

# Social Enterprise Summit

## Outcomes Report



Dublin City Hall  
16<sup>th</sup> October, 2019



Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council



European Social Economy  
Regions 2019 Project



# Social Enterprise Summit

## Outcomes Report

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L-R: William Parnell, Department of Rural and Community Development; Cllr Racheal Batten, Summit Chairperson; Lord Mayor of Dublin, Paul McAuliffe; Mary MacSweeney, Dublin City Council; Karel Vanderpoorten, European Commission

## 1 Foreword



Cllr Racheal Batten, Summit Chairperson

Social enterprises bring about a diverse and vital range of economic, community and policy benefits to regions, communities and individuals. The Social Enterprise Summit was hosted to highlight social enterprise development in Dublin and Ireland as well as to encourage further development and collaboration. This report provides an extensive account of the summit including contributions, insights and examples. It has been produced to share knowledge and inform policy makers, stakeholders and interested parties.

As Deputy Chairperson of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) of Dublin City Council, it was an honour to host the summit. It was inspiring to hear the many insights and perspectives shared by social enterprise representatives and experts.

Thank you to the Economic Development Office for organising and thank you to all contributors and attendees for supporting the summit. The SPC and Dublin City Council look forward to further supporting and collaborating regarding social enterprise development into the future.

## 2 Key Quotes and Insights

*'Social enterprises are not only doing tremendous good in communities but also bring about real economic benefit to cities and counties'*

**CLlr Racheal Batten**

*'As we head into the coming months and years, social enterprises are really going to be at the heart of the way that we can deliver public services, the way that we can develop community and the way that communities and the economy can come together'*

**Lord Mayor of Dublin, Paul McAuliffe**

*'Social enterprises and the networks need to reach out to the management authorities of the ESF to claim their presence in the operational programmes'*

**Karel Vanderpoorten, European Commission**

*'As we face new challenges in the years ahead, I believe that social enterprises will be well placed to find solutions to policy issues'*

**William Parnell, Department of Rural and Community Development**

*'We're in a great place to work collectively for a further expansion of the social enterprise sector in Ireland and in Dublin'*

**Mary MacSweeney, Dublin City Council**

*'I don't think we're going back to the halcyon days of the 30s, but I do think we live in extremely exciting times where we may see ourselves at the next social enterprise summit in five years' time when the Dublin regional social economy will be transformed''*

**Dr Deiric O'Broin, Dublin City University / NorDubCo**

*'Northern Ireland is developing a reputation ... as being an area where social enterprise has helped to deliver post-conflict resolution'*

**Colin Jess, Social Enterprise Northern Ireland**

*'Ireland has now got so much to offer other countries in terms of what we've learnt. The social enterprise sector has been around for a long time but the momentum that's gathered in the last few years is phenomenal and it's nice to be able to tell that story'*

**John Evoy, Social Innovation Fund Ireland**

*'The best support anyone can give a social enterprise is to use their services and buy their products because at the end of the day that's what's going to help us create work'*

**Maggie Clune, PACE / The Mugshot**

*'Where there's a will there's a way and we're very proud to be one of the first state agencies to utilise reserved contracts for social enterprises'*

**Ingrid McElroy, National Children's Hospital**

*'We encourage and facilitate effective interagency cooperation and collaboration which has been very important for our successes. We identify gaps and seek to broker solutions, looking to mainstream initiatives where possible by getting things started and handing them over to willing hands'*

**Kathleen McCann, Grangegorm Development Agency**

*'We support a group of WISE organisations to develop products in collaboration with Irish designers, to market and advertise those products so they can enter the hands of consumers, to secure and promote contracts, and to support growth and advocate for the development of the WISE sector'*

**Philip Isard, Quality Matters**

*'We have to offer training and mentoring on the governance side, with the latter requiring hand-holding for a long period of time'*

**Larry O'Neill, ILDN / South Dublin County Partnership**

*'Investing in young people in local communities really does produce a new kind of economy and outlook. If you want to build capacity for the social economy, education must play a major role in that'*

**Rachel Collier, Young Social Innovators**

*'Advocacy, network and education. These areas are really important for us as we believe that the ones that need to speak up are social enterprises, they're leading this on the ground, they're the ones that need a voice and are the only voice that truly matters'*

**Chris Gordon, Irish Social Enterprise Network**

*'The circular economy academy is really about making connections, collaborating and mobilising all of that community interest and activity to have a positive impact on both the people that we work with and our planet'*

**Dr Sarah Miller, Rediscovery Centre**

*'We need to foster and promote a collective partnership and model to support social enterprise development. We must actively listen to those we support, putting communities at the front of innovating their own solutions, nothing about us without us'*

**Maria Flanagan, An Cosán Virtual Community College**

*'Natural networking is part of the essence and lifeblood of the social enterprise ecosystem. We have the opportunity to influence businesses in relation to their own policies, not just in procurement but also how they see their own corporate social responsibility and to challenge them'*

**Seán Mullan, Third Space**



### 3 Introduction

Social Enterprise Summit took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in Dublin City Hall at which leading stakeholders and social enterprise representatives came together to focus on and discuss the current status and future direction of social enterprise development in Dublin and Ireland. It was broadcast live online, the recording of which is available on the Dublin City Council webcast site<sup>1</sup>. Cllr Racheal Batten, Deputy Chairperson of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee of Dublin City Council was chairperson of the summit. The summit aims and programme were:

#### Social Enterprise Summit - Aims

- Share knowledge and perspectives
- Obtain insights and inform policy makers
- Facilitate networking
- Highlight opportunities for collaboration

#### Social Enterprise Summit - Programme

- 09:00 Registration, Refreshments & Exhibition Space
- 10:00 Summit
- 12:00 Networking Lunch & Exhibition Space
- 13:00 Close

(Local social enterprise and previous Dublin City Social Enterprise Award winner: Third Space<sup>2</sup> was commissioned to provide summit refreshments and lunch)

<sup>1</sup> ED&E SPC – Social Enterprise Summit [dublincity.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast\\_interactive/449935](http://dublincity.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/449935)

<sup>2</sup> Third Space (Social Enterprise Café) [thirdspace.ie/](http://thirdspace.ie/)

At the summit, international, national and local stakeholders discussed key areas and provided insights on context, trends, challenges, opportunities and the social enterprise ecosystem. Various contributors also highlighted future plans and opportunities for potential collaboration. As part of the summit, an exhibition space featuring social enterprises and support organisations was provided to: encourage further networking, increase awareness of supports and showcase social enterprises and their products and services. Details of exhibitors are provided in Appendix 5.1.4.

The summit was led by Dublin City Council and organised in partnership with various stakeholders such as the Dublin City Social Enterprise Committee and the European Commission. It was part of a social enterprise regional event series which represented Dublin's involvement in the European Commission's: European Social Economy Regions (ESER) - 2019 Project<sup>3</sup>. The objective of the ESER project was to build networks of social economy and social enterprise stakeholders and to raise awareness of the social economy at regional and local level in the various participating regions.

The summit also took place as part of the Dublin City Summit series. The series is an initiative of the Economic and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) of Dublin City Council. The committee is made up of councillors and industry representatives. Each summit brings together key stakeholders including policy makers, elected officials, topic experts and practitioners to share insights, information and perspectives in order to encourage greater collaboration, awareness and development regarding relevant policy issues and challenges facing the city.

After each summit an Outcomes Report comprised of the summit contributions, insights and presentations is produced and disseminated to policy makers, stakeholders and interested parties to support future policy formulation, knowledge sharing and relevant economic development. Previous summits as part of the series include: Brexit Summit 2016<sup>4</sup>, Infrastructure Summit 2017<sup>5</sup> and Apprenticeship Summit 2018<sup>6</sup>. (Links to the Outcomes Reports are provided in the footnotes below)

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<sup>3</sup> ESER 2019 [ec.europa.eu/growth/content/european-social-economy-regions-2019\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/content/european-social-economy-regions-2019_en)

<sup>4</sup> Brexit Summit 2016 – Outcomes Report [www.localenterprise.ie/DublinCity/Documents/Outcome-Report-DCC-Brexit-Summit.pdf](http://www.localenterprise.ie/DublinCity/Documents/Outcome-Report-DCC-Brexit-Summit.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Infrastructure Summit 2017 – Outcomes Report [councilmeetings.dublincity.ie/documents/s12181/286%201%20Final%20Dublin%20City%20Infrastructure%20Summit%20Outcomes%20Report.pdf](http://councilmeetings.dublincity.ie/documents/s12181/286%201%20Final%20Dublin%20City%20Infrastructure%20Summit%20Outcomes%20Report.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Apprenticeship Summit 2018 – Outcomes Report [councilmeetings.dublincity.ie/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=22333](http://councilmeetings.dublincity.ie/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=22333)





## 4 Social Enterprise Summit - Contributions

### 4.1 Lord Mayor's Welcome



Lord Mayor of Dublin, Paul McAuliffe

Lord Mayor of Dublin, Paul McAuliffe officially opened the Social Enterprise Summit by acknowledging Counsellors Racheal Batten and Colm O'Rourke and welcoming all attendees. He stated that it was great to see the council chamber being used for this event.

He recalled the first ever Dublin City summit, held during his tenure as Chair of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee in the same chamber, which convened stakeholders from across the city to discuss and debate outside of the strict protocols of politics. He introduced the social enterprise summit as the fourth in a series that has covered topics such as Brexit, infrastructure, and recruitment for apprenticeships (and how they can solve the labour shortage). Regarding the summit, he stated:

*'I can't think of a better topic for us to address at this time, because as we head into the coming months and years, social enterprises are really going to be at the heart of the way that we can deliver public services, the way that we can develop community, and the way that communities and the economy can come together'.*

He remarked that it is fitting that the chamber is used to look at the current status and future direction of social enterprise development in Dublin. The Lord Mayor highlighted social enterprise as a key way that communities and areas in a city like Dublin can be improved by bringing about: economic benefits such as job creation (often for those who are very marginalised in society); community benefits such as social inclusion and education; and policy benefits such as service delivery and active citizenship. He extended a particular welcome to those present from the relevant sectors.

As well as facilitating dialogue between leading stakeholders regarding social enterprise development, he presented the summit as an opportunity to highlight challenges and opportunities for various social enterprise and stakeholder representatives. Stemming from this, Mr McAuliffe expressed the intent that collaboration would occur and develop between the different social enterprise and organisations present and noted that the summit was an opportunity to connect and engage with policymakers.

He outlined how strengthening the regional social economy is key to the European Commission and European Union and how they are striving ahead in terms of how social enterprises can benefit society. He gave a special welcome and his appreciation to the European Commission representative, Karel Vanderpoorten, whose presence he believed underscored this. He also acknowledged the other contributors, including Colin Jess who came to speak about social enterprise in Northern Ireland.

The Lord Mayor emphasised the central role that Dublin City Council plays in social enterprise and made particular mention of Greg Swift, Mary MacSweeney and the team in the Economic Development Office in this regard as well as for organising the event. 'I think we're a leader in how social enterprise is delivered in the city and how it's supported, but that doesn't mean that we don't need to go further, we absolutely do'. He concluded by telling the participants that, 'By making your contribution, you're having a direct impact on how policy is formed in this area,' given that all the presentations and contributions will be put together in an Outcomes Report (as done for previous summits) and circulated to policymakers and stakeholders.

*'I think we're a leader in how social enterprise is delivered in the city and how it's supported, but that doesn't mean that we don't need to go further, we absolutely do!'*

## 4.2 Section 1: Setting the Context

Section 1 focused on the overarching context of the social economy and social enterprise development, commencing with an international and then national and local contextual overview.

### 4.2.1 European Context



Karel Vanderpoorten, European Commission,  
Directorate-General for Internal Market,  
Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

In his address, Karel Vanderpoorten said he was delighted to be back in Dublin on behalf of the Directorate-General and spoke of his 'special relationship with Ireland and Dublin' through his first contact with Larry O'Neill and the ILDN, to whom he had the honour of showing the European Commissions' visitor centre and highlighting social enterprise development from a European perspective and through several subsequent visits.

Mr Vanderpoorten highlighted the new financial programming period that is being assembled and urged social enterprise to be proactive in the process. Referencing his own background with the European Social Fund (ESF)<sup>7</sup>, which also exists in Ireland, he explained how the fund is locally organised with management authorities based at national, regional or even local level. With the development of these programmes taking place in the Member States, he advised reaching out to the management authorities to help shape them.

Regarding the financial programming period, he stated: 'This is happening as we speak, with operational programmes being assembled and partnership agreements with different kinds of sectors being negotiated, so it's very important for social enterprise – enterprises themselves but especially the networks – to reach out to the management authorities of the ESF to claim their presence in the operational programmes. If not, social enterprise may not get enough attention, so now is the time to have your say'. He offered help through his contacts across Europe who are working with the ESF and determining specific priorities for social innovation, social enterprises and transnational cooperation.

The second fund that he felt may be relatively unknown, was the European Commission (EC) Fund – a financial instrument for investment capital for social enterprises. Rather than being about subsidies and funds, he described it as a pilot programme that will be transferred into a larger fund called Invest EU that manages all of the financial instruments. Within the larger fund, one of the four elements is dedicated to social investment and skills. Mr Vanderpoorten believes that the current EC will be adopted and the programme will most likely be enlarged quite extensively. Accordingly he stated that 'it's very important that we create some kind of intermediate level of social finance so please be proactive and stimulate the social finance people that are able to provide access to it and change these guarantees into loans for the sector'.

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<sup>7</sup> European Social Fund [ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp](https://ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp)

Although a basic approach, he cited the one specific angle he wished to tackle in what the Commission is trying to do for the next seven years as: 'new and innovative means of financing social enterprises'. Further to 'pay for result' and 'social impact bonds', that everyone has heard about and is a somewhat controversial debate, he advocates that, 'We should be open to new ideas and not only listen to these new proposals but also put forward other proposals'.

*'We should be open to new ideas and not only listen to these new proposals but also put forward other proposals'.*

He raised the practice of match funding, where citizens, enterprises and government raise one euro respectively, as an interesting alternative and wants people to consider developing these programme types: 'Match funding creates an accountant's approach where all endorse the investment that is done commonly; it can leverage much more than by a Government grant, citizen or enterprise investment alone. It's quite advanced but we should dare to explore these kinds of new financial methods'.

Another area he highlighted was: skills, something that is not easy for social enterprises because of its broad nature. He reflected specifically on business skills and those for WISE (work integration social enterprises), e.g. social enterprises that work with people who have disabilities and people who have no direct access to the regular labour market. He highlighted that the Commission is pushing for a specific programme in the knowledge that working with this cohort demands other types of skills and HR management to adapt processes to include them in the labour market, give them proper labour assignments and improve their job satisfaction. The Commission is thus seeking members with experience in these specific skills to design tailored training programmes to teach managers, job coaches and others how to develop their enterprises and to support them. To this end, he confirmed that he would be happy to hear from any training centres or those with knowledge in the specific practices of job carving, job crafting, disassembling jobs, etc. For basic business skills, he reiterated that the use of the ESF is very important because the absence of specific training for social enterprise does not mean that other lines cannot be accessed. Mr Vanderpoorten's final words of advice were:

*'Try also to reach out to the regular training lines in the ESF and to train managers and employees with these as well as those specifically for social enterprises'.*



**Rationale for a Policy**

- Social Enterprise linked important economic, social and environmental issues
- A spectrum of Social Enterprise exists in Ireland
- Social Enterprises are about purpose over profit
- Up to three Social Enterprise people employed in Ireland
- Limited data about the sector, scope and impact of Social Enterprises in Ireland
- Difficulty in accessing supports and existing market opportunities – matching them particular for growth
- Many areas of other stakeholders advocating for a policy

#### 4.2.2 National Context



William Parnell, Assistant Secretary General,  
Department of Rural and Community  
Development

William Parnell began by thanking the Chair and Lord Mayor and expressing his delight at seeing so many people and indeed familiar faces taking an interest in the summit. Mr Parnell set out to give a ‘whistle-stop tour’ of the new National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-22<sup>8</sup> that was published in July 2019.

While recognising that social enterprises have been in existence in Ireland for decades, Mr Parnell remarked that the publication of the new policy signals a new phase of social enterprise development. He explained that the Department hopes that the new policy will create an enabling environment for social enterprises to grow and to contribute to our economic and social progress in the years ahead.

He described the four-year policy as part of a suite of Department of Rural and Community Development initiatives to support the full range of organisations that provide services to

<sup>8</sup> National Social Enterprise Policy [www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/e779c3-social-enterprise-policy/](http://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/e779c3-social-enterprise-policy/)

communities or to tackle social or societal issues. He mentioned two other documents within the suite which are the strategy to support the community and voluntary sector in Ireland<sup>9</sup> and the national volunteering strategy<sup>10</sup>.

