m ever in a position of others going on it I’ll definitely be doing that ... so much learning within there but in terms of its impact, that’s incredibly difficult to measure and the acid test is did you move on in your career and sometimes that isn’t going to be the case.”

As has been discussed elsewhere in this report, the power of the impact group was key to many participants and, not surprisingly within the context of career decision making, several interviewees mentioned how the interaction with colleagues in the impact group setting influenced their career position. For example, one of the TMP 42 interviewees described how having a network from the impact group that included a “DVC, a couple of PVCs and a COO” had “really helped in my ability to reach out to other people at similar and higher levels, partly because I’ve got networks here”. His comments also showed that the confidence issue was a key factor when he considered further career advancement because now knowing that he “... can work with people at that level in other organisations means I’ve got absolutely no fear of working with people at those levels in this organisation and I’ve got a lot to bring into those interactions”.

This idea of using the impact group as a way of gaining feedback from other TMP participants regarding career ambitions was also evident for a TMP 43 graduate as it had allowed him to “test out” the option of going “... down the senior management route ... one of the goals was to try and test that, ... which way did I wanna go. I tested it with senior management and my ultimate goal is to be a VC.”

Contrasting this view, another of the TMP 43 cohort appeared to link her experience on the TMP, especially in relation to understanding her values, to a realisation that moving up the hierarchy was now not an ambition for her at this point in her career:

“Our vice-chancellor was off last year so I was accountable officer, acting VC and then I’ve been acting DVC for about a year when she came back. And then we ended up advertising the DVC post and I decided I didn’t want it and that was simply because of what I’d learnt through TMP about needing to be clear about what your goals and your ambitions were, what your values were, what you wanted to do and it was a difficult conversation to have with the vice-chancellor and indeed, the chair of the board of governors which is – I don’t want to do this job, this is not the job for me and it’s not the job for me ... I’m quite happy to delegate to the vice-chancellor but I don’t want to look after the schools. Didn’t want to do it. So, as a consequence of that we then designed a job which is absolutely perfect for me. ... it’s really important that I’m doing a job I want to do rather than I think I’ll do this because a) the vice-chancellor wants me to and b) it seems to be the next career progression. I suspect it raised some eyebrows out of my TMP colleagues as well because they knew I was covering the DVC work and I’d spoken quite clearly about my ambitions to be a VC and I think some of them see it like that as well. No, it wasn’t for me.”

As well as the role of colleagues in their impact groups it was clear that conversations with their coaches in the TMP programme also made an impact on the route that they could take in their careers, as another of the TMP 42 interviewees outlined:

“Yeah, I’ve been approached about the next job which obviously would be a VC job. I am not, there was one that I pursued because it was my old university in the UK and you know, it was one, you do it sometimes out of curiosity, don’t you? ... you’ve got what it takes to be a VC, I’ve heard people say that to me and ... So in my head I think I should go for the VC job, people are saying I can be a VC, I should prove that I could be. But I think, and it was after a conversation with [name removed] actually, a coaching conversation I realised that I am still in a very good place where I’m still learning a lot, I still have more to learn in my current role and I want to do that learning so that if I do go for the next step I am in the best position for it. I am ambitious, I am being completely honest with you, would I like to see myself step into that role sometimes then ambition wise, yes.”

Institutional follow up and impact group interaction after TMP

As with previous cohorts interviewed in the retrospective part of this study, when we asked about support or follow up on the TMP material and experience and how it aided transfer of learning, in the main there appeared to be little formal institutional follow up from the universities where participants were employed. For example, one TMP 39 participant summed up the scenario by noting that:

“There was nobody in the institution who ever went – so, [name removed], what have you learned, what did you make of that – or anything. So, you know, mostly people were unaware or didn’t follow up on some of that. It would have been useful if my immediate line manager and things had indeed been explicit about that. But that’s an internal thing and I don’t mean they were disinterested or hostile towards it at all, indeed, my immediate line manager had done TMP herself and spoke very highly of it but nor was there a conversation that said right, you’ve done TMP, now what are you thinking, how can we you know, build on that. So, I don’t know whether there’s communication from the TMP team back to the individual participant’s employers to encourage that, but I think it would be a good thing to encourage.”

Continuing this theme, the views from one of the TMP 42 participants illustrated the reality of the situation for many returning to work after undertaking the TMP. This interviewee described the more informal conversations he had regarding TMP as opposed to any more formal debriefings from other senior leaders in the university:

“I think what was welcome was, oh here’s [name removed] back, who have you been working with, who do you know, how can we use your networks to help us, have you got anybody at Edinburgh where we can go and pick their brains on this. And did you have any CFOs in your group that we might have a chat about how they do it from a financial perspective. So actually, it was that aspect, it was great, you’ve got some extra things to add here.”

A major theme which surfaced when we spoke to the alumni in the retrospective study was how, for many, long-lasting relationships and connections had been created as a result of the TMP and therefore follow-up impact group meetings and interactions often took place years after the formal conclusion of the programme. Perhaps unsurprisingly, across the five cohorts TMP 39-43 there were different levels of post-TMP interaction taking place. For TMP 39 for example, there appeared to be less interaction than was reported among other previous TMP cohorts, but it would be incorrect to say that no contact had been made since they completed TMP. For example, one of the interviewers did note that “compared to some of the other groups [our group] gelled really quite quickly and we didn’t have any of the fireworks that we saw in some of the other groups” and hence it was no surprise that members of this impact group “had a couple of meet ups since and I’ve met up specifically with one or two of the people since and bounced some things off people so, it has been useful in a professional sense as well as the actual development to do with TMP.”

Several others in TMP 39 noted that although they had tried to set up formal post-programme meetings they had to be “aborted” for a number of reasons mainly linked to “the practicalities of getting people together physically”. When we followed up on this in the interview it was interesting that this person felt that perhaps more support could be given by Advance HE to encourage more linking between group members: “I don’t know, I suppose that’s just down to the people in the group and whether it’s up to TMP to foster that and some notion of TMP 39 going forward in that it never dies ... those sorts of contacts being encouraged after the programme.”

Ultimately, though it would appear that among the TMP 39 cohort, although more formal meetings may not have been particularly regular, constructive relationships had formed and as one of the international colleagues pointed out, he had on a “couple of occasions followed up by email”. When probed further about the interactions, reflecting issues noted above on the role of impact group colleagues and career progression, he noted that he had asked for advice of the group when “applying for a new position”. He noted that this had been extremely useful because, in his words “... they certainly gave me confidence to do something, yes.”

“I didn’t know anybody beforehand and it was fantastic to get to know everybody on the TMP. Some, I have kept in touch with, I wouldn’t say, I’m not now daily or weekly speaking to people but that’s me a little bit as well, I know they’re there and it’s always great to touch base with people.”

This view that more action was needed to bring groups back together again was shared by one TMP 41 interviewees who also felt that “... more could be done actually, more could be done. We do meet but it’s infrequent, it doesn’t feel like there’s an energy to keep those meetings going on a frequent basis, but they are happening at a natural organic rate”. In this group a positive aspect was the fact that although the “get togethers” were less frequent that might have been desired, when they did happen, they were supported at the highest levels by employing universities, with VCs speaking and welcoming participants:

“And [name removed] organised a get together prior to me organising one in [university name removed] and her VC turned up to that also. I think we’ve got a good track record. What I would say is that the frequency of those meetings hasn’t been as great as it probably could be and there’s nothing in the diary for another one of those impact group meetings so it’s a reminder really. I’m surprised because we had a very good relationship and it reminds me that I need to contact everybody and say hello [laughs].”

Given the fact that when the TMP 41 group did gather post-TMP productive meetings ensued, it was perhaps understandable that this interviewee reiterated his frustration about the lack of interaction:

“When it came to the impact group meetings after the TMP, so self-organised meetings nobody was available and you think for God’s sake, it’s the same thing, prioritise it. You were able to prioritise it for the actual TMP programme itself when you’re paying £10K or whatever it was, you prioritise it then value it but for the follow-up meetings people just couldn’t find the time and there’s something, that’s an experiment where there’s clearly something wrong, people just needed to prioritise it so I called that out with the impact group and said you need to prioritise it but it’s worth thinking about that in terms of commitment of individuals and how it falls away when it’s self-organised.”

A different scenario was presented in TMP 42 where it was noted that the group had “probably met about three times in less than 18 months” but it appeared that these meetings were relatively informal but productive affairs which offered participants the chance:

“to be able to work through what’s happening, what your situation is and just having that peer coaching kind of...because people ask you questions and you give different perspectives and just in the time away from the more formal elements, yeah, it’s just having that network and I know that, not that I’ve had to utilise it but I know if I go onto my WhatsApp to my team and I say has anyone got any ideas about this I know that I’ll get some really great responses and others haven’t used it in that way and we’ve all kind of said oh yeah, have you thought about this or done that. So that’s the group itself.”

Another participant from TMP 42 provided quite a lot of detail on the kinds of issues and subjects that the impact group covered in these post-TMP meetings, including issues linked to their portfolio of programmes offered to internationalisation issues:

“Yeah, there’s a practice piece. So for example, there’s a particular type of programme that we run that [university name removed] are running as well so I’ve had a number of conversations with [name removed] who is the dean of [university name removed] and how we’ve put these programmes together and how we cost it, how they cost it. So real kind of nitty-gritty, how are you doing this, how are we doing this and what might we learn from each other. And that’s been really useful. And one of the impact group had been in a couple of interviews, she’s gone from a VC role and she and I have spent quite a lot of time unpicking her experience and how it related to the international world.”

