

Social Enterprise: sharing best practice as a tool in youth work

An exploration of social enterprise in practice in seven countries.



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Introduction

Social enterprise: sharing best practice as a tool in youth work

Social enterprise is recognised by the European Commission as having a significant part to play in the future economic well-being of Europe. While it is more established in some countries such as Ireland, UK and Sweden than others, there is nevertheless a common aim across Europe to tap into its potential and community benefits.

During the 2008/9 economic crash, business values started to change, and an appetite grew for more inclusive or socially active businesses in our communities. Austerity has been the backdrop to many people's lives across Europe since then, but social enterprise as a business model potentially provides opportunities for employment, especially for groups at risk of marginalisation or exclusion from the traditional labour market.

The Social Enterprise best practice project began its journey in Timisoara, Romania, when several interested parties - from Serbia, England, Wales, Romania, Sweden, Czech Republic and Ireland - came together to discuss various ideas for new projects. The group put together a proposal looking at what best practice looks like for social enterprises, how this relates to youth work and how to develop the competences of young people. The project finally came to fruition early in 2018.

It has resulted in a multi-faceted project designed to increase the knowledge and expertise of youth workers, who in turn can cascade their learning to young people to improve their understanding and knowledge of social enterprise. By doing so, they are improving their skills in different competences such as teamwork, communications and marketing.

Over a period of 30 months, the project team has undertaken seven short-term training events to enable staff and volunteers to build their skills and knowledge.

Youth and community workers, and staff from the partners were invited to observe, experience and question representatives from different social enterprises in the study visits, with two examples being chosen at the end of each one. These examples are included in our Good Practice guide together with special mentions of other enterprises visited. The good practices were chosen according to a set of criteria including effectiveness and impact and whether they are capable of being adapted or copied elsewhere.

In addition to choosing the good practices, this project aimed at fostering relationships and building connections. It has brought together young people and community workers from immensely varied backgrounds. It has sparked conversations, challenged views and created lifelong friendships and working connections between people aiming to improve the lives of young people across Europe.

We are very grateful to all the organisations who hosted us and thank them for their hospitality and generosity in sharing their experiences with us. We hope that this guide reinforces the importance of social enterprise and inspires you to get involved.

The Project Team

July 2020



The Good Practices

Sweden

- 1) Bike Kitchen
- 2) Awesome People



Bike Kitchen

Introduction

Bike Kitchen is a social enterprise established in Solna, Sweden in 2012. The concept of bike repair shops is popular climate change and environmental action are important issues in Sweden. However, Bike Kitchen wanted to take their idea one step further and look at the way we teach young people. Their owner has a background as a teacher and has worked extensively with young people from all walks of life. This project is supported financially in two ways; firstly by their municipality who recognised the positive impact this could have on young people and also by the membership programmes and repairs they carry out on site. Membership is 200Kr per year for access to all services and support. They also receive specific funding for key projects with young people with the aim of getting old bikes back on the road.

What did we do?

We were shown the outside area of the Bike Kitchen, which was busy with young people. Our host described how the Bike Kitchen works and showed us round the workshop which was well-stocked with tools and newly repaired bikes.

Impact

This enterprise favours “learning by doing” as an accessible way of learning for young people. They provide a service where young people can learn how to fix bikes and learn about recycling/upcycling. However, their biggest success is the creation of their community hub where young people learn to communicate with one another, often through peer learning.

Innovation and adaptability

The most innovative aspect is the project’s total commitment to building a community through using staff with experience of education and working with young people. Few other bike repair enterprises in Sweden have explored this model of business. In addition, Bike Kitchen focuses on environmental action, including recycling and upcycling, which is also attractive to young people. This type of enterprise can easily be copied or adapted for use in our settings where staff have the relevant background and experience.

For more information:

<http://www.cykelkoketsolna.se/>

<https://www.instagram.com/cykelkoketsolna/>

Awesome People

Introduction

Awesome people are a not-for-profit group who aim to empower young people to do something positive for themselves or their community. They saw a gap in the market for personal development for young people, with a particular focus on sports and physical activity. They offer workshops that empower young people – particularly migrants - to develop their self-esteem and self-worth, helping them to integrate into their communities. They work with young people aged 13-18 years old, particularly those not engaged in other programmes or at school, migrants new to the city, and hard to reach, disadvantaged youngsters. They were initially funded through Erasmus+ funding and many of their activities were run on a voluntary basis making the project cost-effective.

What did we do?

We met Awesome People at the Kurage Youth Centre in Solna, Sweden. They gave a taster of the workshops they run, in which we looked at our own personal goals. We were taught through the lens of the young people themselves and saw how Awesome People bring out the best in them. We then had an opportunity to discuss the work they do, why they do it and what they think are their biggest successes and challenges.

