



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT FUND 2020

**RETHINK
IRELAND**



Údarás Áitiúla Éireann
Local Authorities Ireland



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



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Executive Summary

2020 was a year like no other, and the response of social enterprise to the challenges of the pandemic was impressive. It was also a year in which the Social Enterprise Development (SED) Fund deepened its offerings, increasing the impact and awareness of social enterprise.

This report outlines the impact achieved by the 40 participating SED Fund Awardees, as well as the potential of the social enterprise model to be at the forefront of society as it recovers in the years ahead.

The SED Fund, now in its fourth year, experienced **record levels of media and Local Authority engagement**. The Fund has achieved over 200 pieces of media coverage. Over 500 people attended the January 2021 Showcase and 250 recently joined the Open Call webinar. Furthermore, the Fund supported social enterprises from every Local Authority in Ireland through its national Accelerator and early-stage Genesis programmes.

COVID-19 restrictions had a significant impact on participating Awardees and beneficiaries, but their ability to pivot their business offerings has been exceptional. Many adapted to deliver services remotely, while some who were already offering remote services saw an exponential increase in demand; one case saw an increase of over 300%. In 2020, the Fund achieved the following impact metrics:

- Supported 40 social enterprises across 31 Local Authorities
- Supported 16 Awardees, with a combined turnover of €7.4m, with €400,000 in cash grants and further business supports
- Provided services to 206,931 people
- Supported 87 people to obtain employment

The Accelerator Programme moved online for 16 Awardees, while the first Genesis Programme ensured capacity-building supports were delivered to all 31 Local Authorities. A key learning of in this context is the increased inclusivity of using a virtual or blended format in programme delivery. Several participants found it much easier to dedicate time to the supports

and attend, as they did not have to travel long distances. Similarly, consultants did not have to be located in a specific area.

A sentiment survey undertaken as part of the SED Fund found that **62% of adults have little to no understanding of social enterprise**. One of the key SED Fund objectives in 2020/21 is to increase the awareness of social enterprise to Local Authorities and the general public. This will ensure Local Enterprise Offices provide suitable supports to social enterprises, at a time when the European Commission sets out its Social Economy Action Plan for 2021-2027. The SED Fund plays a pivotal role supporting the implementation of the National Social Enterprise Policy¹ measures and a wider awareness raising strategy will commence in the second half of 2021.

2020 has required the 40 supported social enterprises to show resilience and flexibility in the face of a pandemic with no immediate end in sight. They have evolved and adapted their businesses, often moving online, to ensure they provide the right supports to the people at the heart of their services. In the words of an expert business consultant who interviewed the SED Fund Awardees for Rethink Ireland:

The cohort of Awardees represented in the Social Enterprise Development Fund 2020 have all reflected distinct and diverse journeys over the past year, but common to all of them is a story of **leveraging the right supports at the right time** to improve their sustainability and future opportunities, while deepening the impact they can have in delivering on their individual social objectives. They demonstrate the necessity for tailored supports to sophisticate the emerging social enterprise sector in Ireland, and how these businesses can chart a pathway in a post-COVID world, redefining business in the context of social good. As stated eloquently by one of the Awardees in their closing comments, **“Social Enterprise is the business of the future.”**

¹ National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022 <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/e779c3-social-enterprise-policy/>

Looking ahead to 2021, the key objectives for this, the fourth year of the SED Fund, are two-fold:

- 1 Continue to reach and help scale social enterprises in every Local Authority**, supporting the full spectrum of rural, town and urban-based social enterprises. Ensuring social enterprises contribute to community development, addressing societal challenges at a local as well as national level, will only become more important as we as a society address the COVID-19 recovery.
- 2 Raise awareness of the wider social enterprise sector and model** across the general public and, in particular, amongst Ireland's Local Authority network. Building on the work started in 2020, including the Genesis Programme and scoping of supports, the SED Fund will provide a blueprint for our Local Authority partners on how to support social enterprises moving forward.

Introduction

This report provides an overview of the third year of Rethink Ireland's Social Enterprise Development (SED) Fund. The SED Fund is a €3.2 million Fund which is being delivered over four years: 2018–2022. The Fund was created by Rethink Ireland in partnership with Local Authorities Ireland and is funded by IPB Insurance and the Department of Rural and Community Development via the Dormant Accounts Fund.

The objective of the SED Fund is to find and back social enterprises that add to the social and economic fabric of their community and make a positive social impact. The SED Fund provides critical support to the most innovative and impactful social enterprises across Ireland, helping to bolster their social impact, increase their traded income, create more jobs and develop long-term, effective and sustainable solutions.

The SED Fund offers cash grants, designated business supports, as well as a place on Ireland's only national Accelerator Programme specifically designed for social enterprises. The Accelerator Programme is designed to equip social enterprises with the tools and techniques they need to expand their business skills and deepen their impact. The SED Fund also offers the Genesis Programme to social enterprises in Local Authority areas where there isn't a cash grant given.

In the third year of the SED Fund, both the Accelerator Programme and Genesis Programme were delivered entirely online due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions. Every single Awardee showed inspiring results and outputs, despite the situation. Their journey and experiences are the core focus of this Fund report. Furthermore, the Fund continued to facilitate collaborations with key social enterprise stakeholders that in turn increase policy alignment. These collaborations ultimately increase awareness and build stronger ties across the Local Authorities and partnerships of Ireland.

This first section of this report offers an overview of the SED Fund 2020 Programme. The second section gives an analysis of the impact the Awardees have made under three overarching themes, as well as how they have benefited from the Accelerator Programme. This was written by an independent consultant, who conducted qualitative, semi-structured interviews with each Awardee, to explore the impact of the Fund. Finally, the third major part of this report provides an overview of the impact the SED Fund has made for the wider social enterprise community in Ireland.



Graphic created by Hazel Hurley as part of the SED Fund 2020 Showcase illustrating how social enterprises work and what they do.

Structure of the SED Fund 2020

During this third year of the Social Enterprise Development Fund, 16 Awardees received cash grants, a place on the Accelerator Programme and tailored business support. To support social enterprises in Local Authority areas where there wasn't a cash grant winner, the Genesis Programme was introduced. 24 organisations were offered a place on the Genesis Programme. This meant that, in 2020, the SED Fund supported a social enterprise in each Local Authority.

CASH GRANTS

The Fund was open for initial applications from 16th January 2020 until 6th March 2020. Out of the 232 applications received, 60 were invited to submit a second, more extensive application. This resulted in 30 social enterprises being invited to the interview stage. Following an in-depth review process and due diligence checks, the 16 highest potential social enterprises were selected to receive cash grants. These organisations are detailed in the appendix of this report. A total of €300,000 was awarded initially in cash grants ranging from €10,000 to €50,000. 10 social enterprises received a cash grant of €10,000; two received €20,000; two received €30,000; and two received €50,000.