For those interviewed from TMP 43 it was clear that although their impact group had experienced some setbacks with one member leaving the sector and one passing away, the impact group had become in the words of one “tight” and they used technology (WhatsApp group) to keep in contact with one member confiding that “... there was stuff on it yesterday, the day before so we’re still in touch with the big group as well, being that support network and I’ve had quite a few conversations over the last couple of months with different colleagues around different issues.”

A feature again which came out in this conversation was how the group had appeared to have become quite a close-knit community with trust, discretion and a general sense of collegiality a feature of the relationships:

“... comparing notes confidentially and that’s the great thing, we work in different institutions, we are comfortable sharing because we know they’re not going to share anything, we know that and that’s really important... it’s been really tight. It’s really tight. And some of the conversations I’ve had are pretty confidential but it’s fine. ... I’m sure every TMP group gets on really, really well but we got on really well across the piece. Very diverse, not everybody was on senior exec level, we had people from Scotland, England and Wales and Ireland as well – we had a geographical mix. So we kept the WhatsApp group going and also all of the... well, our impact group set up a smaller WhatsApp group. So our impact group have continued to meet. So we’ve had a couple of catch-up sessions subsequently. My university was happy to support it, in fact I think everybody’s universities were happy to support it. ... I spoke to them about the fact I wasn’t going to apply for the VC job, a couple of others brought up questions around stopping, moving out of higher education completely etc so that was good.”

While the importance of peer-to-peer learning in the impact groups and their continuance after the formal TMP finished was an important theme to explore, several of the participants described how they had also drawn on the expertise of TMP facilitators post-event to help with specific issues they faced at their universities. For example, to help her new executive team understand more about leadership preferences, diversity and respect, one of the TMP 41 participants described how:

“... we actually had with one of the external consultants to TMP just last Friday and the value and the benefit that it continues to bring, those methodologies in terms of self-awareness, awareness of the teams, preferences in terms of understanding preferences of people’s ways of working and leading and how we need to be aware of that to support the team”.

Others were able to sustain relationships with their TMP coaches through working in a more individualised way. For example, one of the TMP 42 interviewees confided that she had “continued [her] relationship with the coach. I can’t speak more highly of her, she is just amazing, the most observant person ever. ... so, so valuable and I’ve used her here, at [university name removed], she has been over twice, she’s coming over again in a couple of weeks so built up a very strong relationship.”

A final way of showing how much value the TMP participants received from their impact groups can be understood from the actions taken by another from TMP 42, who described how he had used the TMP impact group model to initiate a regional group where leaders from universities in his geographical area could mutually help one another and discuss the issues that they faced on a local level:

“... I thought about the benefit I get really from that impact group and I’ve looked to create not something similar but I’ve created a network of the other international directors at the other multi-use universities, and realising that while they might not necessarily be doing the work that I do and [university name removed] does, contextually we’re in the same world so actually we’re in contact reasonably frequently with the [four regional universities] and that’s been really useful and yeah, that’s probably an approach and a bit of learning that we took from the way that we approach the impact process with TMP.”

Appendix 3 – Detailed findings: story-based evaluation

Introduction

Within the original tender for the research study, the Leadership Foundation requested innovative qualitative methods, hence, as part of the Leadership Journeys project, a qualitative 360 feedback process was proposed.

Loosely based on the concept of a traditional quantitative 360, which participants complete during the TMP, an alternative term of ‘story-based evaluation’ replaced ‘qualitative 360’ for the research. This was to prevent potential confusion with the traditional 360 process and to better reflect the intended process and outcome.

Five HE leaders (named A, B, C, D and E within this report) who had completed the TMP within a year to 18 months, were asked if they could identify up to four colleagues (raters) to each provide at least three, but no more than six, leadership stories concerning them since the completion of the programme. Leadership stories are real situations in which the colleagues observed the TMP alumni evidence the expected outcomes ie leadership to improve institutional performance, shaping institutional strategy, bringing about change and/or working collaboratively for the benefit of the institution. It should be noted at this point that to protect confidentiality and the anonymity of those alumni who agreed to participate, the stories are not presented in detail in this report. An example of a leadership story is provided in Appendix 1.

Raters can be anyone from the institution (or a partner organisation), who the TMP alumni feel have had sufficient opportunity to observe their practice and would be prepared to provide accurate and honest leadership stories regarding them. Beyond this, guidance over who the colleagues should be (eg position in the hierarchy) was not felt necessary.

The identified colleagues were then contacted by the research team to ask if they would agree to participate. Colleagues could provide their stories through a telephone interview or an online form. Stories are limited to the last twelve months to minimise memory and recall bias.

The stories for the five leaders in question were summarised and collated. This was followed by an interview with the TMP alumni themselves to look at the leadership stories reported, their recollection of them and determine how they felt the TMP influenced their practice. The alumni interviews were analysed to identify application of the TMP learning and influence on their practice per participant and collective group.

In the next section the background and rationale behind this approach is clarified after which the findings from the story-based evaluation are presented. These findings are structured by:

- + participant record and learning
- + colleague reactions
- + alumni reactions
- + findings in relation to TMP.

Background and rationale

The story-based evaluation was based on a number of themes identified in the literature. These are briefly summarised below in relation to how they have informed this approach.

Leadership is an elusive construct to define but it is easily recognised in practice

Leadership has long been a topic of interest but agreement on what exactly leadership is remains elusive. As noted by Burns (1978, 2) “leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” while Bennis and Nanus (1985, 21) argue that “leadership is like the Abominable Snowman, whose footprints are everywhere but who is nowhere to be seen”.

Leadership is a social process

Although there is no consensus on any one single definition, it is generally agreed that leadership is a social process whereby an individual influences others to accomplish shared objectives (Day, 2001).

Paradigm shift in evaluating leadership development

Evaluating leadership development remains a challenging proposition. It has been argued that the greatest advance in the evaluation of such programmes would be the development of methods to gather more powerful follow-up outcome data (Packard and Jones, 2015). Kennedy et al (2013) argue that while objective diagnostic material may still have a place in evaluation, this is a partial place that needs to be mediated by more complex outcomes including beliefs, world views and alternative forms of data. Similarly, Jarvis et al (2013) note that a challenge for evaluation is to adopt an approach that gives attention to the “everyday experience” of participants while also providing insight into the “return on investment”.

These three themes from the literature informed the decision that this evaluation needed to capture the perception of others and move beyond the more traditional approaches to evaluation.

Leadership is less about individual characteristics of the leader and more about the context in which it is enacted

Until the latter part of the 20th century, most leadership research was undertaken using a positivist research paradigm in the search for universal leadership characteristics. The focus of leadership studies has since shifted from a positivist to a social constructivist framework (Middlehurst, 2012). There is considerable scepticism concerning the viability of frameworks for leadership effectiveness in higher education, particularly given a recognition that leadership effectiveness is profoundly influenced by the context within which leaders find themselves (Bryman and Lilley, 2009).

Leadership and hence the outcomes of leadership development are often emergent

Bolden et al (2008) take the view that leadership in higher education is largely emergent and it is accepted that while the outcomes of leadership development can be prescribed, they are more often emergent (McGurk, 2010).

Based on these identified themes, we sought a method of evaluation that reflected a social constructivist framework that allowed the context in which TMP participants operate to be considered as well as more emergent outcomes of leadership development to be captured. It was felt that this would complement the positivist-oriented survey methodology presented above.

Leadership development

Researchers such as Watkins and deMarrais (2010) have found that the most important changes delivered through leadership development are not easily observable. They are generally more cognitive, such as a broadening of one's internal vision; a change of confidence in dealing with others and a greater level of self-awareness.

This led us to reflect on the importance of presenting the collected leadership stories to each TMP participant to encourage them to reflect on the impact of the TMP on their practice.

Participant record and learning

Each of the four TMP alumni suggested between three and five colleagues to provide leadership stories. A breakdown of colleagues' responses to each of the alumni is provided below.

Table 24. Colleague responses

TMP Alumni	Number of colleagues who did not respond to invitation	Number of colleagues who provided leadership stories by	
		Telephone interview	Online form
A	1	3	1
B		4	
C	1	3	
D		3	
E		3	

Initially, we had hoped for four colleagues per alumnus. However, after the initial interviews it became apparent that three colleagues would be sufficient in terms of the volume of data collected.

In total, 16 colleagues were interviewed and one provided their stories through the online form. However, the stories collected through the online form had to be discarded as they were too brief.

Of the 19 colleagues contacted, none declined but two did not respond to the invitation or reminders. It may be that these colleagues did not want to participate, did not have time or perhaps the invitation email did not reach them. To protect anonymity, alumni were not informed which of their colleagues did not respond. Each colleague interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and the interviewees were also asked for their reflections regarding the process (presented below).

Five alumni interviews were conducted. Each interview started with two questions which had been presented to the alumni in advance:

- + Thinking back to TMP, what do you think you gained most from the programme in retrospect?
- + Do you feel the development from the TMP has helped you achieve outcomes within your organisation? If so, can you give any specific examples?

The intention of these questions was to prime the alumni recollection of the TMP and encourage initial reflection on their part over what they had gained and also to determine if the leadership stories prompted further unique reflection on the impact of the TMP.

In the first alumni interview, the stories were analysed to identify key leadership themes and these leadership themes were presented back to the alumni alongside a brief synopsis of the stories the themes were evident within. This approach was adopted to allow presentation to the alumni of as much information gathered as possible, but it resulted in the interviewer speaking for a considerable amount of time and in the alumni often having to provide details on the stories in order to reflect.