He posed the ‘multimillion dollar question’ of what is a social enterprise, explaining that no two countries regard a social enterprise in the same way due to differences in geographies and cultures. The definition developed for the policy within an Irish context and with stakeholder buy-in, states a social enterprise is:

- An enterprise whose objective is to achieve a social, societal or environmental impact rather than maximizing profit for its owners or shareholders
- It pursues its objectives by trading on an ongoing basis through the provision of goods and / or services, and by reinvesting any surpluses into achieving social objectives
- It is governed in a fully accountable and transparent manner independent of the public service.

Mr Parnell explained that the definition is consistent with EU definitions and is very helpful in providing a shared understanding. He stressed that the definition does not diminish the spectrum of social enterprises that exist in Ireland and outlined the country’s range of social enterprises which all play an important role and include:

- Work integration social enterprises (WISE’s) that mostly work with disadvantaged groups in providing education and training to help them integrate into the workplace;
- Those that help other enterprises to develop;
- Deficient demand social enterprises that fill a gap where there isn’t a large enough market for commercial provision (very often these are found in very disadvantaged or remote areas);
- Environmentally focused social enterprises; and
- Those that adapt a cooperative model but refrain from distributing profits (unlike big cooperatives).

He also mentioned social innovators and entrepreneurs as they are an important part of the ecosystem, given that their initial ideas and sparks often form the genesis of social enterprises.

Addressing the reason for publishing the policy, Mr Parnell said it was to recognise that social enterprises deliver important economic, social and environmental returns, particularly in Ireland where there is significant potential for growth. ‘There’s a spectrum of social enterprises across the board, from some who are very entrepreneurial-minded (and are even Enterprise Ireland client companies) but with the objective of always putting their purpose over profit. Others that are perhaps less entrepreneurial are nonetheless providing a crucial social or community service’.

*‘Social enterprises deliver important economic, social and environmental returns, particularly in Ireland where there is significant potential for growth’.*

He recounted that social enterprise has been very poorly understood in Ireland until now: ‘We know how long social enterprises have been in existence in Ireland but they’ve been under the radar with limited data on their scale, scope and impact so it’s been difficult for them to access supports and to expand and grow. For many years, social enterprise stakeholders were advocating for a policy and we were lagging behind other EU Member States in not having one’. There was also fragmentation of

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<sup>9</sup> Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities – A five year strategy to support the community and voluntary sector in Ireland [assets.gov.ie/26890/ff380490589a4f9ab9cd9bb3f53b5493.pdf](https://assets.gov.ie/26890/ff380490589a4f9ab9cd9bb3f53b5493.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> National Volunteering Strategy [www.gov.ie/en/consultation/fc55b9-public-consultation-on-draft-national-volunteering-strategy-2020-202/](https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/fc55b9-public-consultation-on-draft-national-volunteering-strategy-2020-202/)

responsibility for social enterprise across Government. Employing the saying about the right person being in the right place at the right time, Mr Parnell lauded Minister Michael Ring in the Department of Rural and Community Development (established two years ago with specific policy responsibility for social enterprise) and his excellent understanding of it.

He emphasised that the publication of the policy is trying to provide a framework to enable enterprises to grow, 'Looking around the room and the exhibition downstairs, I think we're reaching a point where social enterprise is being mainstreamed'.

The policy is based around three objectives:

1. Building awareness of social enterprise;
2. Growing and strengthening social enterprise; and
3. Achieving better policy alignment.

While short on time, he gave examples of some of the commitments made to try and progress each objective. This included developing an awareness strategy so the general public and public bodies know what social enterprises are, sharing best practice through an annual Social Enterprise Conference on 21st November (International Social Enterprise Day), and working with education and research bodies to see how they can help in supporting social enterprise development.

In terms of growing and strengthening social enterprise, Mr Parnell brought up the business supports (like business skills) mentioned by Karel Vanderpoorten and how providing these supports was a key objective. He referenced information on financing, working to support social enterprises in public procurement, and looking at the existing legal forms for social enterprise to examine if there is a deficit as this is something that has come up in consultations.

Towards better policy alignment, he said that it was important to try to create a better understanding across Government of the interaction between social enterprise and Government. As such, he highlighted policies such as the Action Plan for Rural Development, Future Jobs Ireland, and the Climate Action Plan, all of which contain references to social enterprise. 'As we face new challenges in the years ahead, I believe that social enterprise will be well placed to find solutions to policy issues'.

*'As we face new challenges in the years ahead, I believe that social enterprise will be well placed to find solutions to policy issues'.*

In terms of the role of local authorities, he highlighted Dublin City Council as a 'real leader' with the Dublin City Social Enterprise Awards and explained that local enterprise offices have a role to play along with the context of public procurement.

He summarised by saying how the new policy recognises the value and impact of social enterprises, includes 26 specific and time-bound commitments and complements other policy initiatives. 'Importantly, we want it to be delivered in partnership with the sector so we're in the process of setting up an implementation group that will comprise at least 50% stakeholders from the sector; and a representative from the County and City Management Association will be invited to join the group'.

He confirmed that implementation has begun through: the launch (and assessments) of a training and mentoring call for proposals; establishing the implementation group; a Social Enterprise Research Fellowship in conjunction with the Irish Research Council (announced this week); the upcoming national conference; recent dialogue with the Higher Education Institutes; imminent further funding announcements and engagement at an international level.

### 4.2.3 Dublin Context



Mary Mac Sweeney, Deputy Head of Enterprise and Economic Development / Chairperson Dublin City Social Enterprise Committee, Dublin City Council

Mary MacSweeney began by expressing her delight in seeing so many people in the chamber, as an example of Karel Vanderpoorten’s advice about social enterprise needing to claim their presence. As Chair of the Dublin City Social Enterprise Committee, she has learnt a lot about the area in the last number of years and described how many representatives are playing different and important parts, but that ‘there is definitely a strength in the collective’.

*‘There is definitely a strength in the collective’.*

As Dublin’s third event as part of the European Social Economy Regions 2019<sup>11</sup> project, aimed at better networking and bringing people together to utilise the strength of the collective, she stressed that the summit (as the final event) was a testament to what can be done collectively, despite everyone’s challenges and resource limits and provides a platform to progress from.

In working with start-ups and scaling companies through the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) and Economic Development Office of Dublin City Council, we recognised that a lot of the supports that work well for businesses also work well for social enterprises. In the policy context, through the Economic and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee, the local authority has also looked at ways to support and recognise the important role of social enterprises at ground level and to celebrate that. She used the example of commissioning Third Space, a local social enterprise café to cater at the summit and other events as another way of delivering on raising awareness as per the national policy.

*‘Like all things in life, the more you know, the more likely you are to use the resources that are available and you can gain excellent value and quality through the social enterprise sector’.*

Regarding the policy context, Ms MacSweeney pointed out that the council is supported by legislation such as the Local Government Reform Act 2014<sup>12</sup>, which states that the promotion of economic development includes: creating and sustaining jobs, supporting enhancement of local innovation capacity and supporting local enterprise. It states that the promotion of local and community development includes supporting social enterprise, social capital, volunteering and active citizenship.

She also highlighted the policy objective in the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022<sup>13</sup>, as that of promoting and facilitating Dublin as a hub for social enterprise in order to help address some of the

<sup>11</sup> ESER 2019 Project [ec.europa.eu/growth/content/european-social-economy-regions-2019\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/content/european-social-economy-regions-2019_en)

<sup>12</sup> Local Government Reform Act 2014 [www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2014/act/1/enacted/en/html](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2014/act/1/enacted/en/html)

<sup>13</sup> Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 [www.dublincity.ie/main-menu-services-planning-city-development-plan/dublin-city-development-plan-2016-2022](http://www.dublincity.ie/main-menu-services-planning-city-development-plan/dublin-city-development-plan-2016-2022)



city's critical needs. She pledged to continue to work with those in the chamber to try and put Dublin on the map as a great place for social enterprise and its development. She also referenced the Local Economic and Community Plan<sup>14</sup> 2016-2021, which includes an objective to promote and support the development of social innovation and enterprise. 'Some of us work without considering how important the policy context is and in a lot of cases, the policy is the practice, so as one of 31 local authorities we're happy to work across the network nationally of LEO's and other local authorities to learn from what they're doing and to share our practice with them'.

Another way of working with the sector, she said, was by celebrating the work of the social enterprises themselves. The Dublin City Social Enterprise Committee, comprising a range of stakeholders including social enterprise practitioners and support organisations has been organising the Dublin City Social Enterprise Awards for the past five years. She expressed her gratitude to the Department of Rural and Community Development for co-funding the initiative and introduced the Dublin City Social Enterprise Awards - Impact Report<sup>15</sup> completed by Norman Thompson which capture details of the awardees to date and their associated impact. The report is another way of raising awareness of the strong social enterprises present in the Dublin region.

In regard to capacity building, Dublin City Council has worked with different players in various areas. One such area is training in which we have worked with An Cosán Virtual Community College, Technological University Dublin and Plato business network which organised a social enterprise founders' network for sharing knowledge. LEO mentoring is also available as we have identified mentors with specific skill sets around social enterprise and LEO grants are available depending on eligibility. As well, we actively look at market opportunities for social enterprises to be able to sell their wares in a mainstream capacity. Ms MacSweeney was delighted to hear from the European Commission about their plans, how they are seeing opportunities for social enterprise to work alongside traditional enterprise and how there might be better alignment between different sectors. 'We would support that and have seen it in practice between the LEO supports and how social enterprises have availed and made good use of enterprise supports when given the opportunity'.

Her view of the future is that, 'We're in a great place to work collectively for a further expansion of the social enterprise sector in Ireland and in Dublin'. Dublin City Council is also working with other sections internally, such as with Bruce Philips who has started a dialogue about how the Liberties could become a hub for social enterprise development. She also referred to Mary Harvey's work in Rialto with active social enterprises that have been successful in tendering at the National Children's Hospital. She affirmed that Dublin City Council is happy to utilise its network and opportunities to further support the growth of the social enterprise sector.

*'We're in a great place to work collectively for a further expansion of the social enterprise sector in Ireland and in Dublin'.*

In picking up on the European Commission's comments on different possibilities brought about by Blockchain, Artificial Intelligence and the use of technology within the social economy, she said that Dublin City Council was wide open to joining in those conversations and sharing the learning to build on what is a strong foundation for social enterprise.

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<sup>14</sup> Dublin City Local Economic & Community Plan 2016-2021 [www.dublincity.ie/LECP](http://www.dublincity.ie/LECP)

<sup>15</sup> Dublin City Social Enterprise Awards – Impact Report [www.localenterprise.ie/DublinCity/Documents/Dublin-City-Social-Enterprise-Awards-%E2%80%93-Impact-Report.pdf](http://www.localenterprise.ie/DublinCity/Documents/Dublin-City-Social-Enterprise-Awards-%E2%80%93-Impact-Report.pdf)

#### 4.2.4 Socio-Economic / Social Enterprise Development Context



Dr Deiric O'Broin, Head of Social Enterprise,  
Dublin City University / NorDubCo

'I get to live my dream job' was how Deiric O'Broin introduced himself, saying that he was lucky to work with Dublin City Council and the Social Enterprise Committee over the past five years and that the packed chamber was proof of how great things can grow from small seeds in a relatively short space of time.

Dr O'Broin stated that there is a leadership question for the sector as a whole or the broader social economy about building the social economy in Ireland, particularly in Dublin and the role of social enterprise as system change leaders and where to go from here. His presentation examined three macro-factors around what has worked in driving the development of the social economy in other small countries in the EU and in the western world.

He put forward the idea of a supportive or enabling policy framework. Remembering an

Irish Social Enterprise Network event five years ago addressing what a supportive public policy framework would look like, Dr O'Broin believes that, 'We now have what would be considered a very good public policy framework for the social economy in Ireland'.

He praised the good work by the Department of Rural and Community Development on the policy framework, 'They've done an amazing job in a relatively short space of time and have turned around something that is both very complex and complicated that goes across a number of Government areas and governance tiers between local, regional and national'.

The next factor he cited was engaged public agencies, using the summit as evidence of the support by Dublin City Council he described them as 'a leader that has broken ground in this area'. He noted that there has been a cascade effect across parts of Ireland, particularly driven by local authorities regarding social economy development and while acknowledging the challenges, he cautioned against losing sight of what has been accomplished to date.

He recapped on the 'eye-opener' of what has been achieved in a short space of time through the policy and public agency support, not just by Dublin City Council but also by his own institution (Dublin City University) where there is a head of social enterprise function and the beginnings of a much more coordinated approach to social enterprise. He also touched on the other public higher education institutes in the north and south of the country that are operating together under a Social Economy Research Network of Ireland, which has gratefully received support from Chris Gordon of the Irish Social Enterprise Network. Dr O'Broin stated that many academics with very different perspectives, are now beginning to collaborate around the social economy research agenda and commented that:

*'We don't just think about social enterprise or social entrepreneurs, we're interested in the UN concept of the social and solidarity economy and the more European concept of the social economy'.*

He remarked that there are a variety of activities to support organisations that are happening within public institutions as well as local authorities and attributed it to the leadership of the Department of Rural and Community Development in facilitating that public institutional change. Proceeding to the 'meat of it', what Dr O'Broin has seen in other small countries that have built their social economy is the idea of a sectoral accord or that the components of the broad social economy have a clear idea of what they want or at least a shared understanding of the path they wish to follow.

The first thing he wished to say about the social economy in Ireland is that it is: Irish, European, and unusual in a number of important ways. Unlike many other countries, the broad social economy has very little understanding of itself. Mentioning an event in the Rediscovery Centre in early September with a number of European speakers, including one from the Social Economy Europe Organisation, the conversation revealed that most European social economy networks have older siblings of the movement (e.g. the credit union and cooperative movements) as drivers of the social economy and social enterprise development. Dr O'Broin elaborated that this hasn't happened in Ireland and while unusual, it can be addressed but has ramifications for how we go forward.

When it comes to shared leadership, he explained that historically it has been limited. This is an issue for the social enterprise sector, cooperatives, and the credit unions as there is very little interaction in a sustained, engaged manner. He hoped that this would be addressed in the coming years. He cited the famous sociologist Eric Olin Wright, who advocated building the global social economy and suggested that if you look at some of the most successful national or regional social economies, what they've done is to analyse the economic structure of their area (be it locality, region or country). They've identified the gaps between mainstream delivery (it's not about demand efficient or supply surplus but the spaces in the capitalist system to deliver services) and tried to fill these. Quebec was given as one of most interesting examples of the sustained development of the provincial social economy by identifying those gaps or 'interstitial spaces'. Dr O'Broin explained that the point Eric Olin Wright was trying to make is: 'it's about analysis, you need to work with people that are in the analysis business'. From his perspective coming from a public university, the challenge is to work with social enterprises to help analyse the economy and the gaps to see how social enterprise leaders can fill these. He continued, 'It's not necessarily about gap identification from the enterprise sense but understanding the broader economy and how we can move from there'.

He highlighted the dynamics of the social economy in how it can grow, fall, expand, and contract, with some whole sectors disappearing and collapsing because the world has moved on. He reflected on his first social enterprise board appointment in 1992 in a sector that no longer exists. Dr O'Broin believes, 'In the last year or two, there has been significant change and momentum towards a better understanding of where we want to be and where social enterprises can actually succeed and flourish'.

There is a tendency among a number of my colleagues to speak of a 'golden age' in Ireland, the strong social banking system of the 20s and early 30s characterised by the Raiffeisen banks. They were driven out due to the lack of a supportive policy framework and a struggling post-independence State that had an orthodox economic view dominating policymaking. He said that these financial cooperatives found it very difficult to succeed and it wasn't until the 50s that this changed. In conclusion, he stated:

*'I don't think we're going back to the halcyon days of the 30s, but I do think we live in extremely exciting times where we may see ourselves at the next social enterprise summit in five years' time when the Dublin regional social economy will be transformed'.*

#### 4.2.5 Northern Ireland Context



Colin Jess, Director, Social Enterprise Northern Ireland

Colin Jess expressed gratitude for the invitation to speak and began by setting out how he would focus his contribution on the background of Social Enterprise Northern Ireland (SENI), details about its activities and some recent statistics to demonstrate the growth of the sector.

He explained that SENI<sup>16</sup> was the first winner of the Social Economy Work Programme (issued by the Department of the Economy in 2012) and has held it since through two tenders. It is a membership organisation aimed at (i) raising awareness of the sector across political parties as well as the public, private and educational sectors, and (ii) developing relationships, stakeholders and networks through forums to ensure that people outside the sector understand it and support its members. He remarked that there has been quite a lot of growth despite the lack of Government in Northern Ireland.

Mr Jess provided an overview of activities that they are involved in through a set of slides (See Appendix 5.1.3). Firstly, he introduced the Social Economy Policy Group as a group comprising a representative from each of the Departments in Northern Ireland (e.g. Health, Justice, Finance, Education) as well as the Probation Board. He said that presenting to this group every six months to give updates on the sector provided a great opportunity to profile the organisation's activities.