BUSINESS SUPPORT PACKAGE

Each social enterprise also received a business support package worth €5,000. This was commissioned on their behalf by Rethink Ireland. Rethink Ireland works with consultants that are best-in-class across the private, public and third sectors. By having this personalised budget, Awardees can get tailored, high-quality consultancy support. For most Awardees, this budget was used on consultancy support for strategic planning. All Awardees wrote a three-year strategic plan to guide them on their journey towards future growth, impact and financial sustainability.

THE ACCELERATOR PROGRAMME

The Accelerator Programme ran from July until November 2020. Over the course of ten workshops, the Awardees received training on a range of topics, including storytelling, impact measurement and management and business modelling. The supports and workshops were delivered by consultants who are leading experts in their fields and familiar with the unique challenges and opportunities social enterprises face. For the first time, the entire programme was conducted online. This presented huge challenges, but also unique opportunities, for both the Awardees and the Fund itself. Many Awardees saw the value of being able to attend sessions virtually and engage more easily in a remote fashion.

THE PITCH FUND

On the 8th and 9th of December 2020, Awardees had the opportunity to pitch for a share of the €100,000 Pitch Fund. This event marked the final step of the Accelerator Programme and tied together the business supports each Awardee had received. It gave the Awardees an opportunity to put their acquired pitching skills to use, with the aim of obtaining funding for one of the goals of their newly developed strategic plans.

The pitch panel comprised experienced members from Rethink Ireland, IPB and Local Authorities and was asked to look for investments that would lead to long-term sustainable growth or impact of the organisations. Awardees were asked to be clear about the planned social impact for the added investment. The following four social enterprises were awarded funding to assist them implementing their strategic plans, meeting the growing demand for their services and the trial of new products.

Social Enterprise	Award	How it will be invested
Grow Remote – Enables people to work, live and participate locally by making remote employment both visible and accessible in their communities	€30,000	Expanding their online training offering
Turn2me – Provides a safe, anonymous and confidential space to anyone aged 12+ in Ireland seeking support with their mental health and wellbeing 24/7	€25,000	Marketing their service
Specialisterne – Supports people living with autism and similar challenges to gain meaningful employment	€30,000	Rolling out their new mentoring and consultancy services
Triest Press – Provides meaningful employment and training opportunities to people with intellectual disabilities	€15,000	Developing their photo-printing app

Grow Remote and Turn2me are national social enterprises that have seen an exponential increase in demand during the pandemic. Both have scaled up quickly to meet this increase, with the additional investment expected to enable them to keep up with this growth and refine their services.

Specialisterne and Triest Press are both expanding their business offerings. Specialisterne is developing new mentoring and a new diversity and inclusion consultancy service for (potential) employers. Triest Press has similarly developed new approaches to support more persons, as there is a continued demand for more opportunities.

GENESIS PROGRAMME

In 2020, the SED Fund offered the Genesis Programme, for the first time, to 24 social enterprises across the country. The aim of the Programme is to support social enterprises across the country, from rural, small town and urban areas alike, to obtain the skills and knowledge to grow sustainable social enterprises and succeed in future funding opportunities. To achieve this goal, social enterprises received a two-day intense training programme, followed by 1-to-1 follow-on support with a consultant of their choice.

The training focused on introductions to storytelling, pitching, developing a clear mission, and fundraising and philanthropy opportunities. Follow-on supports could be availed of on the topics of pitching, fundraising, or strategic problem solving.



Illustration showing key themes from the Genesis Programme

SHOWCASE

The annual SED Fund Showcase took place on 21st January 2021. The objective of the event is to present the work and impact of the Awardees to a wider audience and increase public awareness. The three themes of meaningful employment, digital innovation and community development were presented and discussed at the event. This was complemented by contributions from IPB, the government and an entertainment act from the social enterprise sector.

Due to ongoing restrictions, the event was held online. This meant that not only was the audience attending remotely, but also that interviews were conducted live, for the most part, in a virtual setting. This enabled people from across the country and abroad to be there, with more than 500 people in attendance.



Left to right: Alan Shortt (MC), Deirdre Mortell (CEO of Rethink Ireland) and Lisa Harvey (Irish Sign Language Interpreter) at the SED Fund 2020 Showcase

Impact of the SED Fund 2020

OUR SED FUND 2020 AWARDEES HAVE TOGETHER:



SED Fund Awardees make a positive impact in all parts of the country across many sectors. There are three key themes that categorise this impact. Note that, while many of the Awardees come under more than one of these themes, each has been mentioned only once here for simplicity.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Six Awardees have community development central to their mission and activities. Community development relates to supports that result in a sense of belonging and wellbeing for the overall community, and is generally a core factor of the social enterprise sector. It entails a specific focus on social inclusion, participation and active citizenship. Projects by Awardees range from enabling members of the community to work locally, to providing accessible and sustainable food to local and dispersed communities and connecting members of minority communities with each other and the wider Irish society.



Illustration outlining the work of the SED 2020 Awardees in the context of community development

DIGITAL INNOVATION

Four Awardees employ digital innovation as a core mechanism to achieve their mission, using technologies such as social media or different devices to address unmet needs or provide new approaches to address societal challenges. “Digitisation for the common good” can take numerous forms, as these Awardees have shown. For example, one of the projects ensures that children are able to safely use the internet, while another provides online mental health supports. Providing training to supporters and advocating for policy change and increased awareness, the work of these Awardees has, in many cases, seen unprecedented growth in demand during the pandemic.



Illustration outlining the work of the SED Fund 2020 Awardees in the context of digital innovation

MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

Fulfilling work that provides not only a worthwhile wage but social recognition and networks, meaningful employment continues to be something not everyone can easily gain, especially those from a minority community, or who have been unemployed for a long time. Society's ideas of what is considered relevant merit and essential criteria for employees can, at times, be exclusionary. Six Awardees work with the long-term unemployed, disadvantaged local communities, refugee women, persons with disabilities, disempowered women and people with criminal convictions to obtain meaningful employment.