Given the experience of this first interview and in shaping the remaining interview process, the stories were summarised and a brief precis presented back to the alumni alongside the colleague's perception of why the alumni was effective in this story. Alumni were then asked whether their participation and learning from the TMP influenced their practice in this story. During the introduction and at key points in the interview, alumni were asked to reflect honestly on the contribution of the TMP or not and not to feel that they had to attribute development to the TMP if they felt that it had not contributed in any particular story. The wording of the interview schedule was slightly amended after the initial interviews to improve the flow and better communicate key messages.

Each alumni interview lasted one hour and, with the exception of the first interview in which time ran out, alumni were also asked for their reflections regarding the process (presented below).

Alumni reactions

During the first three TMP alumni interviews, a short evaluation of the process was undertaken. Each alumni answered five questions:

- + how did you find the process?
- + were you surprised by any of the stories or details shared?
- + would you have preferred to have been sent the stories in advance?
- + how does the information shared today compare with a traditional 360 process you would have experienced, for example on the TMP?
- + any final comments or observations?

A number of key themes emerged.

All three found the process to be of value:

“I found hearing the stories extremely humbling actually... you never have these conversations really, everybody’s busy and getting on with the day job... to get this level of in-depth feedback about what people valued about particular situations I think is very helpful.”
(Alumni B)

“It’s a learning for me as well because it’s very difficult to understand what people think about what you’re doing... I didn’t realise this was going to be this useful. You’ve [spent] quite a bit of time to explain what the stories were and why they thought I was effective... I think it’s very useful for me.”
(Alumni C)

“Very enlightening... it’s actually really helpful to hear what resonated with people.”
(Alumni D)

Two alumni stated that they were conscious of the time involved for their colleagues to reflect, prepare and then provide stories but that “time was given for good reason” (Alumni C).

An interesting and unexpected theme that emerged, in line with the colleague feedback below, was the developmental value two of the alumni felt their colleagues would have received from the process:

“Perhaps helpful for you is that some of my colleagues who generously gave time to do this were equally interested in the process and I think really enjoyed being asked to think about leadership stories and are applying some of that in their own work, in their teams so there’s a double benefit to the pilot that I’d point to... And at least two people wrote to me quite lengthy emails, not to tell me what they had discussed with you, but to say how they had valued the process for themselves as well and that they really liked the narrative storytelling approach.”
(Alumni D)

In discussing the benefit to colleagues in participating in the process, Alumni B suggested:

“Say that to people that generally it’s a two-way benefit, I mean I’ll email colleagues and thank them for participating so they’ll have feedback but I think just getting them to recognise that they’ve gained something as well in a sort of non-patronising way, it might be obvious to them that that’s happened, but it was just a thought really.”

When asked if they were surprised by the stories or details shared, a consensus did not emerge:

“Yes, I suppose I am very impressed with my colleagues, as ever, that actually what they’ve done is given a lot of thought to it and picked out scenarios which on reflection do genuinely demonstrate the leadership style and are significant things.”

(Alumni B)

“Yes, I was surprised... I’m pleased that it is a surprise because I thought some people would be saying I’ve taken a very tough approach for a university kind of culture because in university life, I know that the majority of many universities don’t take this approach of tangible outcomes, performance reviews and so on. So, in that sense, yes, there were a few surprises, positive surprises should I say.”

(Alumni C)

“I have some sense of some of these things and so I wouldn’t say there’s massive surprises in there... it is a good reminder that there’s a kind of different scale in these stories and to remember that each of those is meaningful, it doesn’t all have to be about the big story or the big event or the big policy change or the big culture change moment but sometimes it’s as simple as the chair you sit in.”

(Alumni D)

None of the alumni wished to receive the stories in advance, although one acknowledged that this would be useful to prepare for the interview but that, in reality, it would have been unlikely they would have had an opportunity to prepare.

In terms of how the information shared with the alumni compared with a traditional 360 process, such as the one they would have experienced on the TMP or through other development, two of the alumni felt the story-based evaluation was much more effective and informative and one felt both processes were complementary:

“I think what was nice about the 360 was you were given a number and here what you get is a more in-depth view of what people value about how you operate. So, I think the two things are complementary and could almost be two sides of a coin as opposed to one replacing the other in its entirety.”

(Alumni B)

“I thought 360 was very useful but it is much more quantitative in nature... but the concept of stories, eight or nine stories, they give a much richer picture, richer qualitative picture of yourself and how effective you are as a leader, what is working and so on and so forth. I don’t think you’ll be able to capture that rich picture, qualitative picture, through 360... I don’t know whether everybody as part of the TMP programme [can do it], but I think it’s much richer, much more valuable. It’s very difficult to put the number but one being not useful at all or useless and 10 being absolutely world class useful, I would rate 360 around five or six whereas I would put the stories around nine, definitely, it’s completely different. But, probably both will be good, but I know this is very resource intensive.”

(Alumni C)

“I think it’s much more useful... because I think you get more texture out of it and actually some of that detail which is what you don’t get in that traditional format, it’s really, really helpful.”

(Alumni D)

Colleague reactions

During the initial colleague interviews, participants were reminded that the story-based evaluation is a new tool and were invited to answer the following questions about it as a process:

- + when you received the email request to provide stories about the alumni, what was your initial reaction?
- + prior to the interview, did you have any concerns about taking part?
- + do you have any concerns now?
- + do you think this type of process is worthwhile?

In terms of initial reaction, nine of the 12 interviews (75%) reported being comfortable with the request, they were glad to take part or that they were pleased to be asked:

“I think my initial reaction was generally quite positive, I generally like to be involved in things like this because I know how important it is to things like management programmes and getting feedback and obviously because I really appreciate [name] and her support and her management. I didn’t have any concerns that I’d be able to come up with something positive, I think it was genuinely quite a positive response when I got your email.”

(Alumni B, colleague 2)

“I mean I was pleased that I’d been asked, because it was very clear that it wasn’t going to be like twelve people like 360 degree feedback, you know, that I was one of the select few that had been chosen, that was quite nice.”

(Alumni D, colleague 4)

Two (17%) did report being hesitant given that the TMP alumni they were providing feedback on was their boss and that they would be identifiable. The following captures the conflicting reactions:

“Well, it was a bit of a gulp and then a feeling of course and a gulp only that... this is going to be a bit exposing and oh my goodness, this is a responsibility.”

(Alumni D, colleague 4)

Three (25%) did mention their initial reaction related to the time required but one clarified that they wanted to give that time to their manager and the value they placed in them while another stated it didn’t take as much time as they thought:

“It looked like more work than it probably was, so I was kind of like, oh God when am I going to find time to do that, so I probably didn’t reply as quickly as I would’ve done had I realised that actually it’s not that much work.”

(Alumni D, colleague 4)

In terms of concerns prior to the interview, seven (58%) had no concerns. For the remainder, the following concerns were reported:

- + that they were only to be asked for positive stories and would like to have provided developmental feedback as well (mentioned by two colleagues regarding two different TMP alumni)
- + time, as covered above, was mentioned by two colleagues
- + being able to provide stories that would be relevant and useful (also mentioned by two colleagues).

To illustrate:

“No, I don’t think so, only maybe about coming up with relevant examples and being the right thing that you would need but... that example leadership story was really helpful, I think if I hadn’t had that, I’d have found it difficult to have really understood what you needed.”

(Alumni B, colleague 2)

After the interview, only two of the colleagues had any concerns. One related to how the stories would be fed back and the other related to ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the story would be maintained given the sensitivity of what they had shared.

In terms of whether the process would be useful, time permitted this question to be asked of 11 colleagues. Ten felt the process would be useful. This was often on the basis of the context and depth that the stories would provide as feedback to the alumni, for example:

“I do, yes, I think as well, having it in a story-based way is quite good because it’s a bit more thoughtful, it’s a bit more meaningful rather than when people say things like, ‘describe [name]’s leadership style in five words’... When you actually think of a story that you yourself as a colleague have been in the heart of or involved in is a much more meaningful... So, I prefer that sort of story-based approach, rather than just ‘can you tell us all of the reasons why somebody is a good leader?’ Actually, people are only a good leader when it’s tested, in that sense, that you can actually demonstrate it in real life ways and that is why I picked those particular projects or those instances, really.”

(Alumni B, colleague 1)

“Yes, I do think it will be and probably very personalised, as opposed to the 360 survey and because I feel the examples that people talk about in the story will be very pertinent to him and it will help him reflect, I think.”

(Alumni C, colleague 2)

A final finding of interest, is that without being asked, three colleagues spoke about the developmental value for them in reflecting on the leadership of the TMP alumni, as shown below:

“I think it is useful, these things are really beneficial and I find them quite thought provoking myself... it is useful for me to sit down and gather my thoughts. It is quite reflective for me actually, about what I like about [their] leadership style and maybe what parts of that I should try and sort of learn from myself.”

(Alumni A, colleague 1)

“It made me think of some things and then in thinking about them and writing some notes about them, you are also engaging in reflection yourself about how you were in that role and how she was at that role and the subject matter themselves. It makes you do a thing that you might not find time to do otherwise and that’s always a good thing, I think, to go, ‘right, okay, stop and try and put that into words’. So, I thought that has been quite helpful actually.”

(Alumni B, colleague 3)

“I didn’t think that at the time but I’m now thinking the process of me engaging with you is, is helping me to learn part of the leadership style that I’m interested in.”

(Alumni D, colleague 3).