Regarding the National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland, he confirmed that his organisation had met with the Department of Rural and Community Development before its publication and that a very important relationship has developed between them. 'I'm a great believer that we can work together going forward irrespective of what happens over the next couple of weeks as we'll still be doing what we do and we can learn from each other'.

He spoke about how SENI responds to political consultations by attending for example: a recent DUP meeting (at which SENI strongly asserted the need for social economy to be further recognised in Northern Ireland), a Sinn Féin round table meeting and all five political conferences so as to show no political bias. He emphasised the importance of relationships with Permanent Secretaries and the particularly good one they have with the Permanent Secretary of Education and Economy. He highlighted Sue Grey the Permanent Secretary for Finance as a great supporter of social enterprise and SENI who in the past brought the cabinet office from London to meet them and provide updates on social value legislation for England and Wales. He portrayed her as, 'A breath of fresh air who has picked up social enterprise, put it under her arm and run with it'.

Speaking about the dormant accounts that were approved for release in Northern Ireland in 2008 but 'turned into a political football between a couple of parties', Ms Grey got the process going and the organisation is now talking to its members about how they want the funds to be released. On the topic

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<sup>16</sup> Social Enterprise NI [www.socialenterpriseni.org](http://www.socialenterpriseni.org)

of social value and procurement legislation, Mr Jess said that while Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK without a Social Value Act, he believes that directives can be put in place to make progress.

In terms of interaction with the educational sector, he highlighted the strong relationships with Ulster University and Queens University, with one of the student research papers by the latter's Science Shop due for publication in the next few weeks. He also referenced a programme with Belfast Metropolitan College and highlighted a speed-dating event held by the College recently which was attended by SENI members interested in taking on a volunteer and resulted in 64 students spending a half-day once a week learning about social enterprise through on-the-ground experience as well as through textbooks. Mr Jess described the thorough understanding of social enterprise held by millennials in particular as a more socially responsible cohort than older age groups.

Engagement through British Council meetings has fostered excellent relationships internationally with South-East Asia, notably Malaysia, Cambodia, Hong Kong and the Philippines. 'Northern Ireland is developing a reputation in those parts as being an area where social enterprise has helped to deliver post-conflict resolution'. He touched on a visit by people from the Philippines last year, where they visited SENI member social enterprises that are at the coalface of bringing people together from both sides of the community.

*'Northern Ireland is developing a reputation in those parts as being an area where social enterprise has helped to deliver post-conflict resolution'.*

Mr Jess explained that they had 129 people at an awards evening competing in 12 different categories in 2015, this year they had 470 people which he attributed to the increased growth of the sector and private and public sector engagement. His background in banking pre-2016 has benefitted him with many contacts who are keen to work with SENI and SEUPB (Special EU Programmes Body) which has involved SENI with best practice trips to Dublin in June and Scotland in August.

Defining WISE in the Northern Ireland context as 'women in social enterprise' and after pushing for women to be recognised, he said that the NatWest WISE100 nominations saw seven or eight female nominees this year compared to just one last year, again highlighting sectoral growth.

*'With a contribution of £625 million, we think we're a reasonable contributor to the Northern Ireland economy and we need to be listened to'.*

To provide further context and information about the sector in Northern Ireland, Mr Jess presented comparative figures from a 2013 PWC report<sup>17</sup> (featuring: social enterprises, voluntary and community sector) and a subsequent report<sup>18</sup> (featuring: social enterprises alone) to show the growth in organisations, employees, turnover (of almost £1 billion) and economic contribution. 'With a contribution of £625 million, we think we're a reasonable contributor to the Northern Ireland economy and we need to be listened to'.

Looking at how established social enterprises are, as opposed to being 'new kids on the block', Mr Jess revealed that 33% are of 21 or more years old and include credit unions and cooperatives. When it comes to the subsectors, the largest is education [32%] while the challenge remains to grow areas like

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<sup>17</sup> A survey of Northern Ireland's third sector and its potential to become more enterprise driven – Final Report [www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/deti/deti-dsd-3rd-sector-final-report-july-2013-v1.pdf](http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/deti/deti-dsd-3rd-sector-final-report-july-2013-v1.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Re-Balancing the Northern Ireland Economy – 2019 Report on Social Enterprise [www.socialenterpriseni.org/sites/default/files/library/Social%20Enterprise%20New%20Report%20Booklet%20Verison.pdf](http://www.socialenterpriseni.org/sites/default/files/library/Social%20Enterprise%20New%20Report%20Booklet%20Verison.pdf)

retail [14%] by getting into supply chains of the public and private sector. He noted that the percentages in the slide do not add up to 100 because social enterprises don't necessarily belong to just one area. Regarding the profitability of social enterprise in Northern Ireland, 75% were profitable, 12% broke even and 13% made a loss (During the 2017-2018 Financial Year). Research into the age of leadership of social enterprises, showed that over 70% are led by those between 45 and 64 years old while 2% are aged 16 to 24 years old. This will be a future focus and will be among the reasons for working with Belfast Metropolitan College and Queen's University.

This year, Amy Clint was appointed as a young ambassador for SENI. She runs Books by Stellas<sup>19</sup>, a social enterprise that creates books for children with autism and their families. While her parents received various literature concerning her autistic brother, the lack of material for siblings and classmates prompted her to write books about what the condition means for them. For each book she sells (at £4.99), she donates one to a primary school in Northern Ireland. Mr Jess told the chamber that by the end of their recent awards evening, a person had bought the 200 remaining books that allowed Amy to stock every school library, endorsing the belief in her mission and impact.

Mr Jess pointed out that 43% of social enterprises in Northern Ireland are led by women compared to 41% in the UK and 61% in Scotland. This is a topic that Queen's University is conducting research on and is an area, 'as an organisation, we're proud to say that we're helping to lead the way'.

He then highlighted what social enterprises do and outlined the wide-ranging scope, from creating employment and addressing financial exclusion to providing affordable housing. Regarding the size of social enterprises, at 61% the large majority have a staff of one to ten which shows the significance of their impact. The challenge for SENI is to help these organisations grow, create more jobs and employ more people.

He described the barriers to social enterprise as: access to finance and the reduction in Government and EU funding. He commented on how organisations are doing remarkably well in the absence of Government support in Northern Ireland. Among the enablers of social enterprise are business and strategic planning, for example, how can we help them be more business focused and strategic and how can we assist with their marketing, tendering or procurement skills to enable them to grow.

Mr Jess concluded with a series of recommendations from the report, including:

- Gaining clarity around the definition of social enterprise (Similar to other jurisdictions such as South East Asia)
- Supporting business skills to assist with increasing income from trade; and
- Supporting young people to consider social enterprise as a career of choice and not something that they fall into when everything else fails.

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<sup>19</sup> Books By Stellas [booksbystellas.com/](https://booksbystellas.com/)



### 4.3 Section 2: Social Enterprise Ecosystem

Section 2 of the summit focused on the social enterprise ecosystem; the people, social enterprises and organisations that are actively delivering on the ground and enabling social enterprise development across the region and country.

#### 4.3.1 Accelerators



John Evoy, Social Enterprise Development Manager, Social Innovation Fund Ireland

[John Evoy highlighted how accelerators such as SIFI support social enterprise development]

John Evoy explained that Social Innovation Fund Ireland (SIFI) is similar to a version of what Karel Vanderpoorten spoke about earlier as it is a type of match fund. It sources funds from corporates that are matched by the National Government (Department of Rural and Community Development). The fund then identifies the best, most scalable and innovative social enterprises in Ireland and invests in them with cash as well as other non-financial supports.

He introduced IPB Insurance, a mutual insurance company that insures Local Authorities and other state agencies, as the main corporate funder that has closely aligned values. SIFI has had a total fund of €1.6 million over the past two years and Mr Evoy was delighted to announce that IPB has

just committed to another two year contract. He explained that the main model is to invest cash grants and non-financial supports in social enterprises, referring to Colin Jess' list as closely aligned to what SIFI understands social enterprises need to develop further.

With short programme timeframes of typically six months, he said SIFI cannot deliver all the necessary supports in that period but rather can give the participating social enterprises three or four of those supports as solid building blocks to enable them to continue growing or make them 'investment ready'.

He highlighted building blocks that SIFI<sup>20</sup> provides, beginning with impact understanding and measurement among social enterprises. SIFI helps social enterprises develop a clear understanding of the impact that they are trying to deliver to society or the environment and develop an understandable and accessible way of measuring that, which Mr Evoy acknowledged is very difficult.

Another block is a thorough review of the business model or strategic plan to ensure sustainability and growth followed by pitching and story-telling. 'Life is a pitch after all so we try to support the social enterprises to get really good at consistently telling their story to customers, funders or Government agencies. It's a challenge because social enterprises are complex and trying to do a lot of things so it's hard to do this in a clear, succinct way'.

*'Life is a pitch after all so we try to support social enterprises to get really good at consistently telling their story to customers, funders or Government agencies'.*

Evidence of the model's success is shown through the fact that SIFI invested €400,000 into social enterprises during 2018 and proceeded to invest a further €975,000 in that cohort of social enterprises, 'making them viable for future investments'. 'That's just from us and I'm sure a lot of these social enterprises will continue to receive further investment from other sources, something that we would support'.

According to Mr Evoy, the other challenge is one of scale and although scaling and replicating is not for every social enterprise, when they do start to grow they need a different set of supports. He recognised that growth capital can be hard to access so this is an area that SIFI lends it support to.

In advance of facilitating a session on scale at the World Forum the following week and as someone involved within the sector for a few years, listening to the progress being discussed in the chamber, Mr Evoy concluded:

*'Ireland has now got so much to offer other countries in terms of what we've learnt. The social enterprise sector has been around for a long time but the momentum that's gathered in the last few years is phenomenal and it's nice to be able to tell that story'.*

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<sup>20</sup> Social Innovation Fund Ireland (SIFI) [www.socialinnovation.ie/](http://www.socialinnovation.ie/)



### 4.3.2 Supports



Maggie Clune, Training Services & Social Enterprise Manager, PACE / The Mugshot

[Maggie Clune provided an overview of how policy and supports can help social enterprises develop]

Maggie Clune introduced the social mission of PACE<sup>21</sup> as working with people who are coming out of prison or under a probation order to get them back into employment (it is well documented that those with a criminal record struggle to find employment). While the organisation traditionally focused on training, she said that feedback from clients informed them that irrespective of the training, this cohort still couldn't get jobs.

They therefore realised that they needed to start creating jobs through an appropriate model such as a social enterprise. Ms Clune explained that they established a social enterprise in 2014, at a time when there was no one department looking after policy to help them get off the ground.

'Social enterprise was like the bold child, nobody wanted to mind it for too long'. The lack of policy created ambiguity and fear and she admitted that PACE was very fearful all the time, which wasn't a way to try and grow an enterprise.

In the early years, it was the advice of a few key people on how to set themselves up that made all the difference as it was difficult to find any straight answers to practical questions. For example: 'How would working as a business impact on the benefits of those working under Community Employment Programme (CE) schemes? Were there VAT implications for reaching a certain threshold and what would the subsequent impact on the charity status be? The board was reluctant to make money or profit due to the ambiguity but then how could the enterprise grow?

The first sign of a meaningful policy was through the Department of Justice and Equality: A New Way Forward – Social Enterprise Strategy 2017-2019<sup>22</sup>, which validated all the work being done by PACE. Ms Clune said that the strategy was extremely welcome and central to it was its implementation by Siobhán Cafferty [Social Enterprise Project Manager, Department of Justice and Equality]. This strategy helped with the goal of progression by getting people into the social enterprise, training them, updating their CVs and putting them into a paid working environment to build confidence and self-esteem in order to attain a standard mainstream job.

She firmly believes that the new National Social Enterprise Policy is pivotal in removing ambiguity for organisations like hers, which might not have gone down the road of social enterprise as it was too unclear and that a lot of good things will come out of it. 'I think the three policy objectives are fantastic, it's pretty basic stuff and very doable and there should be absolutely no reason for not implementing it. Going forward if the strategy is implemented, it will definitely help us grow in this sector'.

<sup>21</sup> PACE [www.paceorganisation.ie/](http://www.paceorganisation.ie/)

<sup>22</sup> A New Way Forward – Social Enterprise Strategy 2017-2019  
[www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Social\\_Enterprise\\_Strategy\\_2017-2019](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Social_Enterprise_Strategy_2017-2019)

In terms of supports to create jobs, she noted that her organisation was very lucky to be recipients of Community Services Programme<sup>23</sup> (CSP) funding and was working with ‘brilliant people’ in Pobal. She also commended the Plato Social Enterprise Programme of the Economic Development Office and Local Enterprise Office – Dublin City (of Dublin City Council) which provided learning, advice and networking opportunities.

She explained that PACE operates The Mugshot, a social enterprise coffee cart and thanked Inner City Enterprise<sup>24</sup> for backing the idea. Dublin City Council is one of the organisation’s biggest supporters and biggest customers. The Council has put them in touch with the local community development officers, spread the word among community groups, promoted the product and promoted their organisation as a good quality and service organisation. Ms Clune concluded:

*‘The best support that anyone can give a social enterprise is to use their services and buy their products because at the end of the day that’s what’s going to help us create work’.*

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<sup>23</sup> Community Services Programme [www.pobal.ie/programmes/community-services-programme-csp/](http://www.pobal.ie/programmes/community-services-programme-csp/)

<sup>24</sup> Inner City Enterprise [innercityenterprise.com/](http://innercityenterprise.com/)

### 4.3.3 Procurement



Ingrid McElroy, Community Benefit Programme Manager, National Paediatric Hospital Development Board, National Children's Hospital

[Ingrid McElroy shared insights on how social enterprises could respond to tendering opportunities]

Ingrid McElroy began by explaining that the new National Children's Hospital<sup>25</sup> will be one of the finest children's hospitals in the world and is being built in an area of the city where more than half of the electoral divisions are classified as disadvantaged. Recognising this from the start back in 2014, the National Paediatric Hospital Development Board and Children's Health Ireland examined how to embed the principles of social value and social sustainability into both the construction and operation of the hospital.

She introduced the wide-ranging and ambitious community development programme that was developed in partnership with statutory agencies and community interests including Dublin City Council. The programme is based on four themes:

1. Maximise employment and training opportunities
2. Support local business, particularly small and social enterprise
3. Raise aspirations through education
4. Build on community health and well-being.

She acknowledged that the requirements of construction and healthcare are two areas that are probably particularly difficult for the social enterprise sector to break into in terms of the scale, specialization and in the case of the hospital: the centralised nature of government procurement and associated limitations of HSE frameworks. 'However, where there's a will there's a way and we're very proud to be one of the first state agencies to utilise reserved contracts for social enterprises'.

*'However, where there's a will there's a way and we're very proud to be one of the first state agencies to utilise reserved contracts for social enterprises'.*

So far this has resulted in contract wins by the F2 Centre in Rialto for office cleaning, the Arch Café for in-house catering and We Make Good<sup>26</sup> and PALLS<sup>27</sup> Limerick collaboratively for the design and fabrication of special bespoke frames to display the artwork of children attending the new paediatric outpatient and urgent care centre in CHI Connolly (that opened in July). It is hoped to replicate this in the new urgent care centre in Tallaght and the new Children's Hospital at St James.

<sup>25</sup> National Children's Hospital [www.newchildrenshospital.ie/](http://www.newchildrenshospital.ie/)

<sup>26</sup> We Make Good (Social Enterprise Design Brand) [wemakegood.ie/](http://wemakegood.ie/)

<sup>27</sup> Palls [www.palls.ie/](http://www.palls.ie/)

She recounted that the clinical staff of Children's Health Ireland collaborated with the social enterprise: STEAM<sup>28</sup> (based in Cork) to co-develop a very exciting and innovative healthcare science education programme for primary school students. This was recently piloted in St James' National School and Canal Way in Basin Lane, Dublin 8. While this was all good news, she admitted that most of these contracts were very small which is where the vast majority of opportunities for social enterprises will probably be.

*'What's important is the potential leverage it can give a social enterprise. For example, the F2 Centre has gone on to win two more contracts on foot of gaining the contract with us so it's always important to think about the springboard effect and using this as a way of getting another tender'.*

She advised people within the social enterprise space to strongly consider collaboration, particularly regarding public procurement. She was delighted to witness summit participants networking and discussing collaboration at the exhibition downstairs and highlighted how forming partnerships or consortia so that a number of small organisations can bid together is a potential way to gain contracts.

Ms McElroy felt it was also worth reflecting on the number of social enterprises operating in similar fields, e.g. catering or woodwork, that are often geographically close by. She said that it would be lovely if people could pool together and complement each other's services, using the example of one person building a door, one making the hinges, and one painting it. The vast majority of items and goods required by a hospital are highly specialised or of a very large scale so she encouraged thinking outside the box when trying to come up with business ideas.