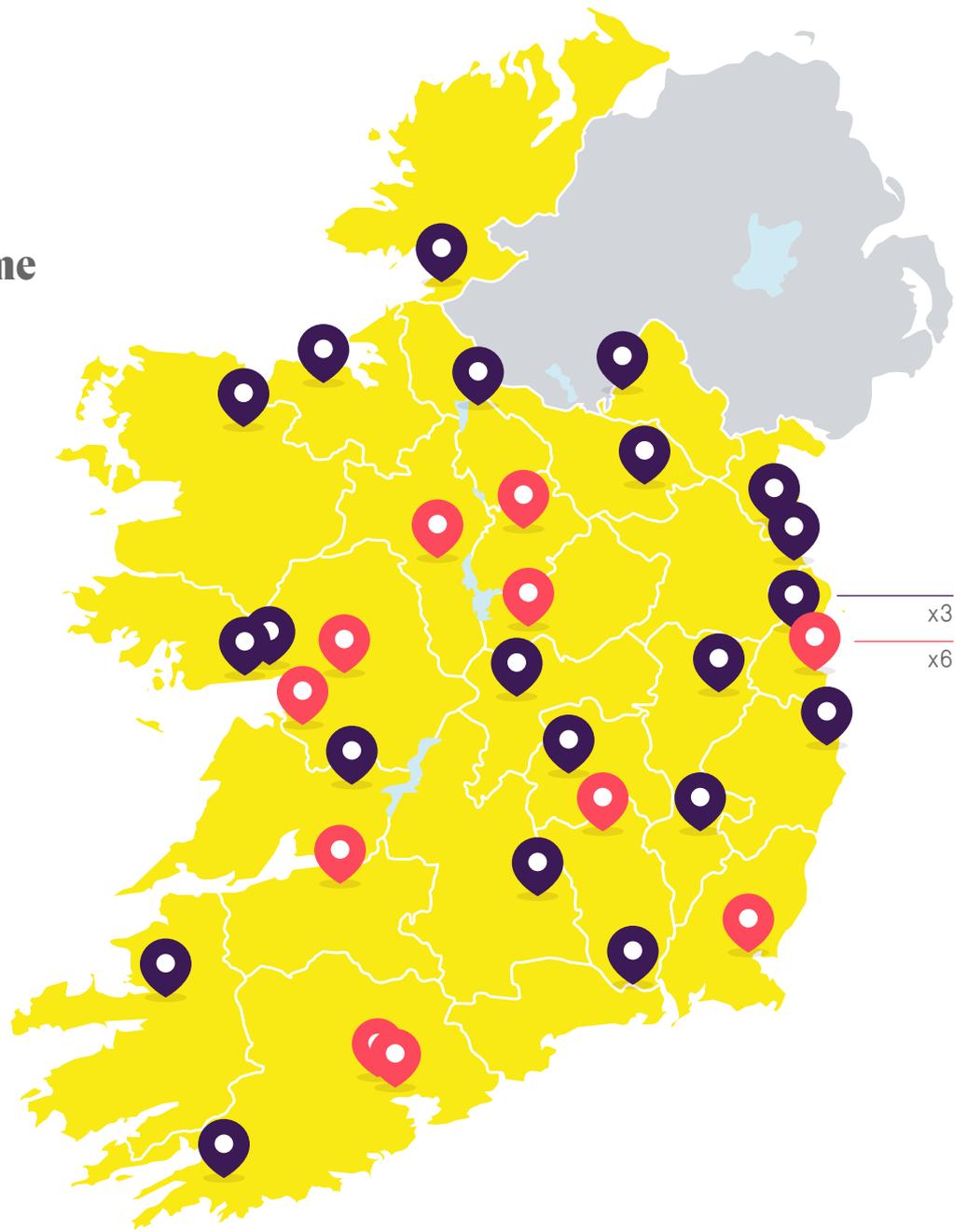


Illustration outlining the work of the SED Fund 2020 Awardees in the context of meaningful employment

REACH OF THE SED FUND 2020

 Genesis Programme Awardees

 SED Awardees



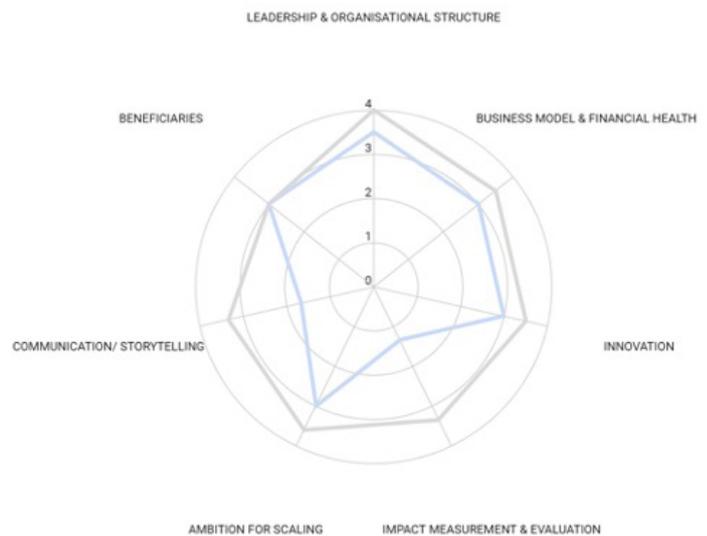
The SED Fund 2020 reached social enterprises in every Local Authority area at different phases of development, offering places on the Accelerator Programme for established social enterprises and the Genesis Programme for early-stage social enterprises. Some social enterprises on the Fund were founded all the way back in the 1980s, while others had been set up less than a year before applying.

AWARDEE ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Rethink Ireland aims to increase the organisational capacity of Awardees in order to support them to scale their social impact. The Organisational Health Assessment (OHA) is a tool designed by Rethink Ireland to assess and track this, and help identify the supports Awardees need. This tool is used twice during the duration of the SED Fund to measure an Awardee's performance; once at the start of the Accelerator Programme (July) and again at the end (December). Organisations select which phase of development their organisation is at by answering questions across seven areas of organisational health. The answers are then used to determine the organisation's score on the OHA measurement index.

Using the OHA at the beginning of the Programme allowed Awardees to see how they were performing in different areas of the organisation, enabling them to focus on necessary improvements. At the end of the Programme, Awardees were able to see the effects of these improvements and their progress mapped out.

Using the tool showed the clear growth in the Awardee's organisational capacity, especially in communication and storytelling, ambition for scale, and impact measurement and evaluation.



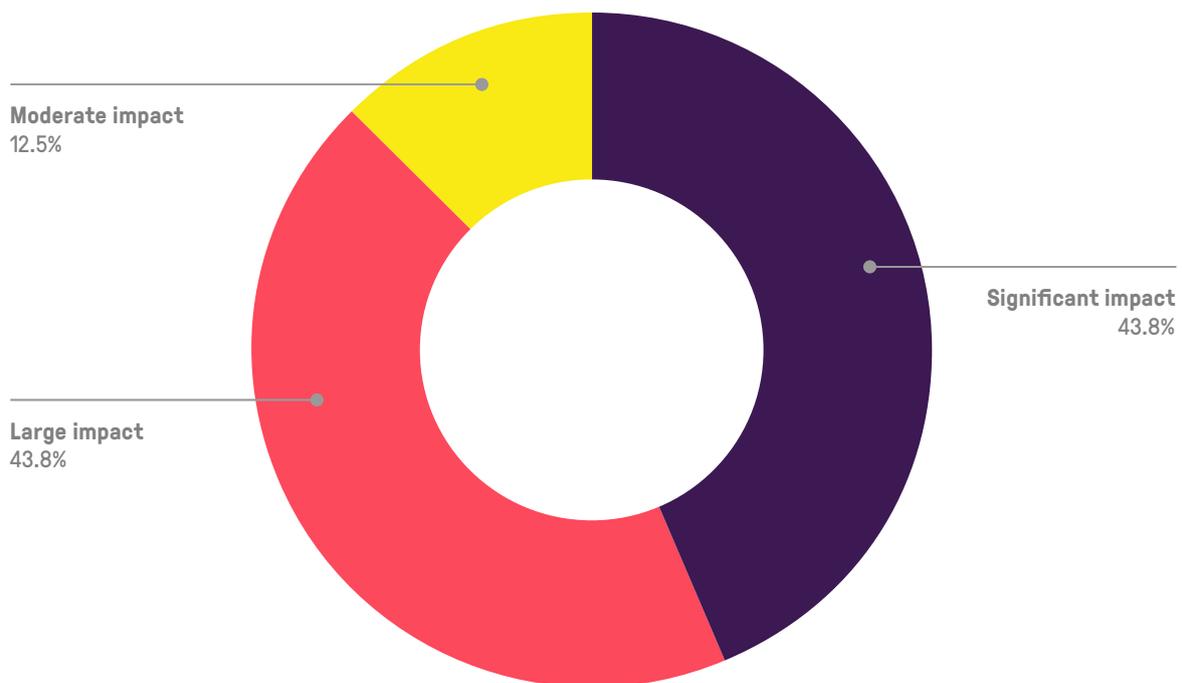
Example of the Organisational Health Assessment Tool's output