Impact

They provide opportunities for young people to feel valued, and target those who are among the most marginalised and disadvantaged in the community. Their approach not only benefits the young people but also provides an enriching experience for volunteers. Programmes like these give young people from disadvantaged backgrounds the possibility of seeing that they can achieve their dreams and make a difference to the world around them.

Innovation and adaptability

This type of programme needs few physical resources, so is flexible to run. The programmes rely on the enthusiasm of the volunteers who run them, and the key to making this work is having the right people who are trained appropriately, and able to inspire young people. We felt that the idea is entirely suitable for other situations and countries.

For more information:

www.awesomepeople.se

<https://www.facebook.com/AwesomesPeoples>

England

1) Dragons' Apprentice Challenge

2) Youth Connexions



Dragons' Apprentice Challenge

Introduction

This project, set up in 2010, aims to create a trilateral connection in the Dacorum area between high school students, local enterprises and local charities. The high school students work in teams and are assigned to a business mentor who assists them in developing a business idea to turn 100 pounds into a 1,000 pounds for a local charity. The business mentor provides advice and support to ensure the students can achieve their goals. Each team is given a detailed time plan of milestones to hit over the course of the challenge including submitting business plans, holding business and community meetings. In the past, students have run events such as quizzes, dances, concerts and silent auctions to raise money. This programme is not only about raising money for charity but about teaching young people about business, working as part of a team, and giving back to their local community. It also boosts their confidence and shows how each person can make a positive difference to the lives of others.

What did we do?

We were fortunate to be present on the first evening of the Dragons' Challenge for 2019 and were able to see for ourselves the enthusiasm of the young people and partners involved. The students were from several different schools in the Dacorum area and were brought together for a briefing on the next few months' activities. Each team was matched up with a business mentor and charity and given some time to get to know each other and discuss some initial ideas. We were given an insight into how each school picks their teams, selecting those students with a keen interest in entrepreneurship and social responsibility. We could also see how this fostered good relationships between different schools and the community, providing opportunities for young people to meet those who they might not have met otherwise.

Impact

The young people develop an understanding of entrepreneurial, business and social skills. They quickly develop confidence, learning about relationships, meetings, and public speaking, all skills that young people often lack. This project brings together the school, the community, businesses and charities. It gives students the time and space to develop core critical thinking skills and make decisions about fundraising, analysing what works best in their area.

Innovation and adaptability

This project is highly adaptable for other countries but requires a lot of initial groundwork to cultivate relationships, motivating schools and businesses to work together. Businesses would need to be convinced of the value of this 'corporate social responsibility' initiative. Please note that due to copyright issues, it cannot be called the Dragons' Challenge in other countries.

For more information: www.connectdacorum.org.uk/dragons-apprentice

Youth Connexions

Introduction

Youth Connexions was established in the 1990s as a youth space for young people in the Dacorum area. The YC building opens from 9am Monday-Sunday with youth workers available from 10am onwards. Young people can drop in and speak to a youth worker between 10am-4pm without appointment and with appointments from 2pm-5pm daily. They generally work with the 13-17-year-old age group, but their LGBT+, transgender and disability groups are extended to 24 years old. They have outreach programmes tackling issues around drugs, alcohol, and sex education with children as young as 11. They aim to run stratified groups targeting those “at risk” including young offenders, school leavers and young mums. They aim to provide safe spaces for young people, as well as running empowering and interactive life skills programmes. They recognise that not all young people have had the same upbringing and opportunity to learn life skills or have a safe place where they can get advice, so they see their service as enhancing and potentially saving lives.

What did we do?

We visited the different areas of the building including a music room, art spaces and meeting rooms, where a youth worker showed us their informative displays on issues like knife crime. No topic is off limits and they try to create safe spaces where young people feel respected, valued and supported.

Impact

The impact of Youth Connexions is immense, as deal face to face with young people, many of whom are vulnerable or marginalised in some way, recognising that some have additional needs and require extra support. They give young people access to up to date and accurate information to help them to make safe and healthy life choices, as well as build their confidence and improve their self-esteem.

Innovation and adaptability

This type of project is very adaptable to other settings but requires significant funding to set up, both for the physical space and the employment of trained youth workers. Other essential elements are dedicated and supportive staff, an understanding of the challenges faced by young people, and a responsive approach to their needs. The projects are tightly focused on their needs with young people being encouraged to contribute their own ideas. This project has an innovative funding stream as the youth workers regularly give workshops in schools, which are paid for by the schools. This not only provides revenue but also widens their reach to young people. It also creates a one stop shop for young people in need of advice, guidance, or support.

Please note that the description above was correct at the time of our visit in 2018; however, since our visit, Youth Connexions has been reorganised and rebranded YC Hertfordshire.

