

**SOCIAL
ENTERPRISE
DEVELOPMENT
FUND**

Showcase 2021

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the dormant
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Together Razem

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Triest Press

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SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

IMPACTING LIVES THROUGH DIGITAL INNOVATION, MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Social enterprises are at the heart of facing the greatest social challenges in Ireland. They are professional and experienced, and use business skills and clever thinking to bridge the gaps in our society. The money they make from their work is used to grow what they do so that they can reach all the people in society who need their services.

Social enterprises have a long history in Ireland, playing a vital role in our society and economy, however a broad lack of understanding remains around the exact nature of what they are, what they do, and how they are different from traditional enterprises or charities. The publication of Ireland's first Social Enterprise Policy marked a major milestone for the development of the social enterprise sector in Ireland. Its overarching objectives of building awareness, growing and strengthening the sector and achieving better policy alignment have been warmly welcomed and have led to an increase in the visibility and self-identification of social enterprises.

At Rethink Ireland, we believe in the power of social enterprises. In 2018, we partnered with Local Authorities Ireland to create a €3.2 million, 4 year Social Enterprise Development Fund (SED) for Ireland's growing social enterprise sector. The Fund is proudly supported by IPB Insurance and the Department of Rural and Community Development via the Dormant Accounts Fund. To date, we have supported 40 social enterprises with cash grants and business supports and a further 38 with business supports and mentoring. These social enterprises were chosen from 543 applications and address a range of societal issues, including access to mental health services, unemployment and the circular economy.

ABOUT THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT FUND

Since 2018, our Social Enterprise Development Fund Awardees have been creating significant social impact in areas such as community development, digital innovation and creating meaningful employment. Together they have made a significant impact on Irish society. In 2020, the Social Enterprise Development Fund received 232 applications from all 31 Local Authorities in Ireland. From these 232 applications, 16 social enterprises were chosen and intensively supported to increase their capacity to deliver sustainable social impact at scale. A further 24 social enterprises were awarded a place on the Genesis Programme. The Genesis Programme supports social enterprises to build the skills and knowledge needed to develop a sustainable social enterprise and to be successful in future funding opportunities.

In December 2020, Awardees were invited to pitch for a share of €100,000. From this and a review of their strategic plans, 4 of the 16 Awardees were chosen to receive further funding that will help them implement their new strategies and scale their social impact.

IMPACT OF THE ACCELERATOR

The impact of the Social Enterprise Development Fund support will be seen over the years to come as Awardees implement their new strategic plans, scale their organisations and access new markets. This is what some of our Awardees had to say about their experiences of the Fund:

“It has given us motivation to really see what we can do, and the supports were so important for us to have that space to be able to develop the strategic plan and really think more about where it is we want to be.”

“The SED Fund supports provided an opportunity as kind of a soundboard for what we’re doing. Based on the support that we got, it really helped to put a structure on the process this year, at a time when it was challenging, and it got us thinking about things at an earlier stage. And that was really, really positive.”

“The accelerator programme forced us to knuckle down and really put the effort into the strategic plan and operational plan, to have that focus. And the mentorship was significant, it added to that in terms of the storytelling and everything else that we did.”

“All the different workshops were so valuable, I took all these notes and find myself going back to them again and again. It helps me when I’m needing to work through something, I can go back to that. It’s been so inspirational. Then, of course, the colleagues as well from all of the other social enterprises, I’ve learned a lot from them and how they’re approaching the sort of challenges that we’re also facing. It’s been huge.”