SED FUND 2020 LEARNINGS AND EVALUATION

To examine the effect the Fund has had on Awardees in terms of guiding their future direction, honing their operations and building their capacity to deliver on their social and business objectives, each agreed to a 30-minute interview between late December 2020 and early January 2021, following completion of the Accelerator Programme. Awardees were queried by an external consultant on the usefulness of the supports, the impact on their sustainability, ability to communicate, motivation to grow, and the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on their organisations.

OVERALL IMPACT

Universal feedback on the Fund was highly positive. All Awardees reflected on how it had positively impacted their organisations. Many noted that the combination of the grant and non-financial supports, as well as the direct support of Fund staff, came at a fortuitous time. They were enabled to navigate the difficulties and opportunities presented by the pandemic and were felt in a stronger position looking to the future. A central theme emerging from interviews was the focus that the Fund brought to their work. A point made by numerous Awardees was that the Fund provided them with an opportunity to ‘*step away from the day-to-day*’; they made the time to take a look at the longer term through an external lens. As expressed in the very title of the Fund, the development aspect was the principal benefit they experienced. While this manifested in quite diverse ways across the organisations, it has stood out in the impacts outlined below.

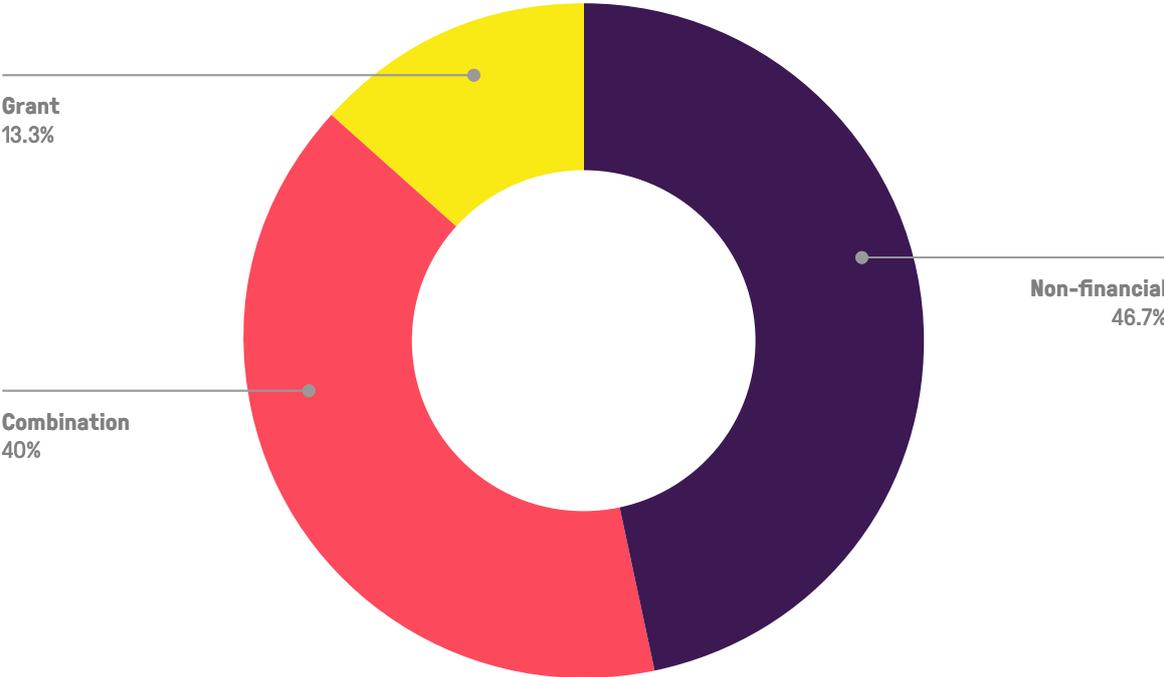


The above graph illustrates how the Awardees assessed the impact the non-financial supports had for their social enterprises.

As one interviewee noted, social enterprises face the same challenges as any other socially focussed organisation, in that they are resource and time poor. The opportunity for financial support is often the critical motivating factor when applying for available funds. However, almost across the board, the Awardees noted their own positive surprise at how the non-financial supports became the more valuable component, particularly when reflecting on their position going forward.

“This is the first grant in my life where I didn’t even care about the money. The consultancy supports – they were amazing. You took something away from every session. It really has kickstarted a whole catalyst of events for us. I knew that our social enterprise could achieve, but this process drove it on.”

When pressed on whether the grant or the supports were more valuable, the overwhelming response was that the combination of both provided the greatest benefit. However, Awardees noted that non-financial aspects would have lasting, long-term benefits, and that they anticipate seeing the impact of the work done with their consultants only increase over time.



The graph above illustrates the responses by Awardees when asked whether the grant or non-financial supports was more beneficial for them.

The strongest emphasis from the Awardees was on the strategic and business planning process they underwent. There was exceptionally strong endorsement of the consultants and how well they engaged with the challenges unique to social enterprises. Many Awardees found that they were constructively challenged to think in ways they had not done before. It also afforded many of the organisations with the opportunity to engage their board and membership and bring these key stakeholders on the journey with them.

“Our consultant was incredible. I’ve never met someone so able to take conversations and turn them into a document that he could share back, one that articulated things better than I would have thought I could.”

jumpAgrade

Given the unique scenario of the COVID-19 pandemic, most if not all of the Awardees found themselves in positions where they were having to re-evaluate or reorganise various aspects of their programme delivery, operations and market viability, as well as a whole range of other business and social outcome considerations. Working on their strategic and business plans during this time was seen as highly beneficial. It allowed them to problem solve around current considerations and position themselves for the longer term, post-pandemic reality.