For more information: www.ychertfordshire.org/

Czech Republic

1) Český Těšín Co-Working Space

2) Karvina Youth Council



Český Těšín Co-Working Space

Introduction

The idea behind co-working spaces is to provide physical space for individuals or small groups, allowing communities, social and small enterprises or entrepreneurs to work individually or together, forging partnerships in an organic way. This space was set up by a young person - Tomasz Hlisnikowski - in Silesia, in the eastern part of the Czech Republic, a socially and economically deprived area on the border with Poland.

The space itself is flexible and open plan with meeting rooms and communal areas that all patrons can use. The initiative primarily targets 20-35-year olds, and offers options to pay on an hourly, daily, weekly or monthly basis. There is no charge for community or youth groups.

The building was renovated by the young people who started the enterprise and sits above a youth club where some of the co-working staff also work. This helps develop a natural partnership with young people and gives them the opportunity to experience a grass roots enterprise. Before the creation of the co-working space, this building was used as a pub and was dirty and full of rubbish. As Tomasz wanted to improve it, the owner of the building agreed to give him the place for a low monthly rent. Initially, there were difficulties in ensuring their building complied with all necessary regulations, but this was readily overcome.

Both buildings are owned by a Polish minority association who aim to increase opportunities for Polish and Czech young people with improved cooperation at the border.

While the primary aim was to offer cheaper accommodation to local start-up companies or community initiatives, the place has attracted community activists who aim to turn their passions into business ventures. Space is offered to NGOs at free or discounted rates as a way of giving back something to the community.

At the time of visiting in 2019, it was a new venture so still needed work but as of mid-2020, there are six desk spaces and a conference room rented for meetings.

What did we do?

Co-founder Tomasz gave us a tour and presentation about the company. This is a quiet, professional space for young entrepreneurs and attracts those in IT, community work and management.

Impact

Young entrepreneurs not only have the physical space to work but also access to peer support networking facilities for the exchange of ideas and opportunities. As this is a disadvantaged area, entrepreneurs rarely have an opportunity like this, and it builds confidence and supports the development of solid businesses. This initiative provides opportunities for people from minority communities to integrate into the community and fosters cross cultural co-operation. Unlike Business Gate of Karvina, this place is not a partnership with the municipality, but was co-created by Tomasz himself, his friends and with the support of Petrklíč help.

Innovation and adaptability

While this idea already exists globally and is quite easy to replicate, it can be difficult to get established unless there are suitable premises and a willingness on the part of the relevant authorities. However, this project is a good example of a 'bottom up' approach as it is born out of a need identified by young people. It provides an innovative solution to the problems of a deprived area and fosters new ideas and solutions around regional development, urban renewal, and sustainability, supporting local NGO's and advocacy groups.

For more information: <https://coworkvtesine.cz/>

Email: coworkvtesine@gmail.com; tomasz.hlisnikowski@seznam.cz

Facebook: Co working v Těšíně

Karvina Youth Council

Introduction

This project was started in 2014 to give young people in Karvina opportunities for personal development, a sense of belonging to the community, and to help them acquire skills such as peer learning, enterprise, confidence and practice in public speaking.

Around 25 active members aged between 13-30 ensure the voice of young people is considered in the council's decision making. Every young person can be a member of the Youth Council if they are motivated and want to participate in their community. They aim to particularly engage those from minority groups to ensure diverse representation in their activities. Members do not have to represent an organisation to become a member of the Youth Council as they represent themselves as individuals. The Youth Council collaborates with local organisations and is part of the National Youth Council and the Parliament of Children and Youth of the Moravian-Silesian Region. They advertise through local school, library and university networks.

The KYC creates spaces and events for young people, challenges inequalities and looks at how to face the issues of today such as climate change. The Youth Council organizes or cooperates in different types of projects year-round. These include sports, with the "Skate through Karvina" project, where they closed a road in the town to permit to people to skate freely for one day. Cultural events include the "Festival of Colours" while they are also involved in environmental events like Earth Day and in human rights like the One World film festival. The Youth Council aims to transfer what people have in their mind into reality with the help of local decision makers.

The Youth Council of Karvina meets once a month as well as with other young people and the municipality – both officers and political representatives. They also have retreat weekends twice a year modelled on other youth councils.

What did we do?

We were invited to the municipality to meet three representatives of the youth council. These young people talked us through what the youth council does and what it means to them. They talked about the training they have had and the support from both the municipality and local groups.

Impact

Young people are empowered to speak up about the issues they face and are given opportunities to make changes in their area and create events and activities. They have created a sustainable model of youth engagement and constantly grow their network of young people. They also provide opportunities for young people of all different backgrounds to get to know one another and learn about other cultures. This in turn, breaks down stigma and prejudice and ultimately creates a more cohesive society. They teach young people to become more politically engaged and ensure they feel able to speak up for what they believe in. This has created a more informed population of young people in Karvina.