*'Rather than thinking about the hospital's services and needs, think about what might be of interest to our staff, children, families, visitors or even the supply chain. Where things are outsourced, like cleaning or catering contracts, you can think about how you might supply something to those subcontractors'.*

While the issue of social mission is vital, she told participants that it was equally important not to forget that you are viewed as a business and you need to be able to deliver what was procured in terms of quality, efficiency and cost. She cautioned enterprises not to bid for contracts they were not in a position to deliver on, reminding everyone that deadlines are not elastic.

Despite this, she advised social enterprises not to be afraid to bid as it is simpler than you think and there are various supports to help. She said that there was no need to wait for a tender, but rather make a call to people like herself. For example, while something might not work in a hospital setting, it might work in a nursing home later on, and that call will have put the social enterprise on her radar so she can make that connection in due course should the need arise.

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<sup>28</sup> STEAM Education Ltd [www.steam-ed.ie/](http://www.steam-ed.ie/)



Kathleen McCann, Employment and Training Coordinator, Grangegorman Development Agency

[Kathleen McCann spoke about the community benefit work to date regarding the Grangegorman Development Agency and how social enterprises could fit into that work]

Ms McCann began by stating that it was great to be involved in what was beginning to feel like part of a movement around social enterprise and that they are happy to be part of that in whatever way possible. She explained that she is representing the Grangegorman Development Agency<sup>29</sup> (GDA) which is a national flagship project on economic and social renewal in Dublin's North inner city, an area of significant disadvantage.

The project involves a huge 73 acre site where a single campus for the former DIT, now TU Dublin<sup>30</sup> will be built and residential mental health facilities and community care for the HSE are being built. She reminded the chamber that this has been a site of psychiatric care since 1815. There is a new Educate Together primary school

for the local community to access and use and ultimately this is a new open quarter and the project is 'stitching this whole area back into the city'.

The Grangegorman Labour and Learning Forum<sup>31</sup> (interagency group) was established a decade ago and comprises statutory, community and voluntary organisations working in the area to leverage maximum benefit from the development for the people living in the area. She listed TU Dublin, the HSE, CDETB, Intreo, Dublin City Council (in many guises), Dublin Chamber of Commerce, Dublin North West Area Partnership, North-West Inner City Network and local schools as members. The key aims are to ensure that employment, education, training, business, enterprise and other opportunities from the project will benefit and improve the quality of life for those surrounding communities.

*'We encourage and facilitate effective interagency cooperation and collaboration which has been very important for our successes. We identify gaps and seek to broker solutions, looking to mainstream initiatives where possible by getting things started and handing them over to willing hands'.*

She highlighted their strong focus on employment which is progressed through the Grangegorman Employment Charter. This requires percentages and targets of new hires to comprise people living in Dublin 7, 1 and surrounding areas and is written as a clause in tender documents and included as part of the evaluation.

When the Charter was launched in 2012, national unemployment on the live register was about 16% but it was much higher in the Grangegorman area where youth unemployment was over 30%. While unemployment has come down over the years, Ms McCann believes that there is a key role for social

<sup>29</sup> Grangegorman Development Agency [ggda.ie/](http://ggda.ie/)

<sup>30</sup> TU Dublin [tudublin.ie/](http://tudublin.ie/)

<sup>31</sup> Grangegorman Labour and Learning Forum [www.gllf.ie/gllf/](http://www.gllf.ie/gllf/)

enterprises to create employment opportunities for those 5% that continue to be distanced from the labour market. She cited Maggie Clune's social enterprise as a very good example of that.

She explained that they have also been active around the apprenticeship piece and referred to the 'broken pipeline' from a number of years ago when young people had difficulty accessing employers and how movement by a number of players got apprenticeship back on track. The agency was involved in developing and partnering with the TU Dublin Access to Apprenticeship Programme and developing opportunities for young people to take part in apprenticeships with Grangegorman contractors as part of its efforts to raise the profile of apprenticeship opportunities.

Most of the agency's education and training has been labour market based but not exclusively, as they have engaged with Age Friendly activities, Intergenerational Learning, and the ABC area-based childhood anti-poverty project. For business and enterprise, she mentioned a subgroup of the Labour and Learning Forum that includes organisations like the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), Inner City Enterprise (ICE), Innovate Dublin, and the Smithfield and Stoneybatter Business Association (of which Ms McCann is a proud member). The agency has also organised a number of networking events to engage with local business associations in areas characterised by very small or micro businesses.

In trying to 'dip a toe into social enterprise waters', she confirmed that the agency is looking at opportunities on the demand side. She referenced the GDA and construction phase that may well go on for most of the next decade and TU Dublin and the HSE as the major stakeholders in the operational phase of the development.

On the supply side, she spoke about looking at supports for capacity building in the wider environment and a possible interagency approach that has worked for them as exemplified by the ABC project and the Labour and Learning Forum. She highlighted some possibilities around reserved contracts (mentioned by Ingrid McElroy), subcontracting by bigger contractors and buddying, and supports from TU Dublin by academic staff and students working with social enterprises.

She talked about the many challenges including the public procurement process and the presence of public-private partnerships on these developments. Referencing the agency's own public-private partnership with a facilities management company (due to run for 25 years), she suggested exploring the opportunities for social enterprise within this. She alluded to the creation of TU Dublin that extended into Blanchardstown and Tallaght which in turn creates other challenges around the contracting piece when it is being done across the whole organisation.

Ms McCann finished by inviting all present to the next Grangegorman Business Breakfast which will focus on Social Enterprise and provide an opportunity for social enterprises to get to know each other. The event is being held as part of Dublin City Council's Start-up Week in St Laurence's Church, TU Dublin on October 22nd from 8 a.m.

#### 4.3.4 Marketing



Philip Isard, Project and Office Manager,  
Quality Matters

[Philip Isard provided insights on addressing social enterprise branding, marketing and promotion and the challenges involved]

On behalf of Quality Matters<sup>32</sup>, Philip Isard set out to address the challenges of branding, promotion and contracting and also to explain its' We Make Good<sup>33</sup> project.

Holding up a 'beautiful, handmade, wooden chopping board', he said that it was designed and made by Cairde Enterprise<sup>34</sup> which is part of PALLS Limerick and involves people that have had contact with the criminal justice system, and was one of the products sold by We Make Good.

We Make Good is Ireland's first collective social enterprise brand which operates under an umbrella of 16 WISE organisations that are working together to share their expertise, challenges and to develop a collective response.

He reiterated the meaning of WISE as work integrated social enterprises namely organisations working with people from disadvantaged groups to help them enter the labour market and find sustainable, full employment for their skills.

*'We do this by supporting a group of WISE organisations to develop products in collaboration with Irish designers, to market and advertise those products so they can enter the hands of consumers in Ireland, to secure and promote Business to Business (B2B) contracts, and to support growth and advocate for the development of the WISE sector'.*

The 16 different partners working with We Make Good, work with people including travellers, migrants, people in contact with the criminal justice system and people with disabilities. 'They're extremely effective at working with people from these difficult backgrounds and helping them get employment. We share a common vision: to gradually and hopefully improve the opportunities that exist for these people in Ireland'. Mr Isard highlighted three key challenges:

1. Businesses don't really understand social enterprises and don't believe that they can create or produce the same quality product as they do, this is something that needs to be 'knocked on the head'
2. WISE organisations don't have the resources to afford the level of sales, marketing and brand expertise they need (as mentioned by Karel Vanderpoorten and William Parnell); and
3. WISE organisations that do have strong business models see a role and opportunity for increased state subsidisation.

<sup>32</sup> Quality Matters [qualitymatters.ie/](http://qualitymatters.ie/)

<sup>33</sup> We Make Good (Social Enterprise Design Brand) [wemakegood.ie/](http://wemakegood.ie/)

<sup>34</sup> Cairde Enterprises [www.palls.ie/social-enterprise-2](http://www.palls.ie/social-enterprise-2)

The first solution he introduced (that was mentioned by Ingrid McElroy) was the partnership between We Make Good and Cairde Enterprises in making the beautiful frames for the National Children's Hospital. Identifying the manufacturers as the same individuals as for the cutting board, he described it as an 'exceptional jump' from designing and producing boards to incredibly technical, large format frames that will be showcased in the hospital. He gave his appreciation to the hospital for the support, while saying how it illustrated the growth that can happen at an individual or local level to deliver high quality products that are on time and that tell an important social story.

Believing that organisations have to embrace their strengths, Mr Isard pointed to the effectiveness of working with these disadvantaged individuals but also to the help required with the challenges around their expertise, be it design, photography, technical production, prototyping, sourcing, or public relations. We Make Good is proposing a collective approach to allow them to be freed up to do the work that they are there to do, and collectively find ways to support this group of organisations in these areas. 'We don't need to reinvent the wheel but rather provide supports that respond to the challenges they have in the most resource effective way for them'.

A second solution outlined was a collective brand of the 16 social enterprises from across the country. He likened this to the Wild Atlantic Way and potentially the Buy Social campaign as wonderful examples of people from lots of different organisations operating under a single identity. We Make Good has tried extremely hard to manage product quality and quality control, 'We want to avoid a scenario where a poor quality product operating under a single identity creates a negative reputation, so quality for us is a top tier issue'.

Thirdly was the topic of strong business models, characteristic of the social enterprises his organisation works with. He referenced Colin Jess' mentioning of the desire to have more social enterprises in the retail space as these are organisations that rely on trade. In this regard, he perceives an important role for state subsidisation to help those organisations deliver training and support disadvantaged individuals so that they can enter the labour market and find full-time, meaningful employment for their skills.

Mr Isard concluded by saying it has been almost a year since We Make Good opened a pop-up shop in Smithfield and he invited all present to the launch of its new store on Fade Street, Dublin 2 on October 24th. 'With a range of products from over 16 social enterprises, we'd love for you to buy something but most importantly we'd love you to see that each of these social enterprises is delivering something that is extremely high quality and tells a significant story about growth here in Ireland, so we want you to share in that story too'.



#### 4.3.5 Training



Rachel Collier, CEO and Co-Founder, Young Social Innovators

[Rachel Collier spoke about how Young Social Innovators is designing and delivering training and other supports to enable the next generation of social entrepreneurs / innovators at a local and national level in Ireland]

Rachel Collier opened by saying, 'If you want to build capacity for the social economy, education must play a major role in that'. Since 2001, Young Social Innovators<sup>35</sup> (YSI) has been designing and implementing programmes in the second level education system for young people to engage in social innovation and entrepreneurship.

*'If you want to build capacity for the social economy, education must play a major role in that'.*

Currently there are around 15,000 teenagers involved in social innovation and entrepreneurship in the schools YSI works with. She highlighted the importance of the social aspect of innovation and entrepreneurship to 'Generation Z' (current 16 to 21 year olds). Quoting recent research<sup>36</sup> which they conducted with Amárach Research, she revealed that 40% of Generation Z selected 'making a difference in the world' as an indicator of success in life above other considerations such as having a house, money, job or loving relationship (which one might imagine to be the case). 26% (mostly males) expressed a desire to set up their own businesses. 'These statistics combined illustrate that this is a generation that is really ready to build a social economy like no other generation before them'.

*'These statistics combined illustrate that this is a generation that is really ready to build a social economy like no other generation before them'.*

She explained that when in schools, 'we build capacity amongst educators and help them to facilitate innovation and entrepreneurship'. Although about 5% of our teenage population is engaged in social innovation, Ms Collier believes that while this is good, it is not good enough and wants more young people involved. 'If you want a culture of sport, you invest in sport. You need to invest in social innovation and

entrepreneurial learning and practice. The pedagogy works well and there is high engagement of schools but we need it to be systematic and throughout the country'.

She highlighted YSI's most recent project, assisted by Dublin City Council, which considers how to focus on an area and build social innovation and entrepreneurship capacity among its young population. To this end, she suggested clustering schools, building capacity among educators and helping them to introduce programmes to their junior and senior cycle students and support them to develop their

<sup>35</sup> Young Social Innovators (YSI) [www.youngsocialinnovators.ie/](http://www.youngsocialinnovators.ie/)

<sup>36</sup> Gen Z Index [www.youngsocialinnovators.ie/images/uploads/inner/content/Gen\\_Z\\_Index\\_Part\\_2.pdf](http://www.youngsocialinnovators.ie/images/uploads/inner/content/Gen_Z_Index_Part_2.pdf)

innovations, entrepreneurship and social enterprises. She affirmed that teenagers are well able to set up profitable social enterprises and advocated to ‘let them in even if they’re under 18’.

In conjunction with Dublin City Council, YSI is assigning a regional officer in social innovation to engage schools in Dublin city and build from there. She maintains, ‘Education alone cannot achieve this, so as well as the schools, it’s about looking outwards to the community and building the necessary networks from the business community, local government, civic society, education and academia’. According to Ms Collier, the skills in social innovation are like business skills in social enterprises as they are all the same skills that are being built up. Projects developed by students include a publishing house of young people, country area mapping, a film festival, water conservation, various apps (e.g. to determine soil composition) and solar panel installation mechanisms.

*‘It’s really important to concentrate attention on teenagers, to give them the opportunities and mechanisms, and to create new ways in education that will engage them’.*

To help progress this, YSI is setting up a new Social Innovation and Learning Lab in DCU to share learning and conduct facilitation with young people. Ms Collier explained that there is a new generation emerging which represents a very strong pipeline coming from the teenage population into third level and beyond to build social enterprises. As an example, she explained how three YSI alumni have gone on to develop social enterprises and innovation with Enactus Ireland<sup>37</sup> and win awards in California. This demonstrates that, ‘Investing in young people in local communities really does produce a new kind of economy and outlook’. She concluded with special thanks to Dublin City Council and the Department of Rural and Community Development for supporting YSI.



Larry O’Neill, Chairperson ILDN Social Economy Working Group / CEO South Dublin County Partnership

[Larry O’Neill spoke about how the ILDN<sup>38</sup> and Local Development Companies / Partnerships are working to provide training and support for social enterprise development at a local level]

Larry O’Neill stated that he was ‘invigorated and energised’ by the summit contributions and commented that ‘it was great to hear about the policy side from the top table’. He said that the Northern Ireland description of social economy would mirror what is happening in the south bar one factor, that 40% of the social economy projects in the South are involved in childcare due to the lack of State support. He explained that in the UK, there are a lot of Sure Start programmes built into schools. The populations in the community childcare sector have therefore come together to provide a much needed service to allow females in the main to go back into the labour force.

<sup>37</sup> Enactus Ireland [www.enactus.ie/](http://www.enactus.ie/)

<sup>38</sup> Irish Local Development Network [ildn.ie/](http://ildn.ie/)

In regard to training and supports, Mr O'Neill introduced Dublin West Childcare (now called Start Brite<sup>39</sup>) that had five childcare units operating as separate legal companies in disadvantaged areas of south county Dublin, three of which were in danger of closing. It brought the five together and radically reduced the overhead costs of running childcare. The important point he said, was that there was a societal impact and it was no mistake that this is in the first part of the social enterprise definition. He noted that there are now five CEOs and that one of the drivers of bringing them together was Emily Smart, his colleague in the South Dublin County Partnership<sup>40</sup> (SDCP). While this significant piece of work was an example of what could be done, it also addressed a major issue for social economy projects, that of governance. 'We cannot get Directors onto boards or take responsibility and is it any wonder given the 67 pieces of legislation, in addition to the rules and regulations we have governing childcare alone? Who would sign up to a community board like that?' We have to offer training and mentoring on the governance side, with the latter requiring hand-holding for a long period of time.

*'A mentor is there as someone they can trust and rely on to put them on solid ground in a world there they're trying to build stuff on sand'.*

He reiterated the crucial importance of getting governance correct. The Clondalkin Community Recycling Initiative (CCRI) was near to closing down before SDCP got involved. Following a rebrand to Recycle IT<sup>41</sup>, 'a fantastic step forward', Mr O'Neill was proud to report that it now offers the last door-to-door collection of white goods in Europe. With organised collections, there is also an environmental impact as it avoids the indiscriminate dumping of these goods (fridges, washing machines, cookers, etc.) in Dublin city and adjoining counties. He confirmed that CCRI employs nearly 20 people, most of whom would not have gotten employment if not for the social economy. 'Again, we're seeing the societal impact in two ways'. Finally he spoke about the superb success in saving end-of-life materials from going to the dump through Recreate<sup>42</sup>, a partnership with Early Childhood Ireland that took two years to deliver from start to door-opening. He highlighted its huge educational and recreational value as well as its employment of those that may not have found jobs otherwise.

Referring to all three projects Mr O'Neill asserted, 'We can safely say that they've got the governance right'. Touching on his experience of having to wind down companies in an orderly and legal manner, he affirmed that without proper governance, projects will collapse which is a tragedy for all those involved if it is due to this rather than natural progression. He directed a message to the Department of Rural and Community Development officials present, saying how he was delighted to be participating in such a historic place and how great it was to have a senior minister in charge of social economy for the first time (reflecting on a time six years ago when it was no one person's responsibility). While appreciating the fact that there is a policy, with the Department behind it, he said that there needed to be something developed for 'fledglings' or new start-ups in lots of cases.