Findings

As was noted above, the key objective in the story-based evaluation phase of this research was to collect stories from peers and colleagues of the TMP participants, to illustrate where they had demonstrated effective leadership. In this section a number of stories are briefly described to allow the reader to appreciate context. The stories are not described in great detail in this report as assurances for participant anonymity were given when they were invited to participate. In the sections below an outline of each 'story' is presented followed by a discussion of the leader's response concentrating on whether they felt their participation and learning from the TMP influenced their practice in the examples in any way. It should be noted that, on occasion, some stories which dealt with similar aspects are presented under the same general category heading.

As noted above when the methodology for the story-based evaluation was presented, TMP alumni were asked to take a moment to reflect on the stories as they were recounted to them but were reassured that there was no pressure to respond or 'force' links between any story and their experience of the TMP. The stories are grouped into several key categories depending on the main thrust or direction of the examples given.

Innovative leadership practice – challenging convention

Alumni D – innovative presentation style

The first main category was linked to the leaders' innovative behaviour and their attempts to challenge traditional university conventions through their leadership behaviour. A colleague shared how, during the first senior faculty executive board Alumni D chaired, she facilitated the first 10 minutes of the meeting in an extremely innovative way using large cards as the basis of the presentation with a string of words such as 'Excitement, Creativity, Aspiration' written on each. The colleague described how she personally found this approach funny and different from the usual spreadsheet-based presentation linked to faculty executive key performance indicators. The colleague also noted that the outcome was somewhat surprising, with people remarking on how refreshingly different Alumni D's style was compared to the previous incumbent of her role, and how it made a clear statement that she would be different in the future.

When Alumni D's colleague was asked why this made her effective as a leader, she recalled how those in attendance in the meeting agreed that giving the presentation in this way was brave and, even if they were critical, they recognised the effort, energy and application involved in presenting in this way. This colleague also argued that this example was indicative of the way that Alumni D sought to develop an organisational culture, characterised by innovation, enjoyment and excitement. The colleague also felt that certain people may have had, in her words, "a pop at her" for doing something like this, but it showed real bravery as it would have been easier to present using normal media such as PowerPoint. Ultimately, for Alumni D's colleague this scenario signalled Alumni D's willingness and confidence to try new things.

How does such leadership behaviour link to participation on the TMP?

When this story was related back to Alumni D and she was asked if she felt her participation in the TMP had any effect, she responded that for her, the main link was in relation to how TMP participation had helped bolster her confidence. She noted how she had received feedback during several TMP sessions and was encouraged to experiment and be more 'non-normative'. Ultimately, she now felt more confident and reassured that as a senior officer in HE she should not be afraid to "be who I am and not try to fit some preconceived mould". Hence, Alumni D summed up this link to the TMP experience observing that really what she experienced was an "affirmation" of her leadership style and that for her it was "right to let that play out".

Alumni D – unconventional behaviour in senior meetings

In a similar vein to the previous story, the second story was linked to an experience of the formal university review meeting in which the heads of school (HoS) present on their school's strategic position. In the interview, Alumni D's colleague recounted how, traditionally, the PVC and the deans, along with other senior academic staff, position themselves on one side of the boardroom table and the HoS and school managers along with other colleagues sit on the other. The specific example that Alumni D's colleague related showed how in the second of these meetings attended by Alumni D, she sat next to the HoS, which was not the usual seat that someone in that role would occupy. This colleague disclosed that this episode was something that both she and her colleagues now remember because of the rich symbolism it carried.

Another colleague of Alumni D provided a similar story which illustrated the value Alumni D appeared to place on professional staff in the university. This colleague described how Alumni D attended an advisory board and did not sit next to the academics, which would be the normal protocol, but next to the professional staff. This behaviour made an impact on colleagues as it seemed to promote better inclusion and a more potent space for discussion and showed Alumni D's willingness to consult with professional staff on all relevant issues.

When pressed on why these colleagues felt that this was effective leadership behaviour, they both underlined that to them Alumni D's actions were very deliberate, and to them Alumni D clearly understood the important symbolic value of such consistent behaviours. For both of these colleagues, Alumni D's leadership became visible early into her tenure at the university and such behaviour as cited above, created a sense of belonging and collegiality among staff.

How does such leadership behaviour link to participation on the TMP?

When directly asked if she felt that these examples could be linked to her participation on the TMP, Alumni D argued that perhaps rather than TMP, the link could be found in an earlier leadership course offered by the Leadership Foundation. She recalled how the concept of 'borderless faculties', characterised by close collaborative working, could produce more effective results, and hence this was something that she always tried to promote in her role. More specifically in relation to her

experience of the TMP, Alumni D provided an interesting perspective where she noted that from her perspective TMP provided a great platform for critical thinking and reflecting back now she felt that some elements of the programme may not actually promote or encourage innovation or what might be termed as “unconventional” behaviour for senior HE leaders. She clarified this sentiment, arguing that for her, “[TMP] ... seems to validate certain cultures of hierarchy”. For example, she proceeded to describe how this appeared to be particularly apparent in relation to some of the simulation activities:

“So, the simulation certainly when I took TMP really made me uncomfortable in lots of ways, the kind of sideline discussions about who would play the VC and what that meant about your career and the assumptions that people were somehow being anointed into things and then behaviours that would roll from that. That left me very unsettled actually and I continue to reflect on with my coach from TMP to this day and so I worry sometimes...”

Relatedly, she also described her concerns about the increasing culture of using KPIs in the HE sector, arguing that this could create further problems where some people tend to over focus on measurable activities which from her perspective could be detrimental for innovation and creativity. Ultimately, she feared that a dangerous precedent could be set where HE leaders, and those aspiring to such positions, become too instrumental in terms of behaviours and activities and hence only agree to carry out duties that can tangibly enhance CVs:

“I worry about that world of KPIs has slightly driven these behaviours and I think the world actually of what I call CV curation, I use this quite a lot when I go to other universities to talk about my leadership journey, because there sort of is ‘my masterplan’, and I’m not an advocate of that world where you come in and you think about the job you want to do next and you kind of curate the CV to achieve that. I think being present in the role that you’re doing is really important.”

On the same subject, Alumni D also reflected another specific session in the TMP led by National Theatre actors and discussed how this had made an impact for her. She recalled how this session had caused her some unease especially in the part dedicated to interpreting body language:

“[The] workshop around body language and it almost taught the opposite of what the peer examples [related above] have said. [This session advised participants] all about owning the room and I got very vocal in that session. So, I said about how I felt it was uncomfortable and I also felt it was making all sorts of points that were potentially quite non-inclusive in terms of gender and diversity and approach and that if we are judging people in the first 30 seconds when they walk in the room then we’ve got serious problems as a sector and that that shouldn’t be trained as something you should somehow act up.”

Although the above quote may appear somewhat negative in nature, Alumni D went on to comment that a lot of valuable learning about her leadership style and practice occurred as a result of her TMP participation. She felt that the experience had encouraged her to “deconstruct and at least, I suppose, you could say it at least galvanised me to keep thinking about that”. The story-based evaluation exercise, which showed that her peers really valued her inclusive leadership style was also clearly a source of learning to her, in that she felt that it validated her behaviour and made her feel that she was appreciated by her colleagues.

Promoting collective leadership practice

Alumni D – cross-disciplinary collaboration

The third story related to how Alumni D took the lead among the university’s senior leadership team to create a cross-disciplinary culture. A specific example was put forward illustrating how Alumni D championed partnerships between researchers’ different departments. Her colleagues asserted that Alumni D wanted the various departments to learn about university-wide research and explore collaborative links to ensure that “they could answer bigger questions by working together”.

In another related example, Alumni D’s colleagues described how, when additional income was made available to the university, she pushed to ensure that when additional professorial appointments were made they would be able to enhance cross-disciplinary working. Hence Alumni D tried to ensure that new professors were not appointed to a ‘home faculty’ but were placed across faculties to work on collaborative research projects. Colleagues felt that this example illustrated how Alumni D was abreast of current developments in higher education where the promotion of cross disciplinary research is very much to the fore. When her colleagues were asked how they felt this story illustrated effective leadership practice they argued that Alumni D effectively used personal persuasion and influencing skills to demonstrate the value of cross-disciplinary working to others in the senior team including the vice-chancellor.

How does such leadership behaviour link to participation on the TMP?

When Alumni D was asked about the contribution of the TMP here, she revealed that a core belief was to encourage and develop cross-disciplinary working. The link to the TMP from this story was very tangible for Alumni D where she described how her participation in the programme afforded her the opportunity to be ‘provocative’ and experiment in a safe environment:

“I think on the final day of my TMP programme, a couple of us had to do presentations and one person did a presentation which was all about scorecards and metricising colleagues and then I stood up and said why I thought that the whole model of senior teams and Top Management Programme was broken and I was deliberately being provocative but trying to explain that I thought the way forward had to be one about cross-working and co-production and that if you really want the innovation that’s in all of our strategies and missions and documents.”

She also felt that participation in the TMP gave her the “confidence to articulate” her views “without it seeming just disruptive for the sake of disruption”. As the above example linked to the National Theatre actors clearly illustrates, Alumni D was not shy about asserting her views and she felt that the TMP gave her opportunities to understand how to best state such preferences in an effective and diplomatic way:

“So, I would say the actual approach is part core me, but I think the way of handling it and I think that’s interesting about keeping my powder dry I probably did test and trial out through the TMP process.”

Communication

Alumni C – clarifying the teaching-intensive, research-informed strategy

Colleagues of Alumni C spoke about how he played an integral role in producing a paper designed to inform and clarify the implications of a teaching-intensive, research-informed strategy. From Alumni C’s colleagues’ perspective the reason why the paper was so well accepted was linked to the extensive period of consultation Alumni C initiated surrounding the strategy. One of Alumni C’s colleagues noted how the paper “really shone a light on the students and the importance of excellence in teaching” and, as a result of adopting its main proposals, the institution was beginning to see tangible rewards.