Innovation and adaptability

This idea can be very adapted to other countries but relies on the willingness of local authorities to listen to their young people and accommodate their thoughts and ideas. It was refreshing to see a functioning forum where young people can engage with others and express their opinions. The youth council also provides a support network for young people, and gives them opportunities to be creative, improve the sustainability of the community, to forge strategic partnerships with the local community, to hold events and activities, and develop business ideas.

For more information: www.mrkarvina.com/

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mrkarvina/>

Serbia

- 1) Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre Counselling Service
- 2) Novi Sad Drop-in Centre for street children



Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre Counselling Service

Introduction

Counselling services are not very common in Serbia and this project was started to address the largely unmet counselling needs of young people in Novi Sad who were experiencing an increase in mental health problems. This project was initially funded by Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre and is now funded via OPENS, the Youth Capital of Europe 2019. The mission is to provide free counselling and support services for young people, primarily under the age of 30. They had, at the time of visiting, over 40 clients, with those over the age of 30 asked to pay for their participation (according to what they can afford). This contributes to financing the enterprise.

The counsellors are volunteers - students in training or who have recently graduated in psychotherapy - and they benefit from gaining experience of providing counselling, which is needed to gain their qualifications. They aim to empower clients to recognise the cause of their anxiety or mental health issue; to give them skills to overcome these problems and reduce self-destructive behaviours. However, it is important to note that those needing serious support or intervention (such as medication) are referred on to national health services. The service operates 7 days a week in the afternoons and evenings.

What did we do?

The offices are in a warehouse space in Novi Sad, which is now used as an office. As well as a reception area, there are three small rooms where confidential meetings can take place. We met some of the core staff who outlined their service and why it is needed. The services support those in times of need and help to break down stigma around mental health issues. They have steadily grown their capacity to support clients and hope that others will be inspired to set up similar services.

Impact

The counselling service allows young people to seek free advice and support in a non-judgmental environment. Through word of mouth, they are rapidly gaining more clients with more on their waiting list. They hope to expand over the coming year so they can provide more services for young people in the area. As well as supporting young people, the volunteer counsellors are also benefiting from the professional experience needed to qualify. The service also looks at new attitudes to mental health and encourages young people not to be ashamed of seeking help. Clients comment on the relaxed environment, the lack of judgement they face and the patience of volunteers.

Innovation and adaptability

This service can be easily adapted and is already being set up by one of the partner organisations in Ireland. Important points to consider are the safety of the young people participating, the security of the venue, confidentiality and the qualifications and experience of those providing the service. The idea is simple and capitalises on the willingness of medical trainees/graduates to take part and the need for mental health support for young people.

For more information: <http://www.savetovaliste.nshc.org.rs/>

Drop-in Centre for Street Children

Introduction

The Drop-In Centre is a small building in a Novi Sad neighbourhood comprising of meeting rooms, a dining room, shower facilities, kitchen, a medical facility and therapy rooms. The centre opened in 2010, financed in part from international funding, to combat the high levels of HIV in “at risk” groups which include street children. At first, they concentrated on building relationships with relevant organisations in the area, including the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad. In 2015 they became part of the state’s social welfare system which allowed them to access sustainable funding. They target mainly Roma children and adults, who seldom have any formal education, are often unemployed and experience discrimination in their daily lives.

The service operates between 9am-10pm year-round, providing more than 20,000 meals a year, hundreds of items of clothing and washing facilities for the most under-privileged groups in the area. They ensure that young people have a safe space where they can relax, with access to hot meals, support services and an opportunity to learn new skills. Seven dedicated staff members run the services and the local community provide donations to support them. The Drop-In Centre promotes social cohesion and integration and has helped hundreds of children over the past 9 years.

What did we do?

We visited the Centre to meet the staff and some of the beneficiaries. We heard about the impact of their work and the challenges they face in building up trust with minority groups and breaking down the perceptions of the Roma community in Novi Sad.

Impact

This project provides, often for the first time, a safe space for very vulnerable children with access to hot meals and shower facilities. The staff and volunteers know, anecdotally, that children who come here are more likely to go into education and gain opportunities to improve their lives. Children are also given access to personal hygiene products, allowing the children to become healthier and reduce the risk of illness. This place provides something often taken for granted, which transforms the lives of the beneficiaries. It also improves community relations by breaking down stereotypes.

Innovation and adaptability

This service can be set up wherever there are the resources and funding available. Considerations need to be given to the safety of children, with innovative approaches to developing trust and partnerships with the local community. This enterprise meets some of the basic needs of children and young people as well as opportunities to gain life-long skills. They learn about health and life skills and receive some education.