While welcoming the implementation group, he regretted that none of the ILDN operators on the ground, the 40 practitioners or 50 companies in the network are part of the group. He urged the State, Government and funding bodies to take the ILDN operators seriously given how far they have come without support, attributing this to their sheer will and energy. He emphasised the opportunity to take on board what these people are saying because they are in the know. With due respect to Karel Vanderpoorten and Deiric O'Broin who are familiar with the framework and academic sides respectively, he stressed the importance of looking at how that impacts the people on the ground.

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<sup>39</sup> Start Brite [www.startbright.ie/](http://www.startbright.ie/)

<sup>40</sup> South Dublin County Partnership [sdcpartnership.ie/](http://sdcpartnership.ie/)

<sup>41</sup> Recycle IT [www.recycleit.ie/](http://www.recycleit.ie/)

<sup>42</sup> Recreate Ireland [recreate.ie/](http://recreate.ie/)



Maria Flanagan, Community Partner Lead, An Cosán Virtual Community College

[Maria Flanagan explained how An Cosán is designing and delivering training support to enable social enterprise development at a local level and contributing to networking, clustering and activation of new social enterprises]

Maria Flanagan said she was humbled to be in the room with so many peers and ‘amazing social enterprises’ and gladdened to see so many women represented which is indicative of a strong movement forward. She introduced An Cosán Virtual Community College<sup>43</sup> as a unique social enterprise rooted in the extraordinary dream of two visionary women, Dr Ann Louise Gilligan and Dr Katherine Zappone (Minister for Children). The community-based education project began in 1986 in Tallaght West to support the local community through learning, leadership and enterprise. It has now become a national social enterprise through the virtual community college and is serving similar

communities that struggle with inequality and the injustice of poverty across Ireland. In relation to trends, Ms Flanagan stated that social enterprises are experiencing a current period of rapid expansion, dramatic transformation and increased importance thanks to the developing ecosystem of social innovation and social enterprise and the launch of the first social enterprise policy this year.

These developments, she said, prompt the important question of how to open social enterprise opportunities to those in marginalised and underserved communities and promote sustainable community development?

She proceeded to outline several challenges regularly met by learners and community partners. There is agreement that social enterprise supports and higher education provision are most likely to reach those with higher capacity. The groups supported by An Cosán are those most excluded from education and living on the margins of society, e.g. early school leavers; long-term unemployed; and people exiting homelessness, poverty, drug addiction or living in direct provision. ‘They’re normally seen and assumed as the beneficiaries of social enterprise. However, we know that many of the learners and organisations we work with are active citizens, leaders or volunteers in their communities and with the right supports, they have the capacity to create or work in local social enterprises. We therefore need to change our assumptions’. She continued, ‘Just as we know that your postcode shouldn’t determine your level of education, yet it does’. A HEA report shows the stark differences that exist regarding participation in higher level education as 99% of young adults in Dublin 6 progress to third level education, while 15% do so in Dublin 15. Furthermore, this can drop as low as two or three percent if you were to go to micro-levels.

In order to properly address the challenges of individuals from underserved communities, Ms Flanagan believes that a generic approach to training and education will not work and will have limited results. Limited or lack of access to resources such as finance, transport, childcare or information technology infrastructure (laptop or wifi) often blocks or limits participation in education. She also

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<sup>43</sup> An Cosán Virtual Community College [ancosanvcc.com/](https://ancosanvcc.com/)

spoke about confidence as ‘an invisible barrier’ limiting beliefs that can hold people back. Finally, it is acknowledged that without access to social capital, individuals find it really difficult to connect to society, the economy and institutions.

She brought up the opportunities afforded by innovation and technology, ‘With the right tools and supports, ordinary people can do extraordinary things’. She spoke about how providing an accessible model and structured framework, sharing awareness of the range of available supports, bringing together local resources and facilities, and introducing people to networks of support can have a transformative impact on individuals, their families and their communities.

*‘With the right tools and supports, ordinary people can do extraordinary things’.*

‘The An Cosán model reflects the best in 21st century teaching and learning on a number of fronts’:

- It provides a holistic, learner-centred, reflective, inclusive, collaborative and partnership model
- It delivers programmes through an innovative blended learning model that combines face-to-face workshops and weekly online sessions while learners engage in extensive peer-to-peer learning through online discussions, group work activities, case studies, practical examples and personal reflections
- It opens a window to examine case studies and share best practices at global, national and local levels
- It provides an opportunity for learners to analyse and discuss social enterprise development and reflect on their own experiences
- In an era of rapid digitalisation, it develops an individual’s soft and digital skill competencies, encourages personal development, growth and builds confidence
- It offers an innovative pathway from foundation level right through to accredited higher level education at Level 6 and 7 and provides continuous professional development for people who work in the sector
- It builds collaborative peer-to-peer learning opportunities, provides important mentorship and support and offers a way of building networks and social capital, thereby empowering communities.

To date, An Cosán has worked with communities in delivering social enterprise training in Mayo, Donegal, Derry, and Waterford with the support of local development companies as well as in Dublin with the support of Dublin City Council.

Admitting that An Cosán cannot do this on its own, she introduced Carlow IT as a collaborative partner that supports and accredits all of its programmes. Belief in a bottom up approach means that it works with community partners on a national level to support learners who share a similar ethos. By way of a multi-stakeholder approach to social enterprise and community development, she remarked that the ‘clustering’ mentioned by Karel Vanderpoorten can have really strong results when all the stakeholders work together to build a positive outcome for learners and communities.

Ms Flanagan spoke of the need to avoid a two-tier system in education that leaves those farthest behind even further behind. ‘To do this, we need to reimagine traditional education styles and embrace the opportunity presented by technology and invest in community education’. She also suggested the need to foster and promote a collective partnership and model to support social enterprise development. Finally, she said, ‘We must actively listen to those that we support, putting communities at the front of innovating their own solutions – nothing about us without us – and we must think of the people who are not in the room’.

#### 4.3.6 Circular Economy



Dr Sarah Miller, Chief Executive, Rediscovery Centre

[Dr Sarah Miller presented on how the Rediscovery Centre supports for social enterprise will assist them in future-proofing or scaling their businesses through learning about and adopting circular economy principles / practices]

Sarah Miller began by saying that she was humbled to be speaking in front of her peers and delighted to be involved in this exciting moment for social enterprise. The Rediscovery Centre<sup>44</sup> is an environmental social enterprise and the National Centre for the Circular Economy in Ireland. Established in late 2004, and an enterprise in its own right since 2009 with a new building as of two years ago, the centre is heavily supported by Dublin City Council as part of the Ballymun Regeneration Programme. It runs four social enterprises: Rediscover Furniture, Rediscover Fashion, Rediscover Paint and Rediscover Recycling and is a founding member of the Community Reuse Network of Ireland<sup>45</sup>.

The network supports environmental organisations and works within the space of community reuse, recycling and repair while creating wonderful jobs and opportunities for people in Ireland, according to Dr Miller. On foot of a successful community services programme, she noted the big change in managing the centre's operations as a social enterprise. It also runs the National Centre for the Circular Economy, meaning that it is a social enterprise, an Eco-store, a café, and a space to gather and host events and conferences.

It supports 45 social enterprises through its store by selling designs and products that have been created with an environmental conscience. 'That's a really important thing to be able to do for small businesses starting up,' believes Dr Miller. As the longest standing initiative, the educational programme has grown from strength to strength at primary, secondary and third levels across the country, delivering programmes to about 10,000 participants last year.

In terms of growth, the centre started off with an operational budget of €7,000 in 2005. This year, turnover is forecast to be in excess of €800,000 and 50 staff are now employed. She referenced managing operational budgets of up to €3.6 million to demonstrate the growth that can happen in a relatively short period, and at a time when social enterprise was not getting the same support as it does today. Having seen the effects of the CSP programme first-hand, she reiterated that organisations establishing themselves now are in a good place to start off with and may not have the same struggles as the centre had.

Addressing the topic of how to scale and grow, Dr Miller introduced the Circular Economy Academy, a new mentoring programme specifically for social enterprises that builds on their experience and research capabilities. The idea is to work with: established social enterprises to embrace the circular

<sup>44</sup> Rediscovery Centre [www.rediscoverycentre.ie/](http://www.rediscoverycentre.ie/)

<sup>45</sup> Community Reuse Network of Ireland [www.cрни.ie/](http://www.cрни.ie/)

economy, emerging social enterprises that are setting up environmental initiatives, and community groups that are considering setting up social enterprises. Depicting it as ‘a great and successful programme operating in the circular economy space for the moment, it is delivered in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency and definitely represents our approach to growing social enterprise in Ireland’.

In looking at various models to develop the programme, she said that while the training course with five-day module worked to a certain degree initially, the fact that enterprises were coming in at very different levels of development led to the more effective one-to-one mentoring programme being created. In terms of how the programme works, she explained that social enterprises express an interest and then attend one of the clinics around the country (in Cork, Limerick, Galway, or Dublin with more to be set up for the rest of the year) receive mentoring and are assisted to access supports.

‘The academy is really about making connections, collaborating and mobilising all of that community interest and activity to have a positive impact on both the people that we work with and our planet, which is obviously fragile at the moment’. With eight companies already participating in the (free) academy, she welcomed anyone with an interest in the clinics or becoming part of the academy to make contact and encouraged everyone to spread the word.

#### 4.3.7 Capacity Building for the Future



John Kearns, Chief Executive, Partas

[John Kearns spoke about how Partas has evolved in its social enterprise remit and in future proofing its social enterprise initiatives]

John Kearns’ contribution focused on insights from the development of a new strategy for Partas<sup>46</sup> over the previous four years. He borrowed Dr O’Broin’s use of the word ‘interstitial’ in saying how his organisation has been examining trends, believing that a convergence of social and traditional enterprise has been coming about for a long time with a lot of things happening to get to this juncture.

He described Partas as a social enterprise of about 35 years standing with a purpose of tackling unemployment through enterprise and innovation to create an inclusive and thriving community in Tallaght. It has helped about 200 people to start their own businesses, trained

another 1,000 people annually and manages four enterprise centres in the area. He said that this model had been working pretty well for a prolonged period but also pointed to this as a flaw.

The austerity years effectively forced Partas to re-evaluate its entire model as income fell by 50% (as a property management business, occupancy rates were hit) and funding reduced year on year even

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<sup>46</sup> Partas [www.partas.ie/](http://www.partas.ie/)

though demand for services increased. Wages were cut by 25% and staff were put back to a three-day week, while the ‘question of sustainability was absolutely stark’, recounted Mr Kearns.

Like so many other social enterprises, he believed it would survive because better times would return with the help of funding. Despite having lots of representatives from the area, it became apparent that lobbying was fruitless, that the organisation stood alone and that it was incumbent on itself to sort out the problem.

*‘We had to tell ourselves to grow up, to get tough and lose the poor mouth, to take a real, honest evaluation of where we were and what we were doing and to look at our true value and impact to see if we had become too every-day’.*

With an internal focus and attitude of self-preservation that goes against the nature of networking, he mentioned a couple of possibly controversial actions such as resigning from committees and the ‘golden rule’ of acting only, stop just talking and seeking to identify opportunities. They thereafter only counted actions and not meetings or talking.

In terms of opportunities, they identified three trends relevant to Partas:

1. Ongoing evolution of social enterprise – in the context of the policy launched earlier this year, he spoke of social enterprise as a moving target that keeps changing and how we must understand that through all its iterations (social innovation, social impact, ‘social anything’ or convergence with only one impact economy) the social aspect of it is growing and will remain.
2. Localism – a return, be it post-capitalism or post-globalisation to the importance of things that were local. He cited examples such as strengthening community, reducing food miles, having a sense of pride of place (that where you were from mattered and being authentic about the work you were doing there represented a new currency), connecting and interacting locally, fully utilising local resources (many of the huge resources put into the local communities over the decades lie underutilised) and sustainability.
3. ‘Hipster economy’ – the development of artisan food and craft. Microenterprises at a local level with skilled craftspeople making informed, lifestyle choices (not necessarily climbing corporate or ICT ladders but wishing to do something valuable and important to them). He pointed to quality driven demand, exemplified by the preference for sourdough over Brennan’s bread, and characterised by the demand for small quantities, non-mechanised and traditional methods, local seasonal produce where practical and the attractiveness of tourism.

Based on these three trends, and informed by a conference in the US where the key words were: ‘place, relationship, money and meaning’ and the by-line was ‘building resilient community wealth to our local economies’ Mr Kearns introduced the concept of ‘neighbourhood economics’. He explained that these trends and those key words became new drivers and central to the new Partas strategy that involved ‘taking the economy from Wall Street to the Main Street’.

In this vein Partas has developed an artisan food hub, the area’s first and only speciality coffee shop (The County Fare<sup>47</sup>) with local artisan food produce and an award-winning microbrewery (Priory Brewing<sup>48</sup>) which produces locally handcrafted beer. He stressed that this is one of its strengths as ‘people love having something from Tallaght’. While activities are in the embryonic stages, by this time next year or the year after, he envisages Partas achieving a much stronger impact.

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<sup>47</sup> The County Fare [www.facebook.com/The-County-Fare-104376580102373](https://www.facebook.com/The-County-Fare-104376580102373)

<sup>48</sup> Priory Brewing [www.priorybrewing.ie/](http://www.priorybrewing.ie/)



#### 4.3.8 Collaboration



Chris Gordon, CEO & Co-Founder, Irish Social Enterprise Network

[Chris Gordon presented on his work with Irish Social Enterprise Network and Collaboration Ireland and the importance of networking and collaboration to drive social enterprise development]

Chris Gordon was 'wowed' by the number of people in the chamber and in awe of the extraordinary support given to social enterprise over the past while. He introduced himself as the CEO of the Irish Social Enterprise Network<sup>49</sup> and former Director of Social Enterprise Northern Ireland (with Colin Jess as his boss) and expressed his deep appreciation for the brilliant work being done by the two organisations.

He spoke about using an outside perspective when shaping social enterprise development and how the network was set up a number of years ago on foot of a programme in Tallaght thanks to John Kearns and others. As part of the

programme, social enterprises were asked to join the network and from small beginnings the Irish Social Enterprise Network has gone from strength to strength. Mr Gordon highlighted the networks' three main areas of focus as: advocacy, network and education.

*'These areas are really important for us as we believe that the ones that need to speak up are social enterprises, they're leading this on the ground, they're the ones that need a voice and are the only voice that truly matters'.*

He referenced an incredible group of support organisations, social enterprises and beneficiaries that have been able to help along the way but said that it was ultimately down to social enterprises themselves to take the available opportunities.

On this topic, he acknowledged that Dublin City Council had provided some of the opportunities and that the network was ecstatic to be involved with the team of the Economic Development Office and Local Enterprise Office over the past six years. He gave particular thanks to Evanne Kilmurray of Inner City Enterprise who, along with Dublin City Council and the Department of Rural and Community Development was responsible for developing the Dublin City Social Enterprise Awards that many of the social enterprises present have been involved with.

He also named DCU and Deiric O'Broin, the Carmichael Centre, and St Andrew's Resource Centre in this regard. He reminded attendees that it wasn't a case of someone just deciding to set up a social enterprise but rather a movement that happened long beforehand with a host of people involved, maintaining that, 'It's crucial to start early and keep strong'.

In relation to the social enterprise part, he said that he was fortunate to be involved in lots of programmes such as the Social Enterprise Training Course (managed by Dublin City Council) and the

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<sup>49</sup> Irish Social Enterprise Network [www.socent.ie/](http://www.socent.ie/)

Social Enterprise Toolkit<sup>50</sup> (written by the network and co-funded by Dublin South City Partnership, Community Finance Ireland and Dublin City Council), advising those helping out or setting up a social enterprise to use this resource. These along with the Social Enterprise Management Plato Programme and other projects gave credence to the fact that there has been Trojan work done to date.

Mr Gordon urged participants to make sure that when talking about social enterprises, that there is engagement with social enterprises and asked those who had interacted with the network through the ask and advise nights, networking events, mailing list, website, phone number, clinic meetings, Plato group or membership to raise their hands. He explained that the widespread show of raised hands demonstrated that interaction was occurring and necessary, stating ‘there is nothing worse than people working in silos’.

*‘Social enterprise is stronger when we work together, collaborate and that’s what we’ve been trying to do. When you contact the network, we try to point you in the direction of the service you need to get your idea off the ground or get your organisation to the next level. Whether it’s working with local authorities or partnerships, we have a track record of it and know it works’.*

Highlighting how the network helps in various ways such as with individual social enterprises who otherwise would not have a voice, he explained that the network assisted Siobhán Cafferty from the Justice Committee who has helped develop a number of initiatives, one of which was to reduce the cost of insurance for social enterprises. While this may seem small, he believes it can be ruinous for organisations and shows that it does make a difference.