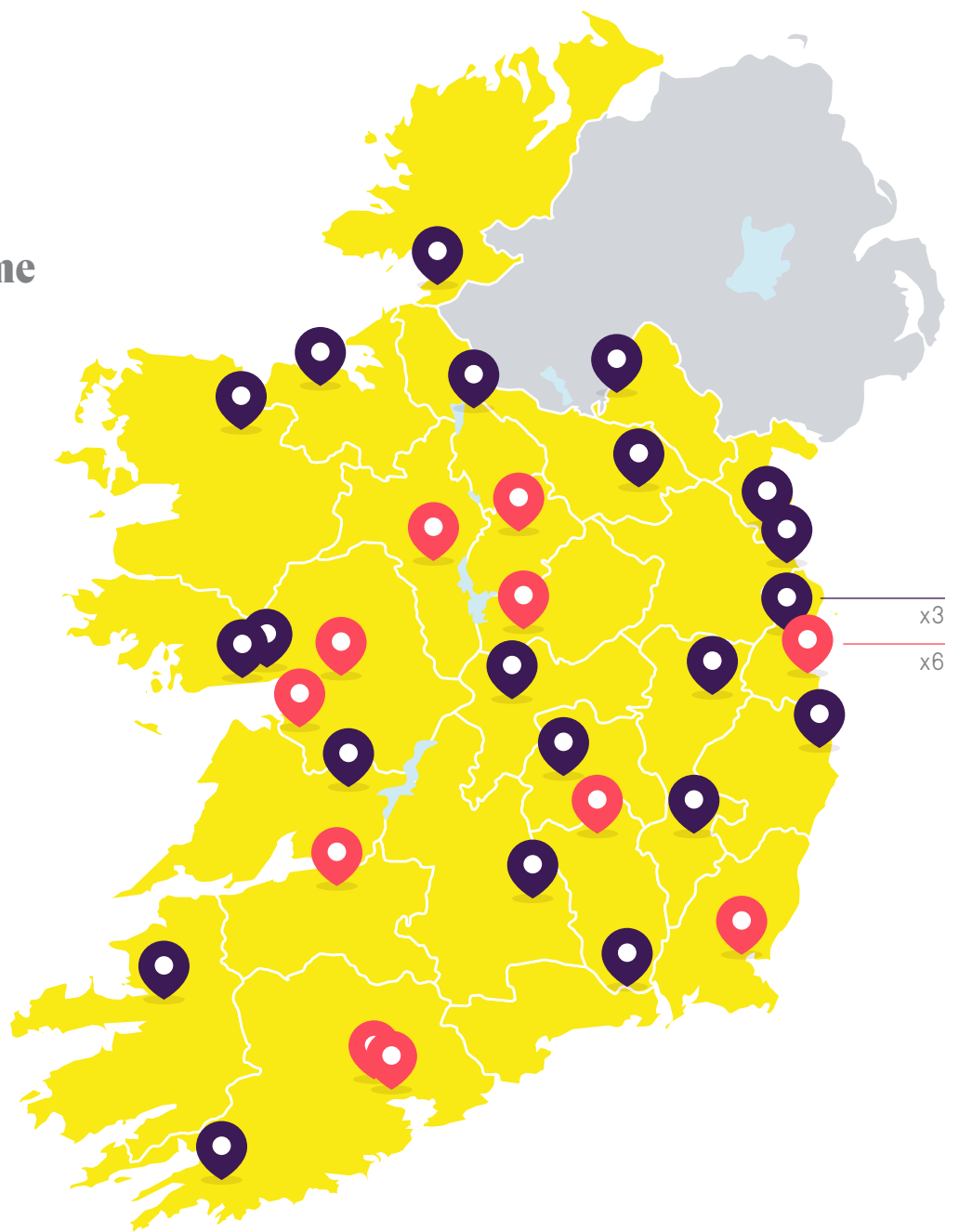
SPREAD ACROSS IRELAND

This year, between the Genesis Programme and the Accelerator Programme, the Social Enterprise Development Fund has supported a social enterprise in every local authority area in the country.

The visions and activities of these social enterprises are just as diverse as their geographical locations. Many work at a community level, with a focus on providing services to their community as well as local employment opportunities. However, this year we have supported multiple organisations who specifically offer online services and therefore are creating social impact in every corner of Ireland.

 **Genesis Programme**

 **SED Awardees**



AWARDEE IMPACT

**ALTOGETHER, THE
16 AWARDEES OF THE
SED FUND 2020:**

COMBINED TURNOVER IN 2019

€6.8m

EMPLOY

231

STAFF MEMBERS

SUPPORTED

268

**PEOPLE TO ACCESS
EMPLOYMENT IN 2019,**

217 (80%)

**OF WHOM ARE FROM
MINORITY GROUPS**

MOBILISE

1,878

VOLUNTEERS

REACH

353,000

PEOPLE

**WORK WITH PEOPLE
OF ALL AGES AND
MINORITY GROUPS**

Many of the social enterprises offer multi-faceted supports, which they have expanded over the last year in response to COVID-19. This includes delivering food to those that were not able to do their own shopping during the pandemic, pivoting services online to continue offering support to those that needed it most or developing new products such as face masks and sanitiser.

The 2020 Social Enterprise Development Fund Awardees are creating incredible social impact in three key areas:

DIGITAL INNOVATION

Four of the Awardees have created new solutions via digital innovation, which we understand as using digital technology, such as social media or different devices, for the purpose of addressing unmet needs or providing new approaches in addressing societal challenges. “Digitisation for the common good” can take numerous forms, as our Awardees have shown. Their projects range from ensuring that children are able to safely use the internet, to providing online mental health supports. Their work also spans the entire range from engaging with individuals, to providing training to supporters and advocating for policy change and increased awareness. Their work has in many cases seen an unprecedented growth in demand during the pandemic.

MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

Meaningful employment, referring to not only a decent salary but also to work of one’s choice, which feels fulfilling and provides social recognition and networks, continues to be something that not everyone can easily obtain. People from minority communities and those that have been unemployed for a long time, face additional obstacles. Society’s ideas of what is relevant merit and essential criteria for employees can at times be exclusionary. Seven of our Awardees have taken it as their mission to combat these barriers. They work with the long-term unemployed, disadvantaged local communities, refugee women, persons with disabilities, disempowered women and people with criminal convictions. Together, they have supported almost 270 people to access employment over the course of a year.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Development, referring to supports resulting in a sense of belonging and wellbeing for the overall community, is generally core to the social enterprise sector. It entails a specific focus on social inclusion, participation and active citizenship. Seven of our Awardees have Community Development at the core of their activities or include a particular focus on it. Their projects range from enabling members of the community to work locally, providing accessible and sustainable food to local and dispersed communities and connecting members of minority communities amongst each other and with the wider Irish society.



Castlecomer

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Cork Counselling Services

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Willow Traders

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MEET THE AWARDEES

AMICITIA

Amicitia believes that a deep consideration of people, place and planet can revitalise local communities. They work with the inhabitants of rural towns and villages across Ireland, where there are higher levels of consistent poverty, to co-create initiatives which will improve the quality of life, health and wellbeing of aged, disabled and socially isolated local residents.

CASTLECOMER

Castlecomer Discovery Park is one of Ireland's premier adventure parks, set on 80 acres of stunning woodland and lakes. It is home to Ireland's longest zipwire and a host of other activities from high ropes courses to archery and canoeing. It was set up to develop rural tourism, create jobs and regenerate the town of Castlecomer. It welcomed over 144,000 visitors in 2019 and has so far created 25 full-time equivalent jobs.

CORK COUNSELLING SERVICES

Cork Counselling Services provides counselling and psychotherapy to all members of society, regardless of financial means. To date they have reached 9,000 people. Their social enterprise also educates and trains students so that they attain professional counselling standards in an applied setting, reflecting best practice and accreditation by both IACP and Coventry University.

MEET THE AWARDEES

CYBERSAFEIRELAND

CyberSafelreland empowers children, parents and teachers to navigate the online world safely and responsibly. Expert guidance, resources and tools are provided to primary schools, children and parents, so they can enjoy the many benefits of technology whilst also being equipped with the tools to avoid harm. In addition, they advocate for better policies and practice on online safety at a national level and regularly engage with online platforms about how to promote a safer user experience for all. They have been running their education programmes for 5 years and have talked to over 25,000 children.

DUBLIN FOOD CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED

Dublin Food Co-op (DFC) is a Co-operative enterprise based in Kilmainham. It is a community based organisation with a healthy food store. Their aim is to provide affordable, ethically sourced vegetarian food for their members & community. DFC are a not-for-profit organisation that addresses the lack of accessible, affordable education on food sustainability and how co-operatives can be organised to sustain their local communities. It has almost 3,000 members and has created a co-operative environment in which to learn and share together.

EPIC

EPIC (Enhancing Progress Inspiring Change) provides employment for people who want to reclaim their lives after problems with addiction and/or prior criminal convictions. They aim to do this through the delivery of progressive training and work experience coupled with supported meaningful employment opportunities.

MEET THE AWARDEES

GROW REMOTE

Grow Remote's mission is to enable people to work, live and participate locally by making remote employment both visible and accessible in their communities. They provide resources to assist people in obtaining remote work with educational curricula for community leaders, leadership courses and training. To date they have trained 220 people in getting 'remote work ready' and they have 60+ 'local chapter leads' in Ireland using remote work as a tool for community development.

JUMPAGRADE

jumpAgrade is making personalised teaching accessible to all students, addressing the growing educational inequality accelerated by the "grinds culture" in Ireland. Its online platform and research-backed methods enable them to support second-level students from less fortunate backgrounds and underrepresented groups. To date, jumpAgrade has provided educational support to over 1,000 students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

NATIONAL MEALS ON WHEELS

The National Meals on Wheels Coordination Unit is implementing a strategic approach to enhancing scale, productivity, training and value for money, in order to make the country's Meals on Wheels service more sustainable. This comes at a time when the service is both critically important, and critically strained, with an aging, more geographically spread population. The Coordination Unit will provide support to Ireland's 268 Meals on Wheels providers who together supply 40,500 meals across Ireland every week.

MEET THE AWARDEES

SPECIALISTERNE

Specialisterne supports people with autism and similar challenges to gain meaningful employment. To date they have enabled over 350 candidates to find jobs. They have a network of over 30 company/employer partners. Proud of its candidate-centric approach, Specialisterne aims to become the go-to organisation for employers seeking talented neurodiverse employees.