For more information: <http://www.decaulice.rs/>

Wales

- 1) Merthyr Tydfil Institute for The Blind
- 2) Cambrian Village Trust



Merthyr Tydfil Institute for The Blind

Introduction

MTIB provides people with disabilities with a sustainable source of employment in manufacturing as well as the opportunity to gain job skills to help them move into employment elsewhere. They are currently one of the leading furniture manufacturers in Wales, using innovative techniques that make them very competitive. The organisation, which was originally set up in 1923 to support visually impaired miners, has a strong social ethos rather than being profit driven. More than 90% of their current staff have some type of recognised disability. Over the last 10 years, they have supported over 500 people with employability or life skills and around 200 of them are still in sustained employment.

They deliver a Specialist Employment Service, a government funded programme for people with health conditions and disabilities who have significant barriers to employment. This service offers a personalised approach to employment support with an advisor who can identify suitable activities and the support needed, such as help with CV writing. This support, which can last up to 12 months, also continues once the client moves into employment. They also work with local employers to provide support and information on hiring and managing employees with a health condition.

What did we do?

We visited the offices and production site of the MTIB in Merthyr Tydfil. Our hosts explained the different roles available within manufacturing or administration. Full training is provided to new staff. At the time of visiting, MTIB had over 35 staff members on site, working on various products, such as producing upholstery buttons, wood cutting and recycling paint.

Impact

The MTIB has been successful in its approach to workforce inclusivity for people with disabilities. They aim to counter the idea that people with disabilities are unable or unsuitable to work. The organisation supports those people who want to upskill or do something different in life, within a safe environment. They are supported until they move to “mainstream” employment, should this be their chosen path. As well as empowering those with disabilities to apply for jobs, they also equip local businesses with the knowledge and skills needed to support employees. They have created a culture of social responsibility instead of being solely profit-driven, giving the staff a sense of self-belief.

Innovation and adaptability

Projects supporting people with disabilities can be implemented in any enterprise where there is a need. The main requirements are positive attitudes towards those with disabilities, recognising that everyone has something valuable to contribute. The accessibility of the buildings, the training needed and level of commitment to an ethos of social responsibility are all considerations.

For more information: www.mtib.co.uk

Cambrian Village Trust

Introduction

Cambrian Village Trust is a registered charity in Merthyr Tydfil, Wales whose aim is to provide an activity space for children and people with disabilities in the surrounding area. They were established in 2001 with 2 staff members but as of 2019, they had nearly 20 staff members and a functioning, sustainable café. Their objectives are to provide sporting facilities for young people in the area as well as providing respite days for families of those with disabilities. They generate revenue from providing recreation spaces and activities for the local community and the café. They have created an accessible adventure space that provides a safe space for young people and those with disabilities to have fun, meet other people and seek support if needed. Over the last few years, they have also generated business from tourists by providing kayaking, hiking and other activities.

Since they started, the CVT has completely re-invigorated the brownfield site of Rhondda-Cynon-Taff, a deprived area following the cessation of coal mining in the area. They are currently funded by the Welsh government or from grants with 9 trustees overseeing their operations.

What did we do?

We had the opportunity to meet key staff and discuss their roles, as well as some of the service users. They told us about how they started and how they evolved into a health and wellbeing organisation. The manager started as a coach and saw the benefits of sport to young people. We were also given the opportunity to try some of their activities including kayaking, walking rugby and hiking.

Impact

The CVT have completely transformed a previously deprived area, creating new opportunities for local young people. They give them an opportunity to engage in activities that promote wellbeing as well as life skills. The project helps young people to forge friendships, improve their mental wellbeing and gain educational opportunities.

Innovation and adaptability

The idea is adaptable for use elsewhere, but it could be resource-heavy especially in funding and the need for trained staff. Its wide variety of different sporting activities for different generations is truly innovative, and this is easily replicated. Projects like these would work well in regions going through periods of transformation for example former coal mining areas.

For more information: www.facebook.com/cambrianvillagetrust

Romania

- 1) Reciproc Café
- 2) DECE Clothing



Reciproc Café

Introduction

Five years ago, Sergiu Florean, the founder of this social enterprise, recognised that there was a market for an eco-friendly café in the city of Timisoara. He opened the café serving coffee, drinks, local beers and wines and organic food. Comfortable seating and a plentiful supply of board games for customers help create a relaxed, informal atmosphere. The café's focus is on Fairtrade, organic products and promoting a sustainable local economy. A selection of local artisanal bio products such as jams, honey, cheeses and herbs are sold in a small shop area within the café. The café also aims to educate and create awareness of the importance of sustainability, Fairtrade and healthy eating.