A common reflection on the strategic plans developed in this time was how the Awardees largely felt they were of a much higher calibre to their previous strategic plans. While not all of the organisations had previous strategic plans to compare against, those that did felt the ones developed during this process were much more bespoke to the particular operation of a social enterprise. They also felt that the consultants had a nuanced understanding that positively impacted their development.

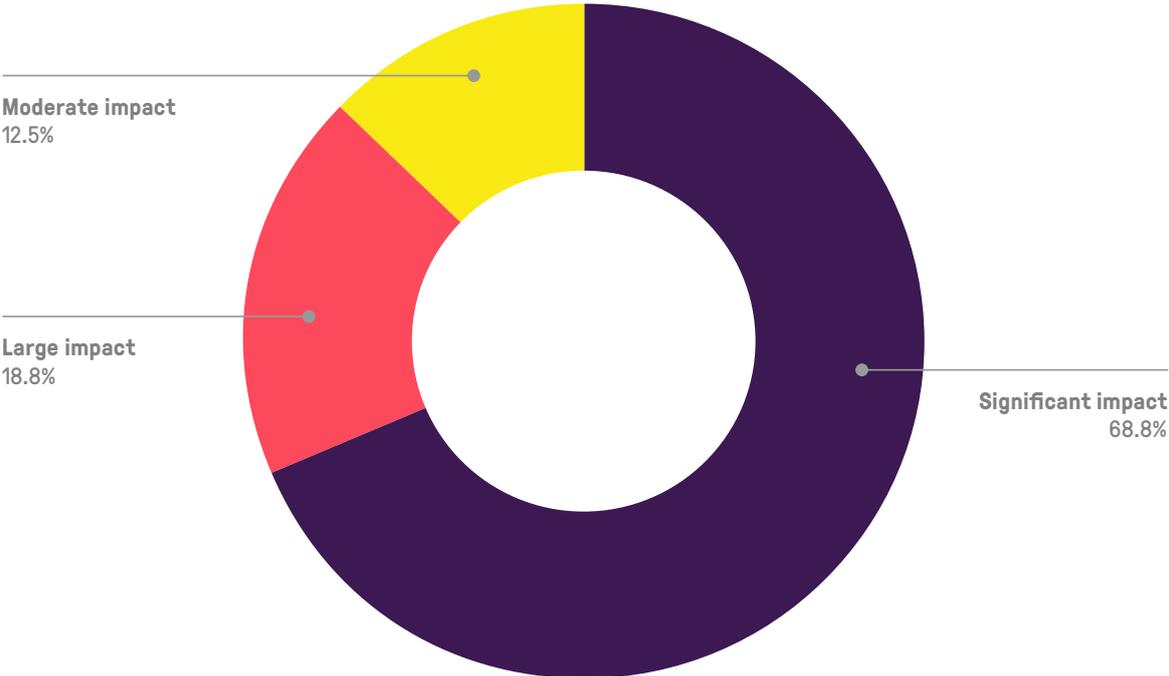
“The SED Fund supports provided the opportunity of a kind of soundboard for what we’re doing. Based on the support that we got, it really helped to put a structure on the process this year, at a time when it was challenging, and it got us thinking about things at an earlier stage. And that was really,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

Speedpak

When prompted on what more could be delivered or potential improvements in relation to the non-financial supports, the most common remark was simply a request for more time with the consultants. As one of the Awardees noted, these sorts of supports are very badly needed and difficult to allocate their own direct spend on, particularly with less established organisations whose finances are more constrained.

PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABILITY

The most universally praised impact of the Fund, overall, is how it has put the organisations in a position for greater success going forward. Given the diverse backgrounds, it is telling that there is unified appraisal here. Whether they are starting off, long-established or pivoting toward social enterprise as a model, the Awardees all express feeling in a much more sustainable position. Additionally, they see the investment itself as a quality mark that elevates and allows them to greater promote their organisations with the stakeholders they need to reach.



The above graph illustrates how the Awardees assessed the impact the non-financial supports had on their sustainability.

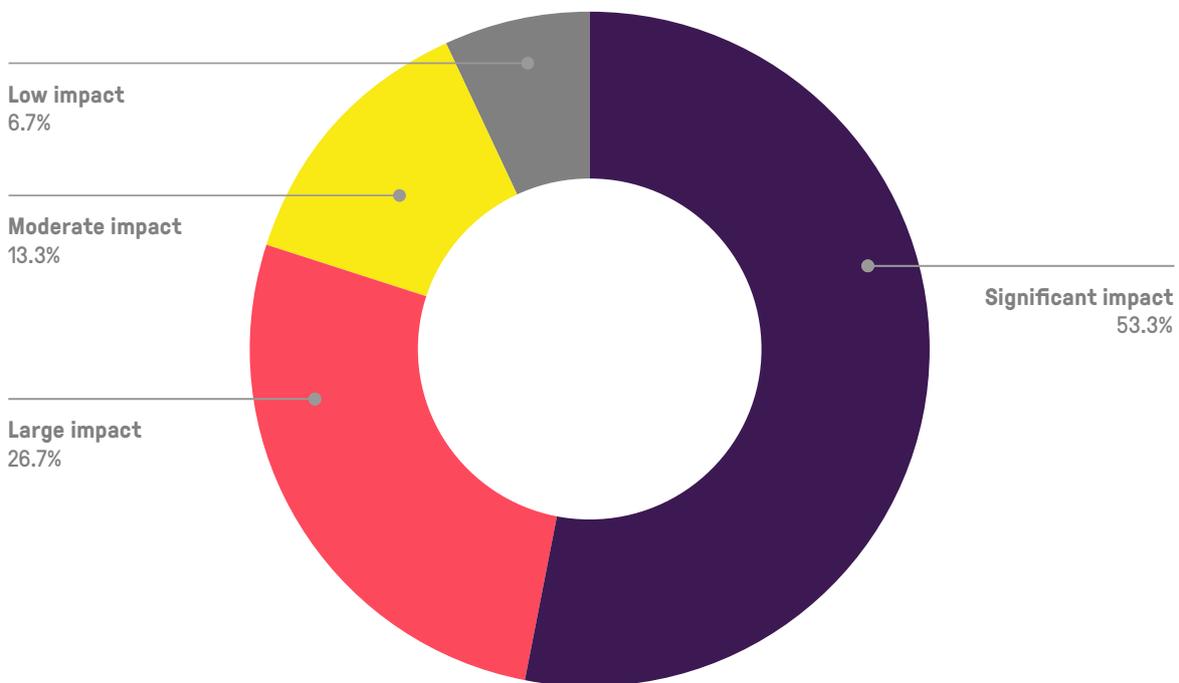
“The strategy is about sustaining and now trying to thrive. We’ve never had that before. We have a really good pitching argument now to talk about our work. Strategy, in reality, is the lifeblood of sustainability.”

Cork Counselling

TELLING THE STORY

The ability to express a clear and concise Theory of Change (ToC) has been highly valued by the Awardees. The impact, focus and clarity of defining the ToC has equipped the organisations with a valuable resource. Many of them reflected on how this has made it far easier to go out and talk about their work, and how it will prove a foundational piece benefitting them both strategically and practically.