The two main areas he raised in working with social enterprises were the governance hurdle (as mentioned by Larry O’Neill) and procurement, which is a main focus of the network. ‘While it may be a boring word, it’s the most transformative’ he said. The Irish network through its European partners such as: European Network of Social Integration Enterprises<sup>51</sup> and the European Commission recently ran the Buying for Social Impact Conference<sup>52</sup>. The network has run a buy social campaign over the past few years which has culminated in the recent creation of the [www.buysocial.ie](http://www.buysocial.ie)<sup>53</sup> website for social enterprises. The site is still being developed and populated, so he encouraged social enterprises to contact the site in order to be featured on it. ‘We want people to not only think about social enterprises as positive but also to purchase from them’.

Mr Gordon finished with, ‘The time is now, it’s been an incredible journey for us over the past eight years and we deeply appreciate all of the members of the Irish Social Enterprise Network. If you’ve got network events, please do tell us about them. Lastly, remember to give the voice to social enterprise!’

*‘We want people to not only think about social enterprises as positive but also to purchase from them’.*

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<sup>50</sup> Social Enterprise Toolkit [socialenterprisetoolkit.ie/](http://socialenterprisetoolkit.ie/)

<sup>51</sup> European Network of Social Integration Enterprises [www.ensie.org/](http://www.ensie.org/)

<sup>52</sup> Buying for Social Impact – Conference [www.socent.ie/blog/2019/07/22/buying-for-social-impact-for-procurers-5th-september-2019/](http://www.socent.ie/blog/2019/07/22/buying-for-social-impact-for-procurers-5th-september-2019/)

<sup>53</sup> Buy Social [buysocial.ie/](http://buysocial.ie/)



Seán Mullan, Founder, Third Space

[Seán Mullan presented on how Third Space provides facilities to encourage collaboration and networking among social enterprises and other organisations which leads to positive outcomes]

Seán Mullan introduced Third Space<sup>54</sup> as an organisation which provides: (i) catering (ii) a café in Smithfield that doubles as a community space for networking (iii) training for those challenged to find employment (iv) employment.

He spoke of the synergy in his organisation in relation to social enterprises, networking and relationships and how it represented a microcosm of what was going on in the chamber, with relationships forming and collaborations taking place, some of which were planned but others that were spontaneous. 'It's a delight when we see that kind of thing taking place'.

Pertaining to William Parnell's categories for social enterprises, he described Third Space as a 'mongrel' that fits into a few categories. 'When we started, we didn't know that we were a social enterprise (Chris Gordon helped us find that out), but no one else knew what a social enterprise was so it didn't make that much difference.' Mr Mullan was enthused to see what was going on now, the energy coming from it and to see people connecting. In both supplying and purchasing from social enterprises, he said that it was great to witness the relationship building and collaborating that was underway. He explained that 'we also have the opportunity to influence businesses in relation to their own policies, not just in procurement but also how they see their own corporate social responsibility and to challenge them.

He remarked on his organisation's influence in connecting businesses and charities that have met or been introduced to each other at Third Space and have proceeded to collaborate on different projects. Mr Mullan advocates that this natural networking is part of the essence and lifeblood of the social enterprise ecosystem. 'As we grow and develop, I think it's really essential that we keep this and don't structure it out of existence'.

*'As we grow and develop, I think it's really essential that we keep this and don't structure it out of existence'.*

He shared a story from another Third Space Director who recently met with a customer that is a CEO of a major business in the area. This person commented that he didn't know what the organisation was doing but that it was 'really great'. He spoke of how he brought other CEOs to show them the space and tell them about it and had noticed the transformation of one of the café staff members from cautious to confident over the few months working at Third Space. Believing this story to ring true of many social enterprises, he concluded, 'While we may not be sure of what we're doing all the time, whatever it is, it's working so let's make sure it continues to work'. He hoped that the summit participants would enjoy the networking lunch being catered by Third Space.

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<sup>54</sup> Third Space [thirdspace.ie/](http://thirdspace.ie/)

## 5 Appendices

### 5.1.1 Social Enterprise Summit Contributors

Contributor	Title	Organisation	Website
Clr Racheal Batten	Summit Chairperson / Deputy Chairperson of Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee	Dublin City Council	<a href="http://www.dublincity.ie">www.dublincity.ie</a>
Paul McAuliffe	Lord Mayor of Dublin	Dublin City Council	<a href="http://www.dublincity.ie/main-menu-your-council/lord-mayor">www.dublincity.ie/main-menu-your-council/lord-mayor</a>
Karel Vanderpoorten	European Commission, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs. Unit F.2– Clusters, Social Economy and Entrepreneurship	European Commission	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/growth/content/european-social-economy-regions-2019_en">ec.europa.eu/growth/content/european-social-economy-regions-2019_en</a>
William Parnell	Assistant Secretary General	Department of Rural and Community Development	<a href="http://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-rural-and-community-development/?referrer=/">www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-rural-and-community-development/?referrer=/</a>
Mary Mac Sweeney	Deputy Head of Enterprise & Economic Development / Chairperson of Dublin City Social Enterprise Committee	Dublin City Council	<a href="http://www.dublincity.ie">www.dublincity.ie</a>
Dr Deiric O'Broin	Head of Social Enterprise	DCU / NorDubCo	<a href="http://www.dcu.ie">www.dcu.ie</a>
Colin Jess	Director	Social Enterprise Northern Ireland	<a href="http://www.socialenterpriseni.org">www.socialenterpriseni.org</a>
John Evoy	Social Enterprise Development Manager	Social Innovation Fund Ireland	<a href="http://www.socialinnovation.ie">www.socialinnovation.ie</a>
Maggie Clune	Training Services & Social Enterprise Manager	PACE / The Mugshot	<a href="http://www.paceorganisation.ie">www.paceorganisation.ie</a>
Ingrid McElroy	Community Benefit Programme Manager National Paediatric Hospital Development Board,	National Children's Hospital	<a href="http://www.newchildrenshospital.ie">www.newchildrenshospital.ie</a>
Kathleen McCann	Employment & Training Coordinator	Grangegorman Development Agency	<a href="http://www.ggda.ie">www.ggda.ie</a>
Philip Isard	Project & Office Manager	Quality Matters	<a href="http://www.qualitymatters.ie">www.qualitymatters.ie</a>
Rachel Collier	CEO & Co-Founder	Young Social Innovators	<a href="http://www.youngsocialinnovators.ie">www.youngsocialinnovators.ie</a>
Larry O' Neill	Chairperson of ILDN Social Economy Working Group / CEO South Dublin County Partnership	ILDN / South Dublin County Partnership	<a href="http://www.ildn.ie">www.ildn.ie</a>
Maria Flanagan	Community Partner Lead	An Cosán Virtual Community College	<a href="http://www.ancosanvcc.com">www.ancosanvcc.com</a>
Dr Sarah Miller	Chief Executive	Rediscovery Centre	<a href="http://www.rediscoverycentre.ie">www.rediscoverycentre.ie</a>
John Kearns	Chief Executive	Partas	<a href="http://www.partas.ie">www.partas.ie</a>
Chris Gordon	CEO & Co-Founder	Irish Social Enterprise Network	<a href="http://www.socent.ie">www.socent.ie</a>
Seán Mullan	Founder	Third Space	<a href="http://www.thirdspace.ie">www.thirdspace.ie</a>

### 5.1.2 Key Statements, Facts and Figures

Lord Mayor of Dublin, Paul McAuliffe

- It is great to see the council chamber being used for the Social Enterprise Summit to convene stakeholders from different parts of the city to discuss and debate outside of the strict protocols of politics. The summit is the fourth in a series that has covered topics such as Brexit, infrastructure, and recruitment for apprenticeships.
- As we head into the coming months and years, social enterprises are really going to be at the heart of the way that we can deliver public services, the way that we can develop community, and the way that communities and the economy can come together.
- Social enterprise is a key way that communities and areas in a city like Dublin, can be improved by bringing about economic benefits such as job creation, community benefits such as social inclusion and education, and policy benefits such as service delivery and active citizenship.
- As well as facilitating dialogue between leading stakeholders regarding social enterprise development, the summit is an opportunity to highlight challenges and opportunities for various social enterprise and stakeholder representatives. It is intended that collaboration would occur and develop between attendees and their organisations. The summit is a formal opportunity to connect and engage with policymakers.
- Strengthening the regional social economy is key to the European Commission and European Union and they are striving ahead in terms of how social enterprises can benefit society; having Mr Vanderpoorten present underscores this.
- Dublin City Council through the Economic Development Office, plays a central role in social enterprise. Development. I think we're a leader in how social enterprise is delivered in the city and how it's supported but that doesn't mean that we don't need to go further, we absolutely do!
- By making your contribution, you're having a direct impact on how policy is formed in this area (through the Outcomes Report that is to be circulated to policymakers and stakeholders).

Karel Vanderpoorten, European Commission, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

- With the new financial programming period approaching, social enterprise should be proactive in the process. The European Social Fund (ESF) is locally organised with management authorities based at national, regional or even local level. With operational programmes currently being assembled and partnership agreements with all different kinds of sectors being negotiated, it's very important for social enterprises and networks to reach out to the management authorities of the ESF to claim their presence in them.
- The European Commission (EC) Fund, a financial instrument for investment capital for social enterprises, is a pilot programme that will be transferred into Invest EU that manages all of the financial instruments, with one element dedicated to social investment and skills. The current EC will most likely be enlarged quite extensively so it's very important to create some kind of intermediate level of social finance. Please be proactive and stimulate the social finance people that are able to provide access to it and change these guarantees into loans for the sector.
- There should be new and innovative means of financing social enterprises; further to 'pay for result' and 'social impact bonds', we should be open to new ideas and not only listen to these new proposals but also put forward other proposals.
- Match funding, where citizens, enterprises and government raise one euro respectively, is an interesting alternative where everyone endorses the investment that is done commonly; it can

leverage much more than by a Government grant, citizen or enterprise investment alone. It's quite advanced but we should dare to explore these kinds of new financial methods.

- The area of skills is not easy for social enterprises because of its broad nature. Regarding skills for WISE (work integration social enterprises – enterprises working with people with disabilities and people with no direct access to the regular labour market), the Commission is pushing for a specific programme because working with this cohort demands other types of skills and HR management to adapt processes to include them in the labour market, give them proper labour assignments and improve job satisfaction. The Commission is seeking members with experience in these specific skills to design tailored training programmes to teach managers, job coaches and others how to develop their enterprises and to support them.
- For basic business skills, the use of the ESF is very important because the absence of a specific training or subsidy line for social enterprise does not mean that other lines cannot be accessed. Try also to reach out to the regular training lines in the ESF and to train your managers and employees with these ones rather than only adhering to those for social enterprises.

William Parnell, Assistant Secretary General, Department of Rural and Community Development

- While social enterprises have been in existence in Ireland for decades, the publication of the new policy signals a new phase of social enterprise development, by creating an enabling environment for social enterprises to grow and contribute to our future economic and social progress.
- The new national social enterprise policy for Ireland published in July is a four-year policy as part of a suite of Department of Rural and Community Development initiatives to support the full range of organisations providing services to communities or to tackle social or societal issues. The other two documents are a strategy to support the community and voluntary sector in Ireland (published) and the forthcoming national volunteering strategy.
- No two countries define a social enterprise in the same way due to differences in geographies and cultures. For the Irish policy context, social enterprise is defined as:
  1. An enterprise whose objective is to achieve a social, societal or environmental impact rather than maximizing profit for its owners or shareholders;
  2. It pursues its objectives by trading on an on-going basis through the provision of goods and / or services and by reinvesting any surpluses into achieving social objectives; and
  3. It is governed in a fully accountable and transparent manner and is independent of the public service.
- This definition, consistent with EU definitions is helpful in providing a shared understanding but does not diminish the spectrum of social enterprises existing in Ireland. The range of social enterprises that all play an important role include:
  - WISE (Work Integration Social Enterprises) that mostly work with disadvantaged groups in providing education and training to help them integrate into the workplace,
  - Those that help other enterprises to develop,
  - Deficient demand social enterprises that fill a gap in where there isn't a large enough market for commercial provision,
  - Environmentally focused social enterprises
  - Those adapting a cooperative model but refraining from distributing profits.
- Social innovators and entrepreneurs are an important part of the ecosystem, as their initial ideas often form the genesis of social enterprises.
- The policy was published to recognise that social enterprises deliver important economic, social and environmental returns, particularly in Ireland where there is significant potential for growth. The

spectrum of social enterprises range from some who are very entrepreneurial-minded (but always putting purpose over profit) to others that are perhaps less so but are providing a crucial social or community service.

- Social enterprise has been very poorly understood in Ireland until now and has been under the radar with limited data on its scale, scope and impact so it's been difficult to access supports and to expand and grow. For many years, social enterprise stakeholders were advocating for a policy and we were lagging behind other EU Member States in not having one.
- There was also fragmentation of responsibility for social enterprise across Government but the specific policy responsibility now rests with the Department of Rural and Community Development (established two years ago) and Minister Michael Ring has a thorough understanding of it.
- The publication of the policy is trying to provide a framework to enable enterprises to grow and is based around three objectives:
  1. Building awareness of social enterprise
  2. Growing and strengthening social enterprise
  3. Achieving better policy alignment.

Examples of implementing these objectives include:

- (1) Some of the commitments include developing an awareness strategy so the general public and public bodies know what social enterprises are, sharing best practice through an annual social enterprise conference on 21st November (International Social Enterprise Day), and working with education and research bodies to see how they can help in supporting social enterprise development.
- (2) Providing the business supports (like business skills) is a key objective along with information on financing, working to support social enterprises in public procurement, and looking at the existing legal forms for social enterprise to examine if there is a deficit.
- (3) It is important to try to create a better understanding across Government of the interaction between social enterprise and Government which is being progressed for example through the inclusion and referencing of social enterprise in various policies. In facing new challenges in the years ahead, social enterprise will be well placed to find solutions to policy issues.
- Regarding local authority roles, Dublin City Council has been a real leader with its Dublin City Social Enterprise Awards and the local enterprise offices have a role to play along with the context of public procurement.
- The policy recognises the value and impact of social enterprises, includes 26 specific and time-bound commitments and complements other policy initiatives. It is intended to be delivered in partnership with the sector so an implementation group with at least 50% stakeholders from the sector is being established.
- Implementation has begun, through the launch (and assessments) of a training and mentoring call for proposals; the implementation group; a Social Enterprise Research Fellowship in conjunction with the Irish Research Council; the upcoming conference; recent dialogue with the Higher Education Institute; imminent funding announcements and engagement at an international level.

Mary Mac Sweeney, Deputy Head of Enterprise and Economic Development / Chairperson Dublin City Social Enterprise Committee, Dublin City Council

- Every representative is playing a different and important part but there is definitely a strength in the collective; the summit is a great testament to what can be done collectively despite everyone's challenges and resource limits and is a solid platform to progress from.
- In working with start-ups and scaling companies through the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), the Economic Development Office of Dublin City Council (DCC) recognised that a lot of the supports that work well for those businesses would also work well for social enterprises. Through the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee, the local authority looked at ways to support the recognition of the important role of social enterprises at ground level and to celebrate that. Having Third Space a local social enterprise café to cater at the summit and other events is another way to deliver on the national policy regarding raising awareness.
- The council is supported by the Local Government Reform Act 2014 which states that the promotion of economic development includes such things as creating and sustaining jobs, supporting enhancement of local innovation capacity and supporting local enterprise. It states that the promotion of local and community development includes supporting social enterprise, social capital, volunteering and active citizenship.
- A policy objective in the Dublin City Development Plan (until 2022) is to: promote and facilitate Dublin as a hub for social enterprise in order to help address some of the city's critical needs; while the Local Economic and Community Plan (until 2021) includes an objective to: promote and support the development of social innovation and enterprise.
- As one of 31 local authorities, Dublin City Council is happy to work across the LEO network nationally and with other local authorities to learn from what they're doing and to share our practice with them.
- The Dublin City Social Enterprise Committee has been organising the Dublin City Social Enterprise Awards for the past five years to celebrate the great work of social enterprises. The committee has produced a report which details awardees and the wider impact of the scheme so far.
- Regarding capacity building, Dublin City Council has worked and developed initiatives with various stakeholders such as An Cosán Virtual Community College, Technological University Dublin, Plato Business Network, Partnerships and the Local Enterprise Office. DCC also assists through LEO grants and looking at market opportunities for social enterprises to be able to sell their wares in a mainstream capacity.
- The Council is working with other sections internally, e.g. with the South Central Area Office (how the Liberties could become a strong location for social enterprises to develop) and Rialto (with active social enterprises successfully tendering for contracts at the new National Children's Hospital). Dublin City Council is happy to utilise its network and opportunities to further support the growth of the social enterprise sector.
- DCC is open to joining in conversations with the European Commission on the possibilities brought about by blockchain, Artificial Intelligence and the use of technology within the social economy and to actively share learning to build on what is a strong foundation for social enterprise.