When asked why they felt Alumni C was particularly effective in terms of leadership here, these colleagues stated that there was now “a set agenda” which ensured that all staff were aware of the need to adhere to a student-centred philosophy at all times. He also noted that the paper simplified the process and everyone now clearly understood that they had to be more student centred. Often, implementing innovative change is about ensuring that there is clarity about what is required of those implementing the change. This story illustrated that he was able to present a very clear, simple and concise message which allowed staff in the university to move towards a more student-focused culture.

How does such leadership behaviour link to participation on the TMP?

Alumni C related that some elements of his experience of the TMP contributed to his success in this story. These were particularly linked to one of the impact group strategic development activities in which he participated, as he stated:

“I think one of the things that really helped from TMP, the impact groups, there was an exercise – leadership for impact or something like that, anyway, I think what I tried to do was devise a new strategy of being a teaching-intensive, research-informed university. ... during the time I more or less finished my TMP ... I took the initiative to write and take that philosophy of teaching-intensive reform and try to build a story of what it means for the institution at every level, especially at the ground level of teaching, and made sure that what would be the confidence of that strategy, for example, high quality teaching, classes happening all the time, good facilities in terms of labs and so on, high attendance rates and so on.”

Summing up the impact of the TMP and this story, Alumni C noted how the opportunity allowed him to think and reflect more deeply about the essence of “great leadership”. He went on to note that, to him, it was linked to ensuring that you understand that any vision is achieved through people and therefore the leader must:

“make them [staff] own the vision and also make sure that they are part of the vision and they actually should believe that they developed it in a realistic manner and ... make sure that there’s an holistic story around it and then once that strategy or vision goes out, everybody thinks yes, that’s my vision... So, I think TMP helped me to centre my beliefs in that philosophy of getting things through to people and making people own their ideas, plans, visions and strategies.”

Alumni C – direct and clear communication skills (two stories)

In the first story related to the communication style of Alumni C, a colleague gave an example about how Alumni C was involved in the management restructure to allow senior academics to give more direct guidance and coaching support to staff. What was felt to be particularly effective about Alumni C’s leadership behaviour here was his ability to illustrate very clearly how the restructuring would impact on the university. More specifically, one of his colleagues described how Alumni C “provided good communication” which led to everyone involved being “... clear about where the growth or the particular targets had not been met ... very clear ... he is very direct, but he also has, I think, perfected a very suitable sort of body language, voice.”

In the second story, Alumni C’s communication style was described by a colleague in sharing a story around the performance review that he conducted with him. The colleague described how this was the first performance review they had had in quite some time. Alumni C’s colleague discussed how effective he had found the process, and as well as achieving its primary goal of reviewing his performance, he found himself actually using the same methods and modelling the behaviour of Alumni C when conducting reviews with the staff he managed. When the colleagues were pressed

on why they felt this was particularly effective leadership, one felt that it was partly Alumni C's listening skills and ability to clearly understand what were the most important activities or skills development that they should engage in for both their current and potential future roles. As with the first story, the manner and directness that was displayed by Alumni C was noted again and as one colleague summed up: "there was none of the sort of woolliness or chit chat around it", with meetings always frank but supportive.

How does such leadership behaviour link to participation on the TMP?

When asked about these stories and their link to the TMP, Alumni C felt that TMP was all about emphasising the importance of thinking strategically for senior HE leaders. A direct link was made to the VCs and other chief executives who came and presented at TMP and how they underlined that in this position it is vital to focus on absolutely core strategic priorities allied with having a clear "operational oversight". He also noted how the discussions held with such speakers helped him to understand why, at this level, delegation was so important. Indeed he stated that this was probably a key influence which led to the decision to restructure the senior management team where an extra layer of deans was added to allow for better linkage with academic staff. Ultimately Alumni C felt that the TMP had provided the catalyst for him to begin to think about the strategic contribution he could make in his role:

"I think the ability to think strategically and focus on the most important aspects for the institution and its future and having the time, energy and mental space for that, I think again that kind of thinking, the strategic thinking, and working at a better high level of abstraction and for that to happen, which I learnt from TMP, I think definitely contributed to that. I had the strategic thinking prior to that but in terms of how to make it work at the ground level, I think it improved, that part has improved because of the TMP."

Alumni C was less clear about whether comments in this story about his communication could be linked back to his experience of the TMP, noting that he had a long-held philosophy that leaders need to be transparent if they want to achieve lasting change. He elaborated on this, arguing that the restructuring may have been deemed a success by those imparting this story because he felt that he was able to convince staff the changes were "based on absolutely open criteria and it's transparent and they can actually see why somebody was made a dean through this process". Therefore, he went on to point out that if you find yourself in such a senior role it is:

"... an absolute priority that I communicate in a very clear way what are the criteria used and what are the factors that are used and what is the process and also what it will achieve for the institution ... I kind of always try to be a facilitator kind of leader rather than a top down type of leader ... I try to bring people with me so that they may be unhappy for a week or two but they understand why the decision is made and I try to bring everybody."

However, Alumni C did also feel that his experience of discussing such issues with others on the TMP through the impact group's "group sessions, a lot of mock exercises" during the VC debates, did help him to understand that regardless of how well change is communicated there may still be difficulties. He felt that if he were to link the TMP to the restructuring example, he would argue that he gained some confidence that it was the right thing to do and to be confident in the action even though he understood that it would be impossible to please everyone. Ultimately for Alumni C, the TMP helped him to understand the reality of managing change in such a large and complex university:

"to convince hundreds of people, it's an impossible task for any leader and you can't achieve that. The fundamental is making sure that overall majority of the team is with you and understands why the decision is made and so on."

In relation to the story about Alumni C's leadership style in terms of performance management, he felt that it was perhaps more difficult to link this to the experience of the TMP. However, he did feel that TMP did underline the importance of symbolic actions from leaders and activities such as performance reviews. These provided a very tangible way to display leadership, set an example and create a high performance culture:

"I have taken the performance reviews very seriously and also, you need to be genuine in terms of your seriousness and commitment because if you do it as a hogwash exercise, people don't take the performance indicators seriously and therefore, if you are not serious, they won't be serious downstream with their line reports and so on and so forth. So, it's again going back to that creating high performance culture in institutions and showing how serious you are, not just in your mind but in your actions."

When Alumni C reflected on the above story and whether his TMP experience affected his behaviour he felt that a link could be made because the issue of performance in HE was always high on the agenda and a frequent topic of conversation among TMP colleagues. He underlined that in simply hearing other TMP colleagues' stories and participating in conversations, learning was sure to take place:

"I picked up several stories and when we went out to have a drink in the evening, my TMP colleagues discussed their own institutional stories, of course in confidence, but throughout those stories, those nuances, those examples, mock sessions, you pick a number of things and you mix those knowledge aspects and try to implement in your own world, your own universal discourse I should say. So, I would say a lot of those ingredients of how to develop high performance culture, institutional culture have been defined through TMP."

Leading staff through change

Alumni B – utilising innovative IT systems for enhancing student retention

In this case Alumni B was heavily involved in helping to shape and deliver a key institutional strategic priority around student retention. The colleagues explained that, historically, there had been little oversight of what action planning took place at the local department level in relation to student retention. They described how Alumni B worked with departments through gradual consultation and the effective use of IT systems to create a more efficient student retention action planning process.

Colleagues felt Alumni B's leadership behaviour was effective because of her ability to continually encourage staff to improve student retention. For example, even though the university was awarded a TEF prize, Alumni B was never complacent and made sure that systems and processes were being continually reviewed and enhanced, so there was no attitude that "... oh, we're winning awards, so let's not continually improve on them". Alumni B's colleagues also explained how core to her effectiveness were her excellent people management skills. For example, one described how her inclusive change management style illustrated a clear and simple case for change and ensured that the key change implementers, namely department heads, did not become defensive. Ultimately, Alumni B's ability to empathise and work with colleagues was noted as a key reason why this change was considered successful.

How does such leadership behaviour link to participation on the TMP?

When Alumni B was asked about the influence of the TMP in this leadership episode, she noted that the main contribution it made was to make her understand the importance of becoming focused on the more strategically important issues in the university. For example, Alumni B asserted that when you really think strategically about some of the big issues, such as student retention, you can better appreciate the complexity:

"retention has always been one [of the key strategic issues], not least because it affects peoples lives if they come to university and drop out but now it's [an important issue] for a whole range of other reasons around test performance and reputational issues and all of those things."

Therefore, Alumni B felt that the TMP had helped her to think more strategically and promoted more confidence in her ability to illustrate to colleagues the need for more collective working to address such issues. Therefore, Alumni B also felt that the TMP helped her to realise that in a leadership role in the HE sector, “you’re critically dependent on academic colleagues in delivering this and I don’t manage any academic areas so I think that influence and that authority thing is really important.” Alumni B also noted that the TMP made her more aware that understanding the context, and whether the appropriate culture is in place, is important to allow you to operate effectively:

“I just think that understanding of the culture is crucial and I do think again TMP helped me with that because I know how I work and I know what preferences are in terms of how I work and I know the type of culture I want to operate within and I know that doesn’t exist in many institutions so, for me, it’s really important to be in a place where I feel that I can work in a way that is my preference and it could have an impact and an effect.”