Over the past 5 years they have grown, providing comprehensive training and an employee mentorship programme. The primary focus is on promoting Fairtrade ideals, the responsible consumption of food and on a practical level, supporting local families with young children. The project was initially financed from European funding and struggled commercially for the first 4 years but, as its reputation grew, the financial situation stabilised and the enterprise has since flourished.

What did we do?

We were given an insight into the enterprise and its ethos during a visit to the cafe. We saw the excellent range of organic products and heard how the café promotes responsible consumption.

Impact

This enterprise has brought a community together in a different way, with a loyal local customer base of mostly young people. The Reciproc ethos is relatively new to Romania and is a good illustration of how local and sustainable cafes and food stores can be established across the country. Reciproc promotes the principles of Fairtrade, with the idea that people should have access to healthy, locally produced food at a fair price that benefits not only those eating it but those producing it too.

Innovation and adaptability

The idea for this café came from observing similar initiatives in other EU countries. Attitudes to sustainability have changed dramatically over the last 5 years, as climate action, food miles and supporting the local food economy have become bigger priorities in society.

The Café Reciproc helps people make healthy choices with affordable options. The idea was untried and untested in Romania but changing attitudes in the country and a willingness to embrace the Fairtrade ethos have allowed this enterprise to flourish. Considerations include the need to create local food producer networks; initial funding, promotion and support from the local community.

For more information: <https://www.facebook.com/lareciproc.ro/>

DECE Clothing

Introduction

DECE is a part of a holistic community development programme with two small production hubs in northwest Romania where a team of community workers educate, employ and empower Roma families living in real poverty. Members of the Roma community experience profound inequalities, with poor health outcomes, lack of education and employment and discrimination.

Dece was set up by a British man, Lee Saville, who had been a lawyer in the UK. He came face to face with the street poverty of Roma children when visiting Romania in the 1990s and gave up his career to work in Roma communities near Arad.

Among many other initiatives, Lee has provided local Roma people with an opportunity to gain skills through working at DECE Clothing, a social enterprise he established. With little experience, Lee and his team worked with local men and women to start making quality, environmentally-sound products such as bags, wallets, belts and hats. Workers learn craft and employability skills, and profits from online sales help Roma families to buy food, medication and firewood. Lee also supports children with educational provision, ultimately giving them the freedom to become who they want to be.

What did we do?

Members of the project team visited Dece Clothing and heard from Lee Saville about the difficulties experienced by the Roma, and how he set up Dece. The tour included the workshop where products are handmade by a small team of craftsmen and women.

Impact

This project impacts two communities: the Roma and local people. DECE gives Roma people the opportunity to learn new skills and helps them support their families. In this way, they can become role models for younger people, showing them that opportunities exist if they stay in education. For non-Roma communities, this initiative breaks down barriers and stigmas around the perceptions of the Roma people by the local community.

Innovation and adaptability

This type of project focuses on seeing the potential in everyone and is suitable for any minority community. It does, however, rely on the vision and drive of the person or people setting it up. Consideration will need to be given to the vulnerable nature of minority groups to ensure that they are safeguarded, trained and supported adequately. This project showed how these considerations can be put into practice, and how a disadvantaged group can be motivated to learn and use new skills. This project also showed how proper training and mentorship could support unskilled workers to develop new employment skills.

For more information: www.dececlothing.com

Republic of Ireland

1) Seas Suas

2) Galway Traveller Movement – Bounce Back Recycling



Seas Suas

Introduction

Seas Suas, which is Irish Gaelic for stand up, is a bystander intervention programme aimed at university students. This programme was developed by the National University of Ireland, Galway's student services and Students' Union several years ago to tackle rising mental health problems and feelings of isolation amongst the student population. A survey found that many had seriously considered committing suicide. The Chaplaincy office decided to implement a peer-support programme for students on campus, with training to equip them with valuable life skills in mental health. Students who follow this training programme are shown how to respond to issues related to alcohol abuse, sexual health, and suicide prevention, through a series of educational talks and role plays. They develop networks and support from other participants in the programme. Seas Suas aims to break down the stigma or fear of intervening in tough situations and encourages students to be more observant of the mental health of their friends and acquaintances. Over the past few years, they have trained over 1000 students with this programme which is now copyrighted and marketed externally.

What did we do?

We visited the chaplaincy centre on campus to meet the two coordinators who currently run the programme. They explained why programmes like this are needed to tackle rising mental health concerns as well as the importance of peer-to-peer support. Students can be more likely to reach out for support to other students, who are often the people most likely to notice signs of distress in others. We were able to observe some elements of the training, and understand the benefits gained by those who complete the programme. Sometimes students realise that they, themselves, may need support just by undertaking the training.