The pitch preparation exercise was also appreciated. Being challenged to clearly and succinctly express the story of their work inspired many of the Awardees to find a new and more engaging way of connecting with their audience. The value of this exercise beyond the immediate pitch itself was recognised.



The above graph illustrates how Awardees assessed the impact the non-financial supports had on their communication skills.

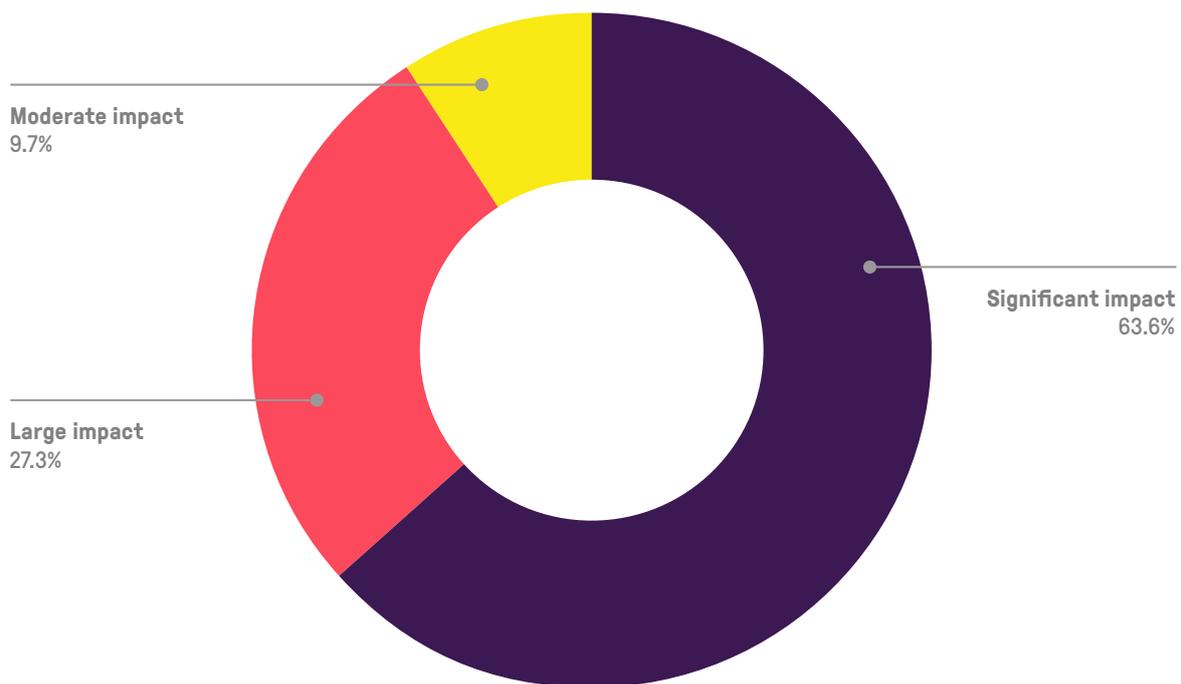
“The difference between us and a commercial entity trying to do the same thing is that we’re trying to tell the story. And that story is about the project; it’s about the impact that it has on the people engaged in the project. I think the key for us is being able to tell that story. Through the SED Fund, we’ve been given advice on how to do that in a sensitive way, but also in an effective way.”

EPIC

MOTIVATION TO GROW

In reflecting on the Fund's impact on their motivation, Awardees related to the clarity they had achieved in their strategic planning as one of the key enablers. For those longer established organisations, they found the process refreshing as it allowed them to re-engage with aspects of their fundamental mission. For younger organisations, they felt a strong motivation already but felt that being connected with a network of like-minded and similarly focussed organisations helped to drive their ambitions higher. Many remarked that it was a pity they did not have the opportunity for face-to-face interaction due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The definition of growth, as explored on the programme, was noted positively. Many felt that they had seen 'growing' or 'scaling' previously in somewhat one-dimensional terms, simply referring to expanded reach and quantitative operation. They appreciated the more nuanced understanding around growing the depth, quality and other aspects of the work as presented within the Fund.



The above graph illustrates how the Awardees assessed the impact the non-financial supports had on their motivation to grow.

“It has given us motivation to really see what we can do. 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 Social Enterprise Sector

It is the aim of the SED Fund to contribute to the growth of the social enterprise sector more generally, beyond supporting each year's Awardees but to create an enabling environment for them and others in the long run. In 2020, Rethink Ireland has placed a particular emphasis on building awareness of the sector's societal impact with the wider public. This work is closely linked to the government's first National Social Enterprise Policy, which is built around the three key objectives of a) building awareness, b) growing and strengthening social enterprises and c) achieving better policy alignment. Our efforts are therefore closely linked to those of the Department of Rural and Community Development, with whom Rethink Ireland has partnered on a research project, and with our Fund partner, IPB Insurance, whose inputs have especially informed our work with Local Authorities. Our aim is to support Local Authorities in their work to strengthen the social enterprise community in their area. To facilitate this, we are working with the Enterprise Ireland Centre of Excellence to clarify LEO supports available to social enterprises across the country. We also aim to support LEO's signpost social enterprises to other suitable supports available to them.

SENTIMENT RESEARCH

As part of our commitment to building awareness of the sector within wider society, and sharing a clear message regarding its impact, Rethink Ireland commissioned a Public Sentiment Research report with Amárach Research. The aim was to get a baseline understanding of the extent to which the general public has heard of and engaged with social enterprises, as well as the extent of their knowledge and their desire to see the sector grow. The findings showed that about half of society has heard of social enterprises, with 6 out of 10 having little or no understanding of what they do. The expression of interest to engage with social enterprises in the future was promising (31% had not yet done so but would like to) and the belief in their valuable contribution to society (76%). Based on this validation of

the still untapped potential of the social enterprise sector, Rethink Ireland committed to continued awareness raising, the Buy Social Christmas campaign across media channels being one example.

LEGAL FORM RESEARCH

Rethink Ireland, in partnership with the Department of Rural and Community Development, commissioned research regarding the question of a dedicated legal form for social enterprises. The aim was to identify, consulting key stakeholders and literature, whether such a dedicated legal form was needed and, if so, what form it should take. The research team surveyed social enterprises and interviewed key stakeholders. The valuable findings and recommendations of this research will be shared with social enterprise stakeholders at a number of seminars later in the year.

OTHER RETHINK IRELAND PROJECTS RELATING TO SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Since its inception, the SED Fund has helped develop the expertise of Rethink Ireland around social enterprises. In 2020, Rethink Ireland was awarded funding by the European Union from the Employment and Social Innovation funding stream. Over the next two years, together with DCU and Community Finance Ireland, we will develop models of impact investing and readiness for the Irish social enterprise sector. This prestigious project would not have been possible, if it was not for the continued work as part of the SED Fund, which has enabled us to identify gaps and potential regarding social enterprise investments.