Alumni E – responding to Covid-19 (two stories)

As with many HE leaders, Alumni E was at the forefront in how their institution pivoted in response to the situation with Covid-19. In the first story shared, the participant highlighted how Alumni E engaged with all the different stakeholders that were involved, covered all the different bases and operated in a very measured way to an unprecedented situation. The other aspect that they thought that was particularly good was the concern that Alumni E showed not just for students but for staff, specifically how staff cope with this change.

How does such leadership behaviour link to participation on the TMP?

When presented with this situation Alumni E felt that their response was in part due to their continued evolution as a leader irrespective of the TMP but noted specific to the programme:

“I think my focus on people as a whole is something that came out certainly of my TMP coaching sessions. So I think prior to that I was very student focused and was staff focused but almost saw them separately but actually they’re not, they’re people. That sounds obvious. They’re all people and therefore how a situation like Covid affects people is important. Yes, students and staff may be in slightly different scenarios and the impact on them would be different but actually, TMP really made me focus that the primary point in something like this is the people. Whether that’s staff and students and that they are equally as important will be that they may need support or decisions to be made in different ways.”

Engagement and collaboration

Alumni D – challenging unpopular university initiatives through engagement

Colleagues of Alumni D also described how a new policy with the objective of allocating individual targets for research for all academic staff was implemented. However, it was stated that this was an unpopular initiative given that there was no consultation with academic staff when it was first introduced. The colleagues described how although Alumni D arrived at the university when this initiative was introduced, she had played no part in the initial implementation decision. However, when she was made aware of the concerns of academic staff she initiated a process to reverse this initiative. Her colleagues noted how Alumni D was relatively unknown in the university at this time, but he was impressed by the way that she listened and answered questions and followed up on the main issues. The eventual outcome was that the controversial initiative was cancelled and an apology was given to staff. Ultimately staff felt that they were supported, their concerns were taken seriously and this outcome was felt to be the best outcome for all parties. Indeed, colleagues remarked that more positive and productive relationships had been fostered as a result of the whole affair.

When colleagues were directly asked why Alumni D was effective in this scenario they asserted that she was determined to ensure that issues were followed up and clearly did not want to just “fob off” people, genuinely giving staff an opportunity to air ideas. Such a collaborative style was something that this colleague had not experienced previously, but felt that it was clearly very effective because it energised staff while simultaneously creating an effective working relationship with the new VC: “I’ve watched how she worked with him, the kind of ideas and values he’s got, how they’ve come out that he is a listening person, that he is committed to the region, he is committed to diversity”.

How does such leadership behaviour link to participation on the TMP?

When this story was related to Alumni D and she was asked if there was any connection to her behaviours and the TMP, some interesting comments were given which affirmed that she was very aware of the importance of effective relationship building. Alumni D related how this experience, early into her tenure, gave her an opportunity to build effective relationships with staff who were concerned about the implications of the new initiative on their workloads. She felt that her experience on the TMP certainly made her more aware of the importance of listening to a wide range of constituents when faced with problems such as this one:

“Yes, it’s really interesting, I mean it was that whole policy and its impact that defined my first-year role in various ways and it also allowed me to build a set of amazing relationships with people that I hope will carry me forward. If I reflect on TMP, I mean I think what TMP does for most people is it gets you into a room with very different personalities with very different approaches and you need to learn listening skills, you need to have a thinking environment.”

Alumni D – using ‘soft power’ and a facilitation leadership style (two stories)

The first of these stories related to Alumni D’s use of soft skills and how she chaired a promotions committee in a very facilitative way, while the second was linked to her ability to navigate a path through the potentially contentious issue of allocating funding for research institutes. Specifically, in relation to the promotions committee example, her colleague noted how Alumni D was successful in terms of providing clarifications, asking challenging questions but simultaneously not attempting to sway the decision surrounding who got promoted in any particular direction. In essence, this colleague felt that Alumni D used what she described as “soft power” very well, which meant that she “felt a lot happier about the decisions, you know, it used to be adversarial area, but it felt much more like a group decision”.

When asked why they felt Alumni D was effective in this scenario, this colleague underlined the transparency in the decision-making deliberations and how there was a very genuine dimension to the whole process:

“it just struck me that her commitment to the process rather than to the politics was quite transparent in that example ... it was more about what she didn’t do, it was more what, that she didn’t chip in when she could’ve done. She entrusted the colleagues to come to a reasoned decision whereas, you know, my experience in the past is that the chair has been unwilling to allow the committee that freedom.”

The second story illustrating Alumni D’s facilitative style of leadership was linked to how she handled a change in relation to research institute funding. Her colleague described how Alumni D was influential in a series of meetings held with other senior leaders in the university. For example, she noted how Alumni D was very effective in a key meeting but in a very quiet and considered way, noting how she was “... more or less silent throughout the whole meeting, but just said a few things which were quite significant”. The colleague went on to note how this style was very useful in “signalling” how she wanted the issues to be resolved – ultimately through closer institute collaboration and partnership. Her colleague went on to describe how Alumni D continued to involve herself and other key stakeholders as the change process evolved, which really reassured her that a satisfactory outcome would happen. She stated that she was “... so anxious about what was going to happen to the institute” but as a result of the actions of Alumni D she “felt confident enough to really disengage because I knew there was a process happening”.

Therefore, for this colleague it was the enabling style that Alumni D displayed and the feeling of being, in her words, “unusually involved in what was happening”. She also spoke about the solid actions of Alumni D, such as involving colleagues in writing relevant papers for circulation at senior management meetings, which really marked her out as effective in this scenario. The following extract from this colleague’s interview underlines how she felt about Alumni D’s style of leadership:

“... just quite calmly, certain things that happened that I felt ok about that gave me, and I suppose it’s in the context of the rest of her management that I, and her values that I understand of her. The way she manages in a way that’s not an alpha male, it’s not the massively loud, it’s incredibly intelligent, competent and with a whole set of values that I adhere to ... Then it was a process that she put in place, I was part of the process of consultation, I was asked, ... So, some of those key messages that stop you from worrying and thinking, oh my God, you know, I’m going to have to change my job, that’s fine it’ll probably change, change is fine, I’m part of the change though, I don’t mind being part of the change because that’s actually going to be interesting, it meant that you felt not scared by it but valued by it.”

How does such leadership behaviour link to participation on the TMP?

When asked whether she felt that the TMP had made any impact to her leadership style in this scenario, the session where visiting vice-chancellors came to speak at the programme was specifically mentioned. Alumni D argued that there seemed to be an underlying theme here where it was expected that those in such senior positions try to significantly influence issues in such scenarios, and in her opinion that was not the most appropriate way to lead, as she summed up:

“some of the visiting vice-chancellors or speakers [had] quite a directive manner being seen as somehow the way to exercise power and how you manipulated things to get to your way of thinking and I think to go back to my quality, diversity, inclusion point is that I don’t think we should be in these roles and assuming that it is about our perspective on everything all the time. We are there to facilitate and enable ... and therefore that has to be collectively owned and sometimes in these promotions committees it won’t be my instinct that the decision is the one I would have made left alone. But that’s the right thing for me to hold back I think because we have elected members, we have a very balanced group and that’s part of the culture here that part of the building of trust is to let that work.”

Alumni D also pointed to the influence of others in her impact group but perhaps more importantly, her exposure to a very effective coach from the TMP team who, from her perspective was able to:

“... hold a room and let silence work and allow everyone to have that time and moment of attention and I learnt a lot of patience through that, I’m not naturally necessarily patient, I might actually sometimes step in too quickly and speak too quickly, so that holding is something I guess I’d practiced it, almost to the point where they said I’d over-practiced it and held back too much on TMP but there you go, there’s no right balance is there.”

When probed more on this issue of “space to practice”, Alumni D pointed out that this was one of the really important benefits of the TMP – allowing one the “experimental space” to try things out in terms of leadership behaviours and skills. Relatedly she also noted how TMP had made an impact on her in that it had made her think about what she described as the “secondary pleasures” of being a senior leader in higher education and how you must really think about how you can influence others and bring about personal success for them:

“the pleasure is seeing other successes and they’re not your own and that goes back to being able not always to have to claim that it’s you that won the day in the big meeting but to see that people found the space to get to the right points for the institution and that has to be something you take great pleasure in because if you’re trying to drive it through with ego all the time it will frustrate, I think.”

In relation to the second story described above, when asked how the TMP helped to contribute to her leadership practice in this scenario, Alumni D specifically recalled the session that she participated in with a UCU representative. In the session the UCU rep presented some very useful case studies which neatly illustrated how leaders are often guilty of not acting quickly enough and not keeping in touch with stakeholders, particularly staff, because they are waiting for what is described as the “pitch perfect answer”. Alumni D noted that this UCU rep made the very pertinent point that staff are frequently simply looking for “a knock on the door early” and some honesty about the scenario. She summed up the situation by noting how the session with the UCU rep taught her that a vital element in being an effective leader is in building trust and reassuring staff:

“... keep talking to me and I’ll help, I’ll steer and there will be trust and even in the difficult times and oh God, that’s vital in the current context we’re in in [university name removed] ... so that was a really important session for me about early communication but also not rushing to offer people the thing they need to hear when that could actually do more damage in the long run if you can’t deliver on it and this thing of building trust and that sometimes that trust is simply people feeling they can ask a question, they can share an anxiety and you at least get back and say look actually that meeting’s not for a couple of weeks. I can’t tell you anything and really do, just go and get on with the work you’re doing ... sometimes people just need that conversation and they need that door to be open so I think there’s something about ... being difficult to get to or our diaries being too busy but it’s something we have to keep battling for. So, I think that UCU session was revelatory for me in that regard.”