- There is a leadership question for the sector as a whole or the broader social economy about building the social economy in Ireland, the role of social enterprise as system change leaders and where to go from here.
- There are three macro-factors around what has worked in driving the development of the social economy in other smaller countries in the EU and in the western world.
  1. A supportive or enabling policy framework: we now have what would be considered a very good public policy framework for the social economy in Ireland.
  2. Engaged public agencies: the cascade effect across parts of Ireland, particularly driven by local authorities means that a lot has been accomplished. There is public agency support through Dublin City University and other public higher education institutes north and south that are operating together under a Social Economy Research Network of Ireland. Many academics with very different perspectives are beginning to collaborate around the research agenda and are interested in the UN concept of the social and solidarity economy and the more European concept of the social economy. There is a variety of support activities by the public institutions as well as local authorities, due to leadership from the Department.
  3. Sectoral accord: other small countries with a built social economy have a sectoral accord, where the components of the broad social economy have a clear idea of what they want or at least a shared understanding of the path they wish to follow.
- Social economy in Ireland is Irish, European, and unusual in a number of important ways. Most European social economy networks have older siblings of the movement (e.g. the credit union and cooperative movements) as drivers of the social economy and social enterprise development. Not in Ireland's case, where the broad social economy has very little understanding of itself, and while unusual, it can be addressed but has ramifications for how we proceed.
- Shared leadership has historically been limited – an issue for the social enterprise sector, cooperatives, and the credit unions as there is very little interaction in a sustained, engaged manner, something that will hopefully be addressed in the coming years.
- The famous sociologist Eric Olin Wright spoke about building the global social economy and looking at the most successful national or regional social economies, where they've analysed the economic structure of their area (locality, region or country), identified gaps between mainstream delivery and tried to fill these interstitial spaces. Quebec was cited as an example where this took place and the provincial social economy has subsequently benefited from sustained development.
- It's about analysis, you need to work with people that are in the analysis business. The challenge for a public university is to work with social enterprise organisations to help analyse the economy and gaps to see how social enterprise leaders can fill these.
- The social economy can grow, fall, expand, and contract, with some whole sectors disappearing and collapsing because the world has moved on. In the last year or two, there has been significant change and momentum towards a better understanding of where we want to be and where social enterprises can succeed and flourish.
- The Raiffeisen banks that characterised the strong social banking system of the 20s and early 30s, the golden age in Ireland, were driven out due to the lack of a supportive policy framework and a struggling post-independence State that had an orthodox economic view dominating policymaking. These financial cooperatives found it very difficult to succeed and this didn't change until the 50s.
- I don't think we're going back to the halcyon days of the 30s, but I believe that we live in extremely exciting times where we may see ourselves at the next social enterprise summit in five years' time when the Dublin regional social economy will be transformed.

Colin Jess, Director, Social Enterprise Northern Ireland

- Social Enterprise Northern Ireland (SENI) was the first winner of the Social Economy Work Programme (issued by the Department of the Economy in 2012) and has held it since through two tenders. It is a membership organisation aimed at (i) raising awareness of the sector across political parties as well as the public, private and educational sectors, and (ii) developing relationships, stakeholders and networks through forums to ensure that people outside the sector understand it and support its members. There has been quite a lot of growth despite the lack of Government in Northern Ireland.
- Activity-wise, the organisation presents to the Social Economy Policy Group (comprising representatives from the Departments of Health, Justice, Finance, Education in Northern Ireland and the Probation Board) every six months to give sectoral updates which provides a great opportunity to profile the activities of SENI.
- The organisation met with the Department of Rural and Community Affairs regarding the national social enterprise policy before its publication and has developed a very important relationship with it. I'm a great believer that we can work together going forward irrespective of what happens over the next couple of weeks as we'll still be doing what we do and we can learn from each other.
- The organisation responds to political consultations, e.g. strongly asserting the need for social economy to be recognised in Northern Ireland at a recent DUP meeting and attending the Sinn Fein round table as well as all five political conferences so as to show no political bias.
- The relationship with the Permanent Secretaries is very important, and is particularly good with the Permanent Secretary of Education and Economy and the Permanent Secretary of Finance, Sue Grey. Ms Grey got the process going for the dormant accounts and the organisation is now talking to its members about how they want the funds to be released.
- On the topic of social value and procurement legislation, while Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK without a Social Value Act, directives can be put in place to make progress.
- Regarding interaction with the educational sector, SENI has strong relationships with Ulster University and Queen's University. A collaborative programme with Belfast Metropolitan College highlighted the thorough understanding of social enterprise held by millennials (they are a more socially responsible cohort than older age groups). As part of the programme, a speed-dating event resulted in 64 students spending a half-day once a week, learning about social enterprise through on-the-ground experience as well as textbooks.
- Engagement through British Council meetings has fostered excellent relationships internationally with South-East Asia, notably Malaysia, Cambodia, Hong Kong and the Philippines. Northern Ireland is developing a reputation in those parts as being an area where social enterprise has helped to deliver post-conflict resolution.
- 129 people attended the 2015 awards evening competing across 12 different categories compared to 470 this year, which is attributed to the increased growth of the sector and private and public sector engagement.
- WISE in the context of Northern Ireland stands for Women in Social Enterprise and this year's NatWest WISE100 nominations saw seven or eight female nominees compared to just one last year, again highlighting sectoral growth.
- Comparative figures from a 2013 PWC report (including: social enterprises, voluntary and community sector) and a 2018 version (including: social enterprises alone) show the growth in organisations, employees, turnover (just shy of £1 billion) and economic contribution. With a contribution of £625 million, we think we're a reasonable contributor to the Northern Ireland economy and we need to be listened to.

- Looking at how established social enterprises are, 33% are of 21 or more years old and include credit unions and cooperatives. The largest subsector is education [32%] while the challenge remains to grow areas like retail [14%] by getting into supply chains of the public and private sector.
- Regarding the profitability of social enterprise in Northern Ireland, 75% were profitable, 12% broke even and 13% made a loss. Research into the age of leadership of social enterprises, showed that over 70% are led by those between 45 and 64 years old while 2% are aged 16 to 24 years old. This is a future focus and will be among the reasons for working with Belfast Metropolitan College and Queen's University.
- This year, Amy Clint was appointed a young ambassador for SENI. She runs Books by Stellas, a social enterprise that creates books for children with autism and their families; for each book sold (at £4.99), she donates one to a primary school library in Northern Ireland.
- 43% of social enterprises in Northern Ireland are led by women compared to 41% in the UK and 61% in Scotland, a topic that Queen's University is conducting research on and is a topic that SENI is proud to be helping to lead the way.
- Social enterprise activities range from creating employment and addressing financial exclusion to providing affordable housing. At 61%, the large majority of organisations have a staff of one to ten, showing the significance of their impact. The challenge is how to help these organisations to grow, create more jobs and employ more people.
- Barriers to social enterprise include access to finance and reduction in Government and EU funding. Organisations are doing remarkably well in the absence of Government support in Northern Ireland. Among the enablers of social enterprise are business and strategic planning, for example, how can we help them to be more business focused and strategic and how can we assist with their marketing, tendering or procurement skills to help them to grow.
- Recommendations from the report include
  1. Gaining clarity around the definition of social enterprise
  2. Supporting business skills to assist with increasing income from trade, and
  3. Supporting young people to consider social enterprise as a career of choice and not something that they fall into when everything else fails.

John Evoy, Social Enterprise Development Manager, Social Innovation Fund Ireland

- Social Innovation Fund Ireland (SIFI) is a type of match fund, i.e. it sources funds from corporates that are matched by the Department of Rural and Community Development; identifies the best and most scalable and innovative social enterprises in Ireland; and invests cash as well as other non-financial supports in them.
- IPB is a mutual insurance company and the main corporate funder which donated a total of €1.6 million over the past two years and committed to another two-year contract. The main model is to invest cash grants and non-financial supports in social enterprises.
- With short programme timeframes of typically six months, the fund cannot deliver all of those supports within that period but rather can give the social enterprises three or four of those supports as solid building blocks to enable them to continue growing or make them 'investment ready'.
- The building blocks that SIFI provides are
  1. A clear understanding of the impact that a social enterprise is trying to deliver to society or to the environment and an understandable and accessible way of measuring that (this is really difficult)
  2. A thorough review of the business model or strategic plan to ensure sustainability and growth.

3. Pitching and storytelling, we try to support organisations to become really good at consistently telling their story to customers, funders or Government agencies. It's a challenge as social enterprises are complex & trying to do a lot of things so it's hard to do this in a clear, succinct way.
  - Evidence of the model's success is shown through the fact that SIFI invested €400,000 into social enterprises in 2018 and proceeded to invest a further €975,000 in that cohort of social enterprises.
  - The other challenge is one of scale and although scaling and replicating is not for every social enterprise, when they do start to grow they need a different set of supports. Growth capital can be hard to access so this is an area that SIFI lends it support to.
  - Ireland has now got so much to offer other countries in terms of what we've learnt. The social enterprise sector has been around for a long time but the momentum that's gathered in the last few years is phenomenal and it's nice to be able to tell that story.

Maggie Clune, Training Services & Social Enterprise Manager, PACE / The Mugshot

- The social mission of PACE is working with people who are coming out of prison or under a probation order to get them back into employment (it is well documented that those with a criminal record struggle to find employment). While PACE traditionally focused on training, feedback informed them that irrespective of the training, this cohort still couldn't get jobs.
- They therefore realised that they needed to start creating jobs through an appropriate model such as a social enterprise. They established a social enterprise in 2014, at a time when there was no one department looking after policy to help them get off the ground. The lack of a policy created ambiguity and fear.
- In the early years, a few key people gave advice on how to set themselves up that made all the difference as it was difficult to find any straight answers to practical questions, such as how would working as a business impact on the benefits of those working under Community Employment Programme (CE) schemes or were there VAT implications for reaching a certain threshold and what would the subsequent impact on the charity status be? The board was reluctant to make money or profit due to the ambiguity but then how could the enterprise grow?
- The first sign of a meaningful policy was through the Department of Justice strategy, 'A New Way Forward', which was extremely welcome and its implementation by Siobhán Cafferty [Social Enterprise Project Manager, Department of Justice and Equality] was central to it. This strategy helped with the goal of progression by getting people into the social enterprise, training them, updating their CVs, and putting them into a paid working environment to build confidence and self-esteem in order to attain a standard mainstream job.
- The new national policy is pivotal in removing ambiguity for organisations like PACE, which might not have gone down the road of social enterprise as it was too unclear. The three policy objectives are fantastic, it's pretty basic stuff and very doable and there should be no reason for not implementing it. Going forward, if the strategy is implemented, it will definitely help us grow in this sector.
- On supports to create jobs, PACE was very lucky to be recipients of Community Services Programme (CSP) funding and was working with Pobal. The Plato Social Enterprise Programme of the Economic Development Office (Dublin City Council) provided learning, advice and networking opportunities.
- PACE operates the social enterprise called The Mugshot which is a mobile coffee cart. Dublin City Council is one of the organisation's biggest supporters and biggest customers. The Council has put them in touch with local community development officers, spread the word among community groups and promoted their organisation as a good quality and service organisation.
- The best support that anyone can give a social enterprise is to use their services and buy their products because that's what's going to help us create work.

Ingrid McElroy, Community Benefit Programme Manager, National Paediatric Hospital Development Board, National Children's Hospital

- The new National Children's Hospital will be one of the finest children's hospitals in the world and is being built in an area of the city where more than half of the electoral divisions are classified as disadvantaged.
- Recognising this from the start back in 2014, the National Paediatric Hospital Development Board and Children's Health Ireland examined how to embed the principles of social value and social sustainability into both the construction and operation of the hospital.
- The wide-ranging and ambitious community development programme developed in partnership with statutory agencies and community interests including Dublin City Council, is based on four themes:
  1. Maximise employment and training opportunities
  2. Support local business, particularly small and social enterprise
  3. Raise aspirations through education
  4. Build on community health and well-being.
- The requirements of construction and healthcare are two areas that are probably particularly difficult for the social enterprise sector to break into in terms of the scale, specialisation and centralised nature of government procurement.
- The hospital is very proud to be one of the first state agencies to use reserved contracts for social enterprises. This has resulted in contract wins by the F2 Centre in Rialto for office cleaning, the Arch Café for in-house catering and We Make Good and PALLS Limerick collaboratively for the design and fabrication of bespoke frames to display artwork of children attending the new paediatric outpatient and urgent care centre in CHI Connolly. It is hoped to replicate this in the new urgent care centre in Tallaght and the new Children's Hospital at St James.
- The clinical staff of Children's Health Ireland collaborated with the social enterprise STEAM to co-develop a very exciting and innovative healthcare science education programme for primary school students.
- Most of these contracts are very small which is where the vast majority of opportunities for social enterprises will probably be. What's important is the potential leverage it can give a social enterprise; it's always important to think about the springboard effect and using this as a way of getting another tender.
- Social enterprise should strongly consider collaboration in public procurement by forming new partnerships or consortia so that a number of small organisations can bid together. There can be a number of social enterprises operating in similar fields, that are often geographically close so it would be lovely if they could pool together and complement each others' services.
- The vast majority of items and goods required by a hospital are highly specialised or of a very large scale so try to think outside the box when coming up with business ideas; rather than thinking about the hospital's services and needs, think about what might be of interest to staff, children, families, visitors or even the supply chain. Where things are outsourced, like cleaning or catering contracts, you can think about how you might supply something to those subcontractors.
- While the issue of social mission is vital, it is equally important not to forget that it is a business and you need to be able to deliver what was procured in terms of quality, efficiency and cost. Enterprises should not bid for contracts they are not in a position to deliver on, but conversely should not be afraid to bid (and to avail of supports). They should not wait for a tender, but pick up the phone to people like herself.

Kathleen McCann, Employment and Training Coordinator, Grangegorman Development Agency

- The Grangegorman Development Agency is a national flagship project on economic and social renewal in Dublin's North inner city, an area of significant disadvantage.
- The project involves a huge 73-acre site where a single campus for the former DIT, now TU Dublin will be built and residential mental health facilities and community care for the HSE are being built. This has been a site of psychiatric care since 1815. There is a new Educate Together primary school for the local community to access and use and ultimately this is a new open quarter and the project is 'stitching this whole area back into the city'.
- The Grangegorman Labour and Learning Forum (interagency group) was established a decade ago and comprises statutory, community and voluntary organisations working in the area to leverage maximum benefit from the development for the people living in the area. TU Dublin, the HSE, CDETB, Intreo, Dublin City Council, Dublin Chamber of Commerce, Dublin North West Area Partnership, North-West Inner City Network and local schools are members. Key aims are to ensure that employment, education, training, business, enterprise and other opportunities from the project will benefit and improve the quality of life for those surrounding communities.
- Encouraging and facilitating effective interagency cooperation and collaboration has been very important for successes, by identifying gaps and seeking to broker solutions, looking to mainstream initiatives where possible by getting things started and handing them over to willing hands.
- The Grangegorman Employment Charter puts a strong focus on local employment. This requires percentages and targets of new hires to comprise people living in Dublin 7, 1 and surrounding areas and is written as a clause in tender documents and included as part of the evaluation.
- When the Charter was launched in 2012, the live register was about 16% but was much higher in the Grangegorman area where youth unemployment was over 30%. While unemployment has come down over the years, there is a key role for social enterprises to create employment opportunities for the 5% that continue to be distanced from the labour market.
- The agency was involved in developing and partnering with the TU Dublin Access to Apprenticeship Programme and developing opportunities for young people to take part in apprenticeships with Grangegorman contractors.
- Most of the agency's education and training has been labour market based but not exclusively, as they have engaged in Age Friendly activities, Intergenerational Learning, and the ABC area-based childhood anti-poverty project. For business and enterprise, a subgroup of the Labour and Learning Forum includes the Local Enterprise Office, Inner City Enterprise (ICE), Innovate Dublin and the Smithfield and Stoneybatter Business Association. The agency has also organised a number of networking events to engage with local business associations in areas characterised by very small or micro businesses.
- The agency is looking at opportunities on the demand side; the GDA and construction phase may well go on for most of the next decade and TU Dublin and the HSE are major stakeholders in the operational phase of the development.
- On the supply side, the agency is looking at supports for capacity building in the wider environment and a possible interagency approach, with some possibilities around reserved contracts, subcontracting by bigger contractors and buddying, and supports from TU Dublin by academic staff and students working with social enterprises.
- The many challenges include the public procurement process and the presence of public-private partnerships on these developments. The opportunities for social enterprise within this should be explored. The creation of TU Dublin that extended into Blanchardstown and Tallaght created other challenges around the contracting piece.
- All those present are invited to the Grangegorman Business Breakfast focused on Social Enterprise on October 22nd, aimed at helping social enterprises to get to know each other.