Impact

Students who complete this programme learn about the value of peer support, becoming an asset to their community. The programme has been set up to allow students to gain a volunteering award upon completion as well as creating a network where students form friendships and develop meaningful support networks. Programmes like these highlight the importance of developing empathy and listening skills; and the need to ensure that everyone recognises they have a value in society.

Innovation and adaptability

This initiative can be adapted for use elsewhere, but care and consideration is needed in any training framework. The support offered to those doing the training; how the key areas of the training are handled, and the key stakeholders involved are all important. There is long standing evidence to support the need for peer-to-peer support but providing training in sensitive subjects like suicide prevention requires extreme care. The passion and dedication of those who oversee the project, combined with their commitment to the students, was key to the success of the project. The training uses scenario-style teaching with a combination of professional trainers and peer learning.

For more information: <https://socs.nuigalway.ie/societies>

Galway Traveller Movement – Bounce Back Recycling

Introduction

The Galway Traveller Movement was established in 1994 with the aim of preserving the ethnic identity of Travellers, while achieving equality for this marginalised indigenous ethnic group. Their first social enterprise “First Installations”, which started in 2010, provided free home insulation for low income families, including those living in remote rural areas. Bounce Back Recycling (BBR) started in 2017 to recycle old mattresses, something no-one else was doing at the time. Mattresses are taken apart with the foam reused for insulation, metal sold for recycling, and other materials used for insulation. At first, the BBR collected directly from landfill sites but subsequently from homes, often in association with local authorities. So far, they have recycled 22,000 mattresses.

What did we do?

We were fortunate to visit the premises of Bounce Back Recycling and meet some of the staff, including the manager and one of the community development workers who explained what the enterprise does and the impact it has. They also showed us a traditional Travellers’ caravan that they are currently repairing which will be used as a promotional vehicle. We heard about their strategy for sustainability and how they have secured local government contracts.

Impact

This enterprise has had an impact in both the Travelling community and the local Galway community. Very few Travellers complete formal education, and are often discriminated against when seeking employment, so this opportunity allows people to improve their knowledge and employability skills, which boosts their self-confidence and ultimately improves their families’ lives. This enterprise has formed good relationships with the local community, while helping to reduce the discrimination and prejudice faced by the Travelling community. They have also set an example for other Travellers by developing a sustainable enterprise, as well as contributing to the preservation of their identity and culture. Despite the success of their enterprise, Travellers in the Galway area and across Ireland continue to encounter discrimination and racism.

Innovation and adaptability

Recycling and sustainability have become important environmental priorities, so this initiative is a simple and attractive idea that can easily be implemented elsewhere. Consideration is needed to ensure the safeguarding of minority communities and the level of investment needed at the outset. This project shows how a market opportunity was identified and used for the benefit of the Travelling community. BBR brings communities together, builds bonds, and gives young Travellers a positive outlook on life by providing employment and providing truly life changing opportunities.

For further information: <https://bouncebackrecycling.ie/>

Special Mentions

The team of project staff and volunteers were generously welcomed and hosted by many organisations during the seven short term training visits. We would like to thank them for kindly sharing their knowledge, experience and ideas about social enterprise in their communities.

-Sweden

[Bike Kitchen](#)

[Awesome People](#)

[Kurage Youth Centre](#)

[Black Sheep – Youth Centre](#)

[Ungdoms Café – Youth Centre](#)

[Solnafixarna](#)

[Vingen Recycling](#)

-England

[Dragons Apprentice Challenge](#)

[Youth Connexions](#)

[University of Hertfordshire](#)

[The Princes' Trust](#)

[The Repair Shed](#)

[The Boxmoor Trust](#)

[Berkhamsted Youth Town Council](#)

[The Swan Youth Project](#)

[West Herts College](#)

[Radio Dacorum](#)

[Rectory Lane Cemetery Project](#)

-Czech Republic

[Cesky Tesin Co-Working Space](#)

[Karvina Youth Council](#)

[Ergon](#)

[Tea House Cieszyn](#)

[Mlecny bar naproti](#)

[Business Gate](#)

-Serbia

[Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre Counselling Service](#)

[Novi Sad Drop-in Centre for street children](#)

[Poslovni inkubator](#)

[Youth creative centre – OKCE](#)

[Special education school – Milan Petrovic](#)

[Education camp Cenej](#)

[Vera Ljubav Nada](#)

[OPENS](#)

[Infopolis](#)

[Biciklana bike & coffee](#)

Eco centre Radulovacki

Secondary School of Mechanical Engineering

Youth Centre CK13

Izadji – LGBT

-Merthyr Tydfil

[Merthyr Institute for The Blind](#)

[Cambrian Village Trust](#)

[Stephens and George Centenary Charitable Trust](#)

[Merthyr Tydfil Training](#)

[Canolfan Soar](#)