Alumni E – setting the organisational strategy

Alumni E's institution had achieved a significant milestone in its strategic plan, in response to which a new vision and plan for the organisation was required. Alumni E organised a series of focus groups with staff looking at what type of institution they aspired to be, the values it was going to have and the strategic objectives. The colleague felt that Alumni E was effective in this case by taking such a collaborative approach in developing a mission statement for the organisation and that this was a very different style than they had seen in the past. In being so much more collaborative, Alumni E "put yourself in more of a vulnerable position because when you ask people for feedback then you have to actually act on their feedback. And then you had gone through a sense checking process with them. How you were reflective was taking such a collaborative approach, such a discursive approach engaging at all levels with the organisation." This approach was taken not just with senior leaders, it was right down to a frontline support staff and then providing a mechanism by which people's views were captured and fed back to ensure that they were checked.

How does such leadership behaviour link to participation on the TMP?

Alumni E reflected:

"I don't think I would have done it as comprehensively without TMP. I think one of the challenges was up until TMP we'd had a pretty black and white direction of travel... the direction of travel had been set since 2012 so there hadn't been the appropriate need for that kind of collaborative approach. So this was the first time we were entering a full-scale consultation for quite a while. I'm pretty sure I would have done it without TMP but I think the way in which I went about it was different. One of the key differences was that we used an external facilitator to help parts of it. And historically I probably would have tried to manage the process and contribute myself which historically would have meant that I was trying to do two or three things at the same time. And I think that creates a different environment for other people to contribute. If I'm trying to keep the discussion moving on and contribute and potentially steer, I don't think that that's necessarily providing as open an environment. So, we actually used one of the TMP members of staff to facilitate that strategic discussion at some of the levels and I think that enabled me to take a much more collaborative approach and allowed me to be more vulnerable and to say look, I don't have a blueprint for what this is going to look like, that is the whole point of this conversation. This is about us as a team, as a faculty designing the blueprint going forward and because I wasn't having to structure everything and manage everything and keep things going on I was able to take that step back up more. So I think the techniques that I employed were certainly supported by the experiences I had on TMP."

Alumni B – collaborative decision making / considerate problem solving (three stories)

In the first and third of a series of three stories on this theme, two colleagues of Alumni B spoke about how she played a key role in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and National Student Survey submissions for their university. Both colleagues shared how Alumni B led this process and really raised awareness of the initiative among staff, by engaging and inspiring them as well as playing an integral part in preparing the actual submissions. One of the colleagues remarked on how Alumni B took personal charge of the whole TEF initiative and devoted much energy on the project. What most impressed this colleague was Alumni B's ability to clarify what the submission would mean for staff in "real life ... putting it in a language that was very human." There was also much enthusiasm created around these submissions and another colleague underlined how Alumni B inspired everyone to be motivated towards the common goal. With particular reference to efforts to achieve better NSS results, colleagues noted how staff felt personally involved and were motivated to try to ensure that the strategy to achieve better results became a reality:

"I think the bit that really stood out for me, that she was really effective in that meeting was her, she's very personable, is probably not the right word but she relates to people so despite there being sort of 30 people in the room it really felt like you could engage with everybody, she was engaging on everybody's level."

The other colleague who spoke about this example argued that for him, Alumni B added balance to the process because of her consultative approach with staff, which allowed them to contribute and give ideas. However, he felt that she skilfully used such information to make well informed, strategic decisions behind the scenes which she knew would be well received by assessors. Colleagues also noticed how Alumni B was able to, in the words of one, "stick to her guns" to try to get the "maximum impact for us, going forward and for long term", even when other senior colleagues had a different opinion about the composition of the submission.

In the other story illustrating Alumni B's talent for calm and considered decision-making, a story was shared regarding how she effectively managed an emergency situation involving several of the university's students. Her colleagues described how Alumni B went straight into problem-solving mode, making sure that the right people across the institution were notified. They described how Alumni B coordinated the response to this situation, ensured panic did not spread across campus and that everyone was kept up to speed and involved as appropriate in terms of how they could help. For example, she was commended on the speed at which she contacted several outside bodies who offered support.

When her colleagues were asked why they felt that this was a display of effective leadership behaviour one colleague underlined that Alumni B seemed to get "the tone right, the situation was serious and sensitive but there was no sense of panic or lack of clarity". As with the previous example, colleagues were impressed with Alumni B's level of knowledge with the university, and in particular who needed to be involved in ensuring that the episode was concluded successfully. As one colleague described, it was not a case of "...oh my God, let's just try and go scattergun and do every action we can right now."

This colleague also discussed how this incident summed up the generally supportive style that Alumni B offered to staff: “[She] was very careful to make sure people knew that she was approachable and should they need any support and should need anything, sometimes, without her even saying it, you know her door’s open”.

How does such leadership behaviour link to participation on the TMP?

When asked if she felt that her participation in the TMP had contributed to her success in these stories revolving around the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and National Student Survey submissions, Alumni B felt that it would be hard to identify any particular parts of the programme that specifically influenced her actions here. However, like several of the participants in this story-based evaluation exercise, Alumni B did remark on how her participation in TMP had boosted her confidence:

“I’m struggling to think about specific things that the TMP did that contributed to that but what I would say is I think participating in it gave me more confidence and I needed that confidence going into that process because it was obviously a very significant thing for the institution, it was complex, it was new, there were no templates in a sense for what should be included and what shouldn’t. But, I think my feeling is that that was just as much about how I would normally operate as anything specific that I would feel I was taught on the TMP.”

In relation to the second story, linked to Alumni B’s response to the emergency situation, she was at pains to point out that any success in this case could not be attributed to her and that everyone who needed to stepped up and made sure that the university’s response was measured and appropriate. She also noted that linking this to the TMP was again difficult in terms of “causes and effects” or identifying how success might be accrued to a particular “course”, but when she reflected on things she felt that her experience of the TMP did help her to think introspectively about what she was good at and what she maybe needed to think about developing further:

“I think the things I benefited from TMP were the things that gave me insight into my own strengths and weaknesses ... the analysis of our own preferences and the way in which we operate, I did find that quite helpful ... I think it was helpful in terms of getting you to reflect on, well, these are things that would be my natural preference and, therefore, I might be reasonably good at and these are things that wouldn’t be my natural preference and I need to practice and I have I think tried to be conscious of that and tried to develop the other side of where things wouldn’t necessarily be my preference and I think probably some of that would have been brought to bear in that situation but not very consciously so.... it just enabled me to be aware of how I am and to reflect on that and to try improve where I’m not as strong.”

On a more general note here, Alumni B did recall how overall it was extremely useful to hear from the senior VC leaders who came to speak to her TMP group. For her, listening to such leaders could provide information for someone in a position such as hers. Interestingly, she stated that sometimes the learning from such speakers was linked to simply seeing them in action and while there might have been aspects that one would want to “emulate as a leader” hearing them speak about certain issues stirred some unease as well:

“other things where I just thought goodness me I hope I never say or do that because I don’t think that’s very motivating for colleagues. So, I did find that really interesting and I did reflect quite a lot on those leadership insights and I think they have given me quite a lot of cause to reflect on how I am and how I want to be.”

Alumni B – Individual consideration for staff / becoming more strategically orientated

As can be appreciated from the other stories that were shared in relation to Alumni B, it is clear that she was perceived to have excellent ability in directing and galvanising groups towards the achievement of key goals with reference to initiatives such as the TEF or the NSS. The final story was more personal in nature, concerning how she worked with a recently recruited colleague who had been tasked with setting up a new function at the university. This colleague confided that this was a challenge for her – finding herself in what she described as “unchartered waters”.

The colleague went on to tell us about the inspiration, support and reassurance offered by Alumni B, who was very realistic about what it was that the colleague should expect to achieve in the timeframe available. For example, she noted how Alumni B’s facilitative and approachable leadership style helped her to open up about the progress of the project and that from the beginning Alumni B reassured her about expectations and goals. She also stated how she valued Alumni B’s clarity and the way she emphasised that although this was a team effort, she was there to provide the relevant leadership when needed and that this colleague should not feel pressurised. For example, she recalled a comment that she made, stating that her job was to “steer this boat and I know where we’re going to go, and this is how we’re going to do it.”

This colleague was also quick to point out that as well as being supportive and reassuring there was a tougher side to Alumni B’s leadership too, where she was not afraid to disagree with others on particular strategies and could find an authoritative style if it was needed. Ultimately, the key theme that came out from the interview with this colleague was that Alumni B established an atmosphere of collaboration and mutual support:

“she is very people-orientated and although she is very clear about what needs to be done, she does know that she will only get there if others are actually engaged in it and feel part of that and that’s very good modelling for me as well because it’s what I need to do as well. I am quite inspired by that.”

How does such leadership behaviour link to participation on the TMP?

When asked about how TMP participation helped in this example, Alumni B pointed out that throughout the programme there was much discussion about the volatility of the HE sector and the increased level of disruption to what may have been perceived as the traditional order. She felt that the example cited in this story was a good example where she could see such volatility happening before her, where originally agreed objectives could not be delivered because other more pressing, strategically important issues may have taken precedence for the university.