SPEEDPAK

Speedpak Group provides real work experience, accredited training, mentoring, tailored interventions and supports to people who are long-term unemployed. This combination of trading – with customers, quality standards and deadlines – and industry-led training is transformative, increasing participants' employability and job resilience, leading to greater financial independence. To date they have supported over 1,300 people.

TEXTILES STUDIOS

The Textiles Studio, a We Make Good initiative, addresses significant difficulties that refugee women or women with experience of the criminal justice system face in gaining employment. The programme provides women with their first job, workplace training and/or language and communication skills sufficient to secure mainstream employment or start their own business after two years. During 2020, they sent over 10,000 face masks to Direct Provision through their buy one – gift one project. They also created 14 jobs.

MEET THE AWARDEES

TOGETHER RAZEM

Together Razem Centre supports those in the Polish and Eastern European migrant community facing problems related to marginalisation, exclusion and isolation. The centre offers advocacy, social and legal advice and mental health support to over 600 people a year. They also offer educational programmes for children and adults, enabling the Polish community to be a more integrated part of their local communities.

TRIST PRESS

Triest Press provides meaningful employment and training opportunities to people with intellectual disabilities. Triest Press cultivates an atmosphere where happy employees understand their talents and approach life with confidence, wonder and a positive sense of self. Through their digital print social enterprise they have employed 36 people and have provided training to over 50.

MEET THE AWARDEES

TURN2ME

Turn2me provides a safe, anonymous and confidential space to anyone aged 12 plus in Ireland seeking support with their mental health and wellbeing 24/7. Turn2me breaks down the barriers to access by combining innovative, custom-built technology, superb clinical expertise and a deep understanding of the needs, online behaviours and health outcomes of those who are seeking support. During 2020, they provided over 5,000 hours of counselling to people across Ireland.

WILLOW TRADERS

Longford Women's Link (LWL) is a dynamic social enterprise linking women together to make their community safe and equal. Using its unique Integrated Service Delivery model, LWL identifies and addresses key inequalities that prevent women from achieving their full social/economic potential. Women, their families and the entire community benefit from: A dedicated Women's Community Education Facility, Domestic Violence & Counselling Services, onsite & mobile childcare facility, Female Entrepreneurship programme and the flagship Women's Manifesto Programme (women in local democracy) all of which support economic independence for women and families.

Services provided to over 1000 women and 160 children in the Midlands, Ireland in 2020 enabled women to access opportunities yielding real benefits for their families. Established as a used furniture and clothing charity enterprise in 2016, LWL Willow Traders operates using a social enterprise model, incorporating the principles of enterprise, education and employment opportunities for the Longford community, underpinned by principles of environmental sustainability. LWL Willow Traders also seeks to address two key challenges for women and families in rural Ireland: 1 – the persistent issues of social exclusion and rural isolation; and 2 – need for dedicated supports for rural female entrepreneurs. The programme is being managed by Tara Farrell, LWL CEO.

ABOUT RETHINK IRELAND

Rethink Ireland (previously Social Innovation Fund Ireland) provides cash grants and business support to charities and social enterprises working in Irish communities across the country. These are the organisations not just thinking differently, but who are putting their ideas into practice and building a more inclusive Ireland. We work with companies, families, individuals and foundations who understand new thinking in Ireland is needed. Every euro they donate to Rethink Ireland is matched by the Irish Government from the Dormant Accounts Fund. Since our first year of operations in 2016, we have created a €65 million social innovation fund. We've partnered with companies, trusts, foundations, families and individuals to create 30 Funds tackling issues such as inequality and educational disadvantage to support over 200 social innovations. These innovations have reached 300,000 people and enabled 864 people experiencing disadvantage to progress into employment.

www.rethinkireland.ie

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Rural and Community Development was established on 19 July 2017. Their mission is to promote rural and community development and to support vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities throughout Ireland. In 2019, the Department published Ireland's first National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022 which aims to create an enabling environment for social enterprise in Ireland to grow and contribute to the country's social and economic progress.

ABOUT IPB INSURANCE

IPB Insurance is wholly Irish-owned and is the only indigenous mutual general insurance company in the Irish market. An experienced underwriter of major liability, property and motor risks, IPB insure some of the largest risks in the State in the public sector and complementary markets in the semi-state and private sectors. The mission of IPB Insurance is to build a world-class business that puts you at the centre of their organisation and society at the heart of their goals. IPB Insurance is an Irish owned general insurance company which protects and supports their local authority members and their communities across the length and breadth of Ireland.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT FUND