[Bike Park Wales](#)

Portugalles

[The Senedd Youth Assembly](#)

[Challenge Wales at Penarth Marina](#)

[Aber Arts Wales](#)

-Romania

[Reciproc Café](#)

[DECE Clothing](#)

[Asociatia Nevazatorilor Arad – massage centre](#)

Casa Sperantei

Asociatia Turism Alternativ NetWorks Romania

[Biofarmland Manufactura](#)

Fundatia Humanitas Gura Ponii

FITT – Fundatia Judeteana de Tineret Timis

-Ireland

[Seas Suas](#)

[Galway Traveller Movement – Bounce Back Recycling](#)

[Saol Café](#)

[An Mheitheal Rothar](#)

[University of Sanctuary](#)

[Letterfrack Community](#)

[Porter Shed](#)

[Comhairle na Nog](#)

Community volunteering

-[NUI Galway Students' Union](#)

-[ALIVE](#)

-[Societies Office](#)

Conclusion

Throughout this project, the partners worked with volunteers to introduce them to the concept of social enterprise during the seven training visits. Our volunteers were mostly youth and community workers, business and education students, and other young people with an interest in the subject. They gave their time freely to attend the week-long training; some people only attended once, but most took part several times, giving them an excellent understanding of the subject and an awareness of differences in context and cultural setting. They took away with them a wealth of ideas and have since used this knowledge in their professional lives.

We were privileged to be introduced to dozens of social enterprises, charities, NGOs, community and voluntary groups, all of whom are committed to improving the lives of their communities.

We encountered successful business people who wanted to give something back to society and who had used their talents to create socially-responsible charitable organisations. We met aspiring social entrepreneurs seeking to make a positive contribution to their communities. Along the way, we observed how a good social enterprise can flourish when founded on sound business principles, ethics and a strong community spirit. We found many excellent examples of individuals and organisations wanting to make the world a better place.

These visits inspired us all and reinvigorated our passion for working with often “hard to reach” young people. They showed us that with patience, creativity and empowerment young people can achieve anything. We were also inspired to see how social enterprise can be influential in shaping the lives of our young people, and we hope that you too will be motivated by these examples of good practice.

The project team

AMACH! LGBT+, Dacorum CVS, Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre, Asociatia Clubul Sportiv Experienta Multisport, Stevens & George Charitable Trust, Petrklíč help, Asociace Středoškolských Klubů, Solna Youth Centre

For further information: www.youthsocialenterprise.eu; Facebook: Youth Social Enterprise

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Appendix:

Template used to collect information during the visits

Definition of good practice

As part of the *Social Enterprise as a Learning Tool in Youth Work* project, we are looking for the most interesting good practice case studies in each country visited. These will be included in a Guide, the final product of the project.

Good practice is by definition the **best possible**: proven to work well; produce good results; tested and validated; and therefore recommended as a model to be shared and adopted more widely.

Good practice criteria

The following criteria will help you determine whether a practice is “good practice” in the field of quality of learning opportunities for youths.

- **Effective and successful:**
Good practice is proven to be the most effective way of achieving an objective. In this project, it will have had a positive impact on youth workers and/or their communities.
- **Economically and socially sustainable:**
There are no economic barriers to accessing good practice. It also brings benefits to the rest of society.
- **Technically feasible:** Good practice is easy to learn and implement.
- **Inherently participatory:**
This is essential, to foster a joint sense of ownership of decisions and actions.
- **Replicable and adaptable:**
Good practice has the potential to be repeated, copied or adapted to other situations.
- **Reducing marginalisation risks, if applicable:**
Good practice helps reduce the risk of marginalisation and promotes resilience.

GP Template – Version 1

Title, date and location of activity

Brief description of how this enterprise was started and why

-Explaining the context of the social enterprise. Why it was needed, how long it has been operating and how frequently it operates. Include image of the GP – preferably the outside of the building

Who benefits from this enterprise?

-Focus on the young people's experiences and all types of benefits they may gain including social, emotional and financial benefits. How do they get/keep people involved? (Include picture of inside the space or recruitment poster etc)

Objective

-Should be one, clear and concise sentence

Impact

-How does this impact on the YP's lives? Surrounding community? Did it create a social change? Did it normalize minority communities? How is their success measured? (Include quotes where possible)

Challenges

-What challenges has the GP had to overcome to be a success? What barriers still remain? What is being put in place to ensure sustainability and continuity?

Stakeholders/Partners

-Who helps to make this a success? Are they short-term or long-term?
Are there any risks with these partners? Financial etc. (Include logos or pictures of partners)

Replicable?

-Explain why and how it is replicable.

What makes this GP innovative?

-What is impressive? What makes this stand out?

Media

Include pictures, websites, quotes etc from the GP