Alumni B felt that a link could clearly be made to what she learnt in the TMP here, in that she became aware that as a leader in HE it was important to prioritise your strategic role and ensure that initiatives and projects that really mattered to the institution happened, often against or in spite of the volatility that was happening all around you:

“I think TMP probably did help me with that actually, again, more on the softer side but I know I’m a detail person and I like to understand the detail and for that to inform strategic decision-making, hopefully, rather than just be obsessed by the detail and I think what TMP has helped me with is to be more strategically focused and to be more empowering hopefully of my colleagues because when you get to the sort of more privileged position of being at PVC level, actually you have got colleagues that are there to do the detail and that’s their job and they value being able to do that job and my job is to support and enable them to perform well and I think to be given confidence to feel actually it’s ok to just do the strategic stuff and to expect other people to do the detail and there was something I else I was going to say but I’ve forgotten what it was.”

Ultimately then, Alumni B shared with us how she felt that the TMP had helped her to understand the need for her, as a senior HE leader, to take a step away from some of the more detailed aspects of her work and to think about the importance of empowerment and delegation:

“TMP has helped me to do that – hearing the way in which other colleagues operate, I sort of think gosh I do get too involved in things at times and that’s at a cost to me and it’s a cost to colleagues both in terms of being at risk of being a blockage because actually I’ve just got too much stuff coming at me and if people feel they’ve got to check things with me or get approval for things or pass me a problem then it will just get stuck and also, in terms of empowering them and enabling them to take decisions. ... I have a very broad portfolio and there’s no way, with the best will in the world, I can know at the level that my colleagues know so I do defer to them as the experts and what I hope I do is try to give strategic direction about what matters to the institution and I do think that TMP has helped me with that actually, both in terms of just giving me time to reflect on how I am and giving me that benchmark of how other people operate.”

References

- Baldwin, TT and Ford, JK (1988) 'Transfer of training: a review and directions for future Research', *Personnel Psychology*, 41: 63–105.
- Bennis, W and Nanus, B (1985) *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*. New York: Harper Row.
- Blume, BD, Ford, JK, Baldwin, TT and Huang, JL (2010) 'Transfer of Training: A Meta-Analytic Review', *Journal of Management*, 36 (4): 1065-1105.
- Bryman, A and Lilley, S (2009) 'Leadership researchers on leadership in higher education', *Leadership*, 5 (3): 331-46.
- Burke, L A and Hutchins, H M (2007) 'Training transfer: an integrative literature review', *Human Resource Development Review*, 6: 263–96.
- Burns, JM (1978) *Leadership*. New York: Harper Row.
- Chaimongkonrojna, T and Steane, P (2015) 'Effectiveness of full range leadership development among middle managers', *Journal of Management Development*, 34 (9): 1161- 1180.
- Chiaburu, DS and Lindsay, DR (2008) 'Can do or will do? The importance of self-efficacy and instrumentality for training transfer', *Human Resource Development International*, 11(2): 199-206.
- Chiaburu, DS and Tekleab, AG (2005) 'Individual and contextual influences on multiple dimensions of training effectiveness', *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 29: 604–26.
- Chiaburu, DS, Van Dam, K and Hutchins, HM (2010) 'Social support in the workplace and training transfer: A longitudinal analysis', *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 18 (2): 187-200.
- Day, DV (2001) 'Leadership Development: A Review in Context', *The Leadership Quarterly*, 11: 581-613.
- Day, DV and Dragoni, L (2015) 'Leadership development: An outcome-oriented review based on time and levels of analyses', *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 2: 133-156.
- Day, DV and Sin, HP (2011) 'Longitudinal tests of an integrative model of leader development: Charting and understanding developmental trajectories', *The Leadership Quarterly*, 22(3): 545–560.
- DeRue, DS and Ashford, SJ (2010) 'Who will lead and who will follow? A social process of leadership identity construction in organizations', *Academy of Management Review*, 35: 627–647.
- Dopson, S, Ferlie, E, McGivern, G, Fischer, M, Ledger, J, Behrens, S and Wilson, S (2016) 'The Impact of Leadership and Leadership Development in Higher Education: A Review of the Literature and Evidence'. Leadership Foundation Research and Development Series, Advance HE. Available at: www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/impact-leadership-and-leadership-development-higher-education-review-literature-and

- Gilpin-Jackson, Y and Bushe, GR (2007) 'Leadership development training transfer: a case study of post-training determinants', *Journal of Management Development*, 26 (10): 980-1004.
- Greszki R, Meyer M, Schoen H (2014) 'The impact of speeding on data quality in nonprobability and freshly recruited probability-based online panels', in *Online Panel Research: A data quality perspective*, M. Callegaro, M, Baker, R, Bethlehem, J, Göritz, AS, Krosnick, JA and Lavrakas, PJ (2014) eds. Chichester, UK: Wiley, 238–262.
- Grossman, R. and Salas, E. (2011) 'The transfer of training: What really matters', *International Journal of Training and Development*, 15, (2): 103-120.
- Hannah, ST and Avolio, BJ (2010) 'Ready or not: How do we accelerate the developmental readiness of leaders?', *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31(8): 1181-1187.
- Hannah, ST, Avolio, BJ, Luthans, F and Harms, PD (2008) 'Leadership efficacy: Review and future directions', *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19: 669–92.
- Hannah, ST and Avolio, BJ (2013) '*Leader Efficacy Questionnaire*'. Mind Garden, Inc. Available at: www.mindgarden.com/115-leader-efficacy-questionnaire
- Jarvis, C, Gulati, A, McCrerrick, V and Simpson, P (2013) 'Leadership matters: Tensions in evaluating leadership development', *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 15 (1): 27-45.
- Kennedy, F, Carroll, B, and Francoeur, J (2013) 'Mindset Not Skill Set: Evaluating in New Paradigms of Leadership Development', *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 15 (1): 10-26.
- Kline P (1999) *The Handbook of Psychological Testing* (2nd Ed). London: Routledge.
- McCracken, M (2004) 'Understanding Managerial Propensity to Participate in Learning Activities in the Scottish Life Assurance Industry', *Human Resource Development International*, 7 (4): 501-517
- McCracken, M, Brown, T and O'Kane, P (2012) 'Swimming Against the Current: Understanding How a Positive Organisational Training Climate Can Enhance Training Participation and Transfer in the Public Sector', *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 25 (4): 301-316.
- McCracken, M, McCrory, SM, Farley, H and McHugh, ML (2018) '*Leadership Journeys: Tracking the Challenge and Impact of the Top Management Programme*. Leadership Insights, Leadership Foundation for Higher Education', Leadership Foundation Research and Development Series, Advance HE. Available at: www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/leadership-journeys-tracking-challenge-and-impact-top-management-programme
- McGivern, G, Currie, G, Ferlie, E, Fitzgerald, L and Waring, J (2015) 'Hybrid Manager-Professionals' Identity Work: The Maintenance and Hybridization of Medical Professionalism in Managerial Contexts', *Public Administration*, 93 (2): 412-432.
- Middlehurst, R (2012) *Leadership and Management in Higher Education: A Research Perspective*. Working Paper No 2012/47. Maastricht School of Management.

- McGurk, P (2010) 'Outcomes of management and leadership development', *Journal of Management Development*, 29 (5): 457 – 470.
- Noe, RA and Schmitt, N (1986) 'The Influence of Trainee Attitudes on Training Effectiveness: Test of a Model', *Personnel Psychology*, 39: 497-523.
- Nunnally JC (1978) *Psychometric theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Packard, T and Jones, L (2015) 'An outcomes evaluation of a leadership development initiative', *Journal of Management Development*, 34 (2): 153 – 168.
- Paglis, LL (2010) 'Leadership self-efficacy: research findings and practical applications', *Journal of Management Development*, 29 (9): 771 – 782.
- Schonlau, M and Toepoel, V (2015) 'Straightlining in web survey panels over time', *Survey Research Methods*, 9: 125-137.
- Tavakol M, and Dennick, R (2011) 'Making sense of Cronbach's alpha', *International Journal of Medical Education*, 2: 53-55.
- Watkins, K, Lysø, I and DeMarrais, K (2011) 'Evaluating executive leadership programs: A theory of change approach', *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 13 (2): 208-239.
- Yurdugül, H (2008) 'Minimum sample size for Cronbach's coefficient alpha: A Monte-Carlo study', *HU Journal of Education*, 35: 397-405.
- Zhang, C and Conrad, F (2014) 'Speeding in web surveys: The tendency to answer very fast and its association with straightlining', *Survey Research Methods*, 8: 127–135.



Contact us

General enquiries

+44 (0) 3300 416201

enquiries@advance-he.ac.uk

www.advance-he.ac.uk

Media enquiries

+44 (0) 1904 717500

communications@advance-he.ac.uk

www.advance-he.ac.uk/contact-us

 **in f** @AdvanceHE

Advance HE enables excellence in higher education, helping it shape its future. Within the UK and globally, Advance HE supports institutions in the areas of excellence in education, transformative leadership, equity and inclusion and effective governance. This is delivered through membership benefits (including accreditation of teaching, equality charters, research, knowledge and resources), programmes and events, Fellowships, awards, consultancy and enhancement services and student surveys.

Advance HE is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales no. 04931031. Registered as a charity in England and Wales no. 1101607 Registered as a charity in Scotland no. SC043946. The Advance HE logo should not be used without our permission.

Unless stated otherwise, Advance HE is not the copyright owner of these case studies. The details and content of the case studies must not be used in any form without the prior express permission of the relevant author(s).

© 2021 Advance HE. All rights reserved.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the author and not necessarily those of Advance HE. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any storage and retrieval system without the written permission of the copyright owner. Such permission will normally be granted for non-commercial, educational purposes provided that due acknowledgement is given.

To request copies of this report in large print or in a different format, please contact the Marketing and Communications Team at Advance HE: +44 (0) 3300 416201 or publications@advance-he.ac.uk