Through the Growth Fund, Rethink Ireland supports organisations that have been previous Awardees, and who aim to successfully scale their model to achieve national growth and address more systemic challenges. A multi-year fund, the Growth Fund currently supports four SED Fund Awardees.

Conclusion

The third year of the SED Fund was a challenging yet rewarding year. The ongoing pandemic impacted programme delivery in ways that made networking and planning difficult at times. However, it also brought, in some ways, increased accessibility and inclusivity, as illustrated in the geographical spread of Genesis Programme participants or the record number of attendees at the Showcase.

Key learnings from the Accelerator Programme include the long-term positive impact of non-financial supports, as confirmed by the Awardees. This benefit will be emphasised moving forward, as we continue to pivot in the ongoing pandemic. Take-up of the Organisational Health Assessment tool has been positive, showing its potential as an offering to Awardees beyond the Accelerator Programme. Similarly, the Genesis Programme will be refined and run again in 2021.

The SED Fund team will continue working to ensure maximum benefit and impact of the Fund for Awardees, including optimising the impact of working with consultants and ensuring the time needed to implement learnings is provided. We will continue our outreach and awareness-raising work, while contributing to the growth of the sector with a new portfolio of Awardees on the questions of sustainability, scale and professionalism in operations.

We believe this work is more needed than ever, as the social enterprise sector will form an integral part of the post-COVID recovery strategy. This can be achieved by contributing to a more inclusive and sustainable society, as emphasised by Minister Humphreys in her announcement of the Regeneration Programme for Social Enterprises.³

³ Department of Rural and Community Development, 'Minister Humphreys Announces New €800,000 Regeneration Programme for Social Enterprises' (22nd February 2021) <<https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/9c700-minister-humphreys-announces-new-800000-regeneration-programme-for-social-enterprises-programme-to-support-social-enterprises-in-the-recovery-from-covid-19/>> accessed 25th February 2021.

Appendix 1 — 2020

Cash Grant Awardees

16 Awardees received a cash grant, a place on the Accelerator Programme and non-financial supports in 2020.

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.

CYBERSAFEIRELAND

CyberSafeIreland 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 (WEXFORD LOCAL DEVELOPMENT)

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.

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 (IRISH RURAL LINK)

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.

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 (QUALITY MATTERS)

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.

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.

TRiest 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.

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)

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. 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.
- 2 The need for dedicated supports for rural female entrepreneurs.

The programme is being managed by Tara Farrell, LWL CEO.

Appendix 2 — Genesis Programme 2020 Awardees

In 2020, 24 Awardees received a place on the Genesis Programme.

AGRIKIDS (AGRI KIDS)

AgriKids is a farm safety educational platform for children. Its ethos is to engage, educate and empower children to be farm safety ambassadors. Through creative and fun resources such as story books, apps and workshops, children can reinforce the message of farm safety within their homes and from their classrooms and in effect create a sustainably safer future on our farms for everyone.

BRÉIFNE SOCIAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION CLG

Bréifne Social Housing Association provides independent living, in the form of a real house and home, to people with intellectual disabilities. Residents are supported and cared for by appropriately qualified, experienced and vetted staff in a safe and sheltered environment.

CLONES DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY LTD.

Clones Development Society answers the needs of a growing elderly and vulnerable population by delivering a Meals on Wheels service to people over the age of 65. Currently serving the town of Clones, the service is working closely with community nurses, social care workers and local practitioners with a view to extending this vital service to a wider area.

DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES

Development Perspectives is an independent development education NGO based in Drogheda, Co. Louth that works with partners in Ireland and across the world. The organisation addresses poverty, inequality and climate change through transformative education and active global citizenship.

EMBRACE FARM

Embrace FARM, the farm accident support network, is a registered charity within the agricultural sector supporting all those affected by farm accidents. It provides information, a listening ear, peer to peer support with practical guidance and sign-posting to those affected by farm accidents. Embrace FARM remembers those who have died throughout the year in its annual remembrance service and gives residential counselling weekends for spouses who have lost a partner and families that have lost a child or sibling. It supports farm accident survivors with support group meetings both face to face and online as well as being an advocate for those facing varied disabilities from life changing injuries following a farm accident.

FORWARD STEPS FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

Forward Steps Family Resource Centre offers family support, information and advice in the Tullow area of County Carlow, with low-cost, confidential counselling, education courses and training. The centre is being pressed to provide therapeutic services in the mental health area for families, with current economic policy and resources meaning longer waiting lists for those most in need.

GRAFFITI THEATRE CLG

Graffiti is a creative centre for children in Cork City. We work with children from birth to 18 years of age, particularly in disadvantaged areas. We engage them creatively through theatre for young audiences, youth theatre, creative writing programmes, in-schools workshops and our innovative Early Years work. Graffiti nurtures children and young people's creativity, fuels their imagination, builds confidence and fosters mental wellbeing.

GREEN SOD (GREEN SOD LAND TRUST COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

Green Sod Ireland is a nationwide Land Trust that aims to protect Ireland's biodiversity and be part of a future where ecosystems are thriving in abundance for the well-being of present and future generations. We achieve this vision by working to establish Wild Acres (land and its biodiversity in protection) in every county in Ireland: safe havens where species can thrive and flourish and by supporting and promoting the proactive preservation of Nature through Ecological Education.

HELPLINK MENTAL HEALTH

Helplink Mental Health provides accessible mental health services locally (West of Irl), nationally and internationally. Mind Hacks, their newest project, provides mental health information (video & Podcast libraries) and education (workshops and webinars) services 24/7.

HERSTORY

Herstory is a cultural movement that tells the stories of women – past, present and future. Founded in 2016, our mission is to give Irish youth and the public authentic female role models and a game-changing education programme, inspiring countries around the world to start their own Herstory movements. Within 4 years, Herstory has become a household name in Ireland. www.herstory.ie

HUNTSTOWN COMMUNITY CENTRE (HUNTSTOWN FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE)

Huntstown Community Centre : Promotes, enables and facilitates inclusive activities which embrace and address the educational, social, cultural and recreational needs of the community in a safe, warm, welcoming and friendly environment. This is needed more now than in 2001, with the ever changing needs of the community and expanding population of the area.

IRISH SEED SAVERS

Irish Seed Savers (ISSA) is the primary food seed grower in Ireland, educator and curator of the country's public seed bank containing over 600 varieties of open pollinated heritage food seeds and the 180 variety heritage apple tree collection. Food accessibility and security is vital for a secure society. Without seed there is no food. With a fear of limitations in our food supply, Irish Seed Savers researches, grows, saves and shares food seeds and fruit trees, to maintain a central store for long-term use so individuals, food growers and communities can benefit.

LEARN FROM LEADERS

Learn from Leaders is a not-for-profit created to promote and foster compassionate leadership. Their publications teach children six qualities of everyday leaders with stories and insights from 22 inspiring Irish leaders. Learn from Leaders believe we need more conscious and ethical leadership to address the many economic, social, political and environmental challenges we face in this rapidly changing world.

LEITRIM SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES (GOOD ENERGIES ALLIANCE IRELAND CLG (GEIA))

Leitrim Sustainable Communities is an initiative of GOOD ENERGIES ALLIANCE IRELAND, an environmental NGO that promotes sustainable development and climate action in rural areas. The project empowers disadvantaged people in these communities to better their wellbeing through activities that enable them to socialise and improve their employability.

LIQUID THERAPY

Liquid Therapy provides young people with physical, mental, emotional, behavioural and intellectual needs from rural areas with the opportunity to take part in ocean and surf-based activities. All dedicated ocean lovers, Liquid Therapy believes everyone should be able to benefit from the therapeutic experience that is the ocean and reach their aquatic potential.

MOTHER TONGUES (MOTHER TONGUES IRELAND)

Mother Tongues is a not-for-profit organisation that celebrates linguistic diversity and promotes multilingualism in Ireland. Working with schools, families, community groups and artists, they support mother tongue maintenance and heritage language transmission through advocacy, art, academic research, and education. They provide teacher training in linguistic diversity and multilingual parental supports.

MOY INNOVATIONS CLG

Moy Innovations provides employment and work experience to unfairly disadvantaged members of the Ballina community in Mayo. With many employers reluctant to hire people from ethnic minorities, with disabilities or mental health issues, the project seeks to level the employment balance and give these valuable, often vulnerable members of society an opportunity.

PROGRESSION COMMUNITY HUB (AISIERI)

The Progression Community Hub supports men and women in recovery from addiction to access work, education, and integrate back into community life following treatment. Through its programmes, men and women in recovery from addiction benefit from meaningful work experience, skills development, accredited training and a work readiness programme that makes them feel valued, safe and supported in their recovery.

PROPERTY MARKING IRELAND (COMMUNITY SERVICES NETWORK CLG)

Property Marking Ireland is a community-led crime prevention programme. It helps to combat property theft on the island of Ireland and reduce the fear it generates in the community and amongst older and more vulnerable populations in particular. As part of the programme, individual property items are etched with the owner's Eircode. This marking is difficult to remove and makes the marked items less attractive to criminals.

SELFLESS

Selfless provides free media content, such as videos, photos and graphics, to worthy Irish non-profits so they can be shared online to help re-establish public confidence in Irish charities and non-profit organisations. Selfless also produces media content for SMEs, allowing them to pay what they want and with 10% of the cost associated donated to a charity of the SME's choice.

SISI (SURVIVORS INFORMING SERVICES AND INSTITUTIONS CLG)

SiSi – survivors eliminating intimate abuse together. Bringing survivors out of isolation to use their collective experiences to create a powerful voice for change. Working collaboratively to raise awareness and foster women into leadership roles at local and national level. SiSi puts abuse survivors and their ideas at the heart of policy and cultural change to eliminate violence against women.

SPARKABILITY (KIDZCRAFT SOCIAL GROUPS)

SparkAbility provides a welcoming environment to children and teens with sensory processing and communication differences. With mainstream after-school activities like sports clubs and dance classes inadequate to address the complex needs of neurodiverse young people, SparkAbility offers a community social outlet they can enjoy with their family and peers.

SPRAOI GLAS

Spraoui Glas is a community garden, farm and tea & craft shop in Dromore West, County Sligo that addresses social isolation and promotes health through the Grow-It-Yourself movement. To involve people marginalised, such as people with disabilities, young, old and non-nationals, to build our community through new lifelong friendships, develop skills, grow their own food, keep active and healthier out in nature, which will benefit the local community as this will be a project all can be part of, to be proud of, look out for each other in the community and be a healthy happy environment for people to prosper.

STAMPIFY

Stampify is a digital loyalty card for charity that allows users to swap loyalty stamps for meal donations. You can use the Stampify app to collect stamps at any of their partner businesses with every purchase, for every stamp you collect the business will donate two meals to children in their place of education in the developing world.

Appendix 3 — Interview questions

- 1 Please tell me briefly about your social enterprise and your intended social (and or environmental) impact.
- 2 Do you think the non-financial supports have been useful to your Social Enterprise? [CODE RESPONSES] What was more useful the cash or non-financial supports?
- 3 Do you think the non-financial supports have or will make your Social Enterprise more sustainable as an organisation? [CODE RESPONSES]
- 4 What difference has the SED Fund investment (cash and non-financial) made to your project? Is there anything that you have achieved that you wouldn't have been able to achieve without the investment? What difference has that made to your organisation?
- 5 Now you have completed the SED Fund Accelerator programme:
 - a) Do you feel you are now in a better position to communicate the work that you do? [CODE RESPONSES]
 - b) Do you feel motivated to grow your Social Enterprise? [CODE RESPONSES] Does this involve scaling the project and if so, how do you see that happening?
 - c) Do you think your Social Enterprise is better equipped to apply for funding?
- 6 Is there any other support you would have found helpful as part of the Accelerator?
- 7 In what ways did using the Organisational Health Tool challenge you as an organisation or present an opportunity for you?
- 8 How has COVID-19 impacted what you hoped to achieve in 2020, including with the help of the SED Fund?

Response coding: At the conclusion of relevant questions, the question can be reiterated to get a qualified response, i.e. 'No impact', 'Low Impact', 'Moderate Impact', 'Significant Impact', 'Large Impact'

Appendix 4 - SED Fund impact since 2018

Since the start of the SED Fund in 2018, three cohorts of social enterprises have benefited from the supports offered by the Fund. This page gives an overview of the impact they have created during their participation on the Fund and the supports that have been provided.

SED Fund Reach

The SED Fund has supported social enterprises across all 31 Local Authorities

78

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

SUPPORTED WITH
BUSINESS SUPPORTS

40

AWARDEES

HAVE RECEIVED
CASH GRANTS

TEAM HAS REVIEWED
A TOTAL OF

752

APPLICATIONS

OVER

200

PIECES OF MEDIA COVERAGE
INCLUDING NATIONAL, REGIONAL,
ONLINE AND BROADCAST

Business supports include: strategic planning, impact measurement and management, pitching and storytelling.

Appendix 4 - SED Fund impact since 2018

(contd.)

Awardee Impact

Over the course of three years,
the SED Fund Awardees*

CREATED AN ADDITIONAL
191
JOBS WITHIN THEIR
SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

SUPPORTED
500
PEOPLE TO OBTAIN
EMPLOYMENT

GENERATED A COMBINED
TURNOVER OF
€22.2
MILLION

ACHIEVED AN AVERAGE
TRADED INCOME OF
44%

REACHED OVER
266,000
PEOPLE IN TOTAL

MOBILISED THE
SUPPORT OF ALMOST
16,000
VOLUNTEERS

*These numbers are based on self-reported data shared by the 40 Awardees who had received cash grants in addition to other supports and only cover the year each Awardee was taking part in the Accelerator Programme.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT FUND 2020