Philip Isard, Project and Office Manager, Quality Matters

- We Make Good is Ireland's first collective social enterprise brand which operates under an umbrella of 16 WISE organisations that are working together to share their expertise, challenges and to develop a collective response.
- They support a group of WISE organisations to develop products in collaboration with Irish designers, to market and advertise those products so they can enter the hands of consumers in Ireland, to secure and promote B2B contracts, and to support growth and advocate for the development of the WISE sector.
- The 16 different partners working with We Make Good, work with people including: travellers, migrants, people in contact with the criminal justice system and people with disabilities. The partners are extremely effective at working with people from these difficult backgrounds and helping them into employment. We share a common vision: to gradually and hopefully improve the opportunities that exist for these people in Ireland.
- Three key challenges are:
  1. Businesses don't really understand social enterprises and don't believe that they can create or produce the same quality product as they do
  2. WISE organisations don't have the resources to afford the level of sales, marketing and brand expertise they need
  3. WISE organisations that do have strong business models see a role and opportunity for increased state subsidisation.
- The first solution (he introduced) is the partnership between We Make Good and Cairde Enterprises (PALLS) where the manufacturers made an exceptional jump from designing and producing beautiful, handmade wooden cutting boards to incredibly technical, large format frames for the National Children's Hospital. We appreciate the hospital's support and it illustrates the growth that can happen at an individual or local level to deliver high quality products that are on time and that tell an important social story.
- While there is effectiveness in working with these disadvantaged individuals, there is also help required with the challenges around their expertise, be it design, photography, technical production, prototyping, sourcing, or public relations. We Make Good is proposing a collective approach to allow them to be freed up to do the work that they're there to do and collectively find ways to support this group of organisations. We need to provide supports that respond to the challenges they have in the most resource effective way for them.
- A second solution is a collective brand or single identity for the 16 social enterprises from across the country, like the Wild Atlantic Way. We Make Good has tried extremely hard to manage product quality and quality control, wishing to avoid a scenario where a poor quality product operating under a single identity creates a negative reputation, so quality for us is a top tier issue.
- Thirdly, strong business models, characteristic of the social enterprises, Mr Isard's organisation works with. There would ideally be more social enterprises in the retail space as these are organisations that rely on trade. There is an important role for state subsidisation to help those organisations deliver training and support disadvantaged individuals so that they can enter the labour market and find full-time, meaningful employment for their skills.
- We Make Good opened a pop-up shop in Smithfield almost a year ago and all are invited to the launch of its new store on Fade Street in Dublin 2 on October 24th. With a range of products from over 16 social enterprises, we'd love for you to buy something but, most importantly we'd love you to see that each of these social enterprises is delivering something that is extremely high quality and tells a significant story about growth here in Ireland, so we want you to share in that story too.

Rachel Collier, CEO and Co-Founder, Young Social Innovators

- If you want to build capacity for the social economy, education must play a major role in that. Since 2001, Young Social Innovators (YSI) has been designing and implementing programmes in the second level education system for young people to engage in social innovation and entrepreneurship.
- The number of teenagers currently involved in social innovation and entrepreneurship in Irish schools is approximately 15,000 and the social aspect of innovation and entrepreneurship is very important to Generation Z (16 to 21 year olds).
- Amárach research reveals that 40% of Generation Z selected 'making a difference in the world' as an indicator of success in life above other considerations such as having a house, money, job or loving relationship. 26% expressed a desire to set up their own businesses. These statistics combined illustrate that this is a generation that is ready to build a social economy like no other generation before them.
- Although about 5% of our teenage population are engaged in social innovation, this is not good enough. You need to invest in social innovation and entrepreneurial learning and practice. The pedagogy works well and there is high engagement of schools but we need it to be systematic and throughout the country.
- YSI's most recent project considers how to focus on an area and build social innovation and entrepreneurship capacity among its young population. She suggested clustering schools, building capacity among educators and helping them to introduce programmes to their junior and senior cycle students and support them to develop their innovations, entrepreneurship and social enterprises. Teenagers are well able to set up profitable social enterprises and they should be let in even if they're under 18.
- In conjunction with Dublin City Council, YSI is assigning a regional officer in social innovation to engage schools in Dublin city and build from there. Education alone cannot achieve this, so as well as the schools, it's about looking outwards to the community and building the necessary networks from the business community, local government, civic society, education and academia'.
- The skills in social innovation are very like business skills in social enterprises as they are all the same skills that are being built up. Projects developed by 15 or 16 year-old students include a publishing house, country area-mapping, a film festival, water conservation, various apps and solar panel installation mechanisms. It's really important to concentrate attention on teenagers, to give them the opportunities and the mechanisms, and to create new ways in education that will engage them.
- To help progress this, YSI is setting up a new Social Innovation and Learning Lab in DCU to share learning and conduct facilitation with young people.
- There is a new generation emerging which represents a very strong pipeline coming from the teenage population into third level and beyond to build social enterprises. Investing in young people in local communities really does produce a new kind of economy and outlook.



Larry O' Neill, Chairperson ILDN Social Economy Working Group / CEO South Dublin County Partnership

- The Northern Ireland description of social economy mirrors what is happening in the South bar one factor, that 40% of the social economy projects are involved in childcare due to the lack of State support.
- The populations in the community childcare sector have come together to provide a much-needed service to allow females in the main to go back into the labour force. For example, Dublin West Childcare (now called Start Brite) had five childcare units as separate legal companies in disadvantaged areas of south county Dublin, three of which were in danger of closing. South Dublin County Partnership brought the five together and radically reduced the overhead costs of running childcare. The important point was that there was a societal impact and it was no mistake that this is in the first part of the social enterprise definition.
- One of the drivers of bringing the five CEOs in the room together was his colleague Emily Smart. This significant piece of work was an example of what could be done.
- A major issue for social economy projects is governance; we cannot get Directors onto boards to take responsibility due to the 67 pieces of legislation, in addition to the rules and regulations governing childcare. There should be training and mentoring on the governance side, something that requires hand-holding for a long period of time, because it's vitally important to get governance correct.
- The Clondalkin Community Recycling Initiative (CCRI), now called Recycle IT was near to closing down before the Partnership got involved and it now offers the last door-to-door collection of white goods in Europe. There's also an environmental impact as it avoids the indiscriminate dumping of these goods in Dublin city and adjoining counties. Recycle IT employs nearly 20 people, most of whom would not have gotten employment if not for the social economy, so there is a societal impact in two ways.
- There is superb success in saving end-of-life materials from going to the dump through the Recreate project, a partnership with Early Childhood Ireland that took two years to deliver and that has a huge educational and recreational value as well as its employment of those that may not have found jobs otherwise.
- These three projects have got the governance right. If a project collapses due to poor governance rather than natural progression, it's a tragedy for all those involved.
- It's great to have a senior minister in charge of social economy and a policy in place for the first time, but there needs to be something developed for fledglings or new start-ups in lots of cases.
- We welcome the implementation group but regret that none of the ILDN operators (practitioners or companies) is on it. The State, government and funding bodies should take the ILDN operators seriously given how far they have come without support. There is an opportunity to take on board what these people are saying because they are in the know. With due respect to Karel Vanderpoorten and Deiric O'Broin, who are familiar with the framework and academic sides respectively, it is important to look at how that impacts the people on the ground.

Maria Flanagan, Community Partner Lead, An Cosán Virtual Community College

- An Cosán Virtual Community College is a unique social enterprise rooted in the extraordinary dream of Dr Ann Louise Gilligan and Dr Katherine Zappone. The community-based education project began in 1986 in Tallaght West to support the local community through learning, leadership and enterprise.
- It has now become a national social enterprise through the virtual community college and is serving similar communities who struggle with inequality and the injustice of poverty across Ireland.
- There is a current period of rapid expansion, dramatic transformation and increased importance thanks to the developing ecosystem of social innovation and social enterprise and the launch of the

first-ever social enterprise policy this year. These developments prompt the important question of how to open social enterprise opportunities to those in marginalised and underserved communities and promote sustainable community development?

- There are several challenges regularly met by learners and community partners. There is agreement that social enterprise supports and higher education provision are most likely to reach those with higher capacity. The groups supported by An Cosán are those most excluded from education and living on the margins of society, e.g. early school leavers; long-term unemployed; and people exiting homelessness, poverty, drug addiction or living in direct provision. They're normally seen and assumed as the beneficiaries of social enterprise. However, we know that many of the learners and organisations we work with are active citizens and community leaders or volunteers and with the right supports have the capacity to create or work in local social enterprises so we need to change our assumptions.
- A HEA report shows the stark differences in participation in higher level education – while 99% of young adults in Dublin 6 progress to third level education, that drops as low as just 15% in Dublin 15 and can drop another two or three percent if you were to go to micro-levels.
- To properly address the challenges of individuals from underserved communities, a generic approach to training and education will not work and will have limited results. (i) Limited or no access to resources, such as finance, transport, childcare, or information technology infrastructure, often blocks or limits participation in education; (ii) confidence limits beliefs and holds people back; and (iii) without access to social capital, individuals find it really difficult to connect to society, the economy and institutions.
- With the right tools and supports offered by innovation and technology, ordinary people can do extraordinary things. Providing an accessible model and structured framework, sharing awareness of the range of available supports, bringing together local resources and facilities, and introducing people to networks of support can have a transformative impact on individuals, their families and communities.
- An Cosán's model reflects all that is best in 21st century teaching and learning:
  1. It provides a holistic, learner-centred, reflective, inclusive, collaborative, partnership model;
  2. The programmes are delivered through an innovative blended learning model that combines face-to-face workshops and weekly online sessions while learners engage in extensive peer-to-peer learning through online discussions, group work activities, case studies, practical exercises and personal reflections;
  3. It opens a window to examine case studies and share best practices at global, national and local levels;
  4. It provides an opportunity for learners to analyse and discuss social enterprise development and to reflect on their own experiences;
  5. It develops an individual's soft and digital skill competencies, encourages personal development and growth and builds confidence;
  6. It offers an innovative pathway from foundation level right through to accredited higher education at Level 6 and 7 and provides continuous professional development for people who work in the sector; and
  7. It builds collaborative peer-to-peer learning opportunities, provides important mentorship and support, and offers a way of building networks and social capital, thereby empowering communities.
- An Cosán has worked with communities in delivering social enterprise in Mayo, Donegal, Derry, and Waterford as well as Dublin. Carlow IT is a collaborative partner that supports and accredits all of its programmes.

- It works with community partners on a national level to support learners who share a similar ethos. By way of a multi-stakeholder approach to social enterprise and community development, clustering can have really strong results when all the stakeholders work together to build a positive outcome for learners and communities.
- We must avoid a two-tier system in education that leaves those farthest behind even further behind, by reimagining traditional education styles, embracing the opportunity presented by technology and investing in community education.
- We need to foster and promote a collective partnership and collaborative model to support social enterprise development. We need to actively listen to those that we support, putting communities at the front of innovating their own solutions, and we need to think of the people who are not in the room.

Dr Sarah Miller, Chief Executive, Rediscovery Centre

- The Rediscovery Centre (RC) is an environmental social enterprise and the National Centre for the Circular Economy in Ireland. Established in late 2004, the centre is heavily supported by Dublin City Council as part of the Ballymun Regeneration Programme.
- It runs four social enterprises: Rediscover Furniture, Rediscover Fashion, Rediscover Paint, and Rediscover Recycling and is a founding member of the Community Reuse Network of Ireland (supporting environmental organisations and working in community reuse, recycling and repair to create jobs and opportunities).
- On foot of a successful community services programme, there has been a big change in managing the centre's operations; it runs the National Centre for the Circular Economy, meaning that it is a social enterprise, an Eco-store, a café, and a space to gather and hold events and conferences.
- It supports 45 social enterprises through its store, selling designs and products that have been created with an environmental conscience. As the longest standing initiative, the educational programme has grown significantly at primary, secondary and third levels across the country and delivered programmes to about 10,000 participants last year.
- From an operational budget of €7,000 in 2005, turnover is in excess of €800,000 this year with a staff of 50. Managing operational budgets of up to €3.6 million demonstrates the growth that can happen in a relatively short period, and at a time when social enterprise was not getting the same support as it does today. Having seen the effects of the CSP Programme first-hand, organisations establishing themselves now are in a good place to start off with.
- The Circular Economy Academy is a new mentoring programme specifically for social enterprises that builds on their experience and research capabilities. The idea is to work with established social enterprises to embrace the circular economy, emerging social enterprises that are setting up environmental initiatives, and community groups that are considering setting up social enterprises. It is a successful programme operating in the circular economy space, delivered in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency and represents RCs approach to growing social enterprise in Ireland.
- While the training course with five-day module worked to a certain degree initially, the fact that enterprises were coming in at very different levels of development led to the more effective one-to-one mentoring programme being created. The academy is really about making connections, collaborating, and mobilising all of that community interest and activity to have a positive impact on both the people that we work with and our planet.
- With eight companies already participating in the (free) academy, anyone with an interest in the clinics or becoming part of it can make contact.

John Kearns, Chief Executive, Partas

- Partas has been examining trends and believes that a convergence of social and traditional enterprise has been coming about for a long time with a lot of things happening to get to this juncture.
- Partas is a 35-year old social enterprise which aims to tackle unemployment through enterprise and innovation to create an inclusive and thriving community in Tallaght. It has helped about 200 people to start their own businesses, trained another 1,000 people annually and manages four enterprise centres in the area.
- The austerity years forced Partas to re-evaluate its entire model as income fell by 50% and funding reduced year on year even though demand for services increased. Wages were cut by 25% and staff were put back to a three-day week, while the question of sustainability was absolutely stark.
- They thought that Partas could survive because better times would return with the help of funding. Despite having lots of area representatives, it became apparent that lobbying was fruitless and that it was incumbent on the organisation itself to sort out the problem. We had to make a real, honest evaluation of where we were and what we were doing, looking at our real value and impact.
- With an internal focus and attitude of self-preservation that goes against the nature of networking, Partas resigned from committees and implemented the golden rule of only counting actions and not meetings or talking.
- They identified three opportunity trends:
  1. Ongoing evolution, in the context of the national policy, social enterprise is a moving target that keeps changing and we must understand that through all its iterations (social anything), the social aspect of it is growing and will remain.
  2. Localism, a return to the importance of things that are local, i.e. strengthening community, reducing food miles, having a sense of pride of place, connecting and interacting locally, fully utilising local resources and sustainability.
  3. Hipster economy, the development of artisan food and craft. Microenterprises at a local level with skilled craftspeople making informed lifestyle choices, quality driven demand, and demand for small quantities, non-mechanised and traditional methods, local seasonal produce where practical, and the attractiveness of tourism.
- As highlighted at a US conference, neighbourhood economics is based around the four key words of place, relationship, money and meaning and is a by-line of building resilient community wealth to our local economies – this has become the new strategy for Partas.
- Partas has developed an artisan food hub, the area's first and only speciality coffee shop, and an award-winning microbrewery. This is one of its strengths as people love having something from Tallaght. While activities are in the embryonic stage, by this time next year or the year after, there will be a much stronger impact.

Chris Gordon, CEO & Co-Founder, Irish Social Enterprise Network

- By using an outside perspective when shaping social enterprise, the ISEN was set up a number of years ago on foot of a programme in Tallaght. Social enterprises were asked to join the network, and from small beginnings the network has gone from strength to strength.
- Its three main areas of focus are advocacy, network and education. These areas are really important for us as we believe that social enterprises are the ones that need to speak up and are the only voice that truly matters. The incredible group of support organisations, social enterprises and beneficiaries have been able to help along the way but it is ultimately down to social enterprises themselves to take the available opportunities.

- Dublin City Council had provided some of the opportunities and the network is delighted to be involved with the team of the Local Enterprise Office and Economic Development Office over the past six years. Particular thanks to Evanne Kilmurray of Inner City Enterprise who, along with Dublin City Council and the Department of Rural and Community Development have developed the Dublin City Social Enterprise Awards that many of the social enterprises present have been involved with.
- There has been lots of great work done to date such as social enterprise: training programmes, management development programmes and the social enterprise toolkit.
- When talking about social enterprises, make sure that there is engagement with them. Social enterprises and people can interact with the network through ask and advise nights, events, mailing list, website, phone number, clinic meetings, Plato group or membership.
- Social enterprise is stronger when we work together and collaborate and that's what we've been trying to do. When you contact the network, we try to point you in the direction of the service you need to get your idea off the ground or to get your organisation to the next level. Whether it's working with local authorities, or partnerships, we have a track record of it and know it works.
- A prime example of where an individual social enterprise would not have a voice is the network's work with Siobhán Cafferty of the Justice Committee who has helped develop several initiatives, one of which was to reduce the insurance cost for social enterprises.
- Two main areas in working with social enterprises are the governance and procurement hurdles. The Irish network through its European partners recently ran the Buying for Social Impact Conference in conjunction with the European Commission. As part of the buy social campaign, the network has set up [www.buysocial.ie](http://www.buysocial.ie) for social enterprises. We want people to not just think about social enterprises as positive but also to purchase from them.

Seán Mullan, Founder, Third Space

- Third Space is an organisation providing (i) catering, (ii) a café in Smithfield that doubles as a community space for networking, (iii) training for those challenged to find employment, and (iv) employment.
- Third Space is a mongrel that fits into a few categories of what a social enterprise does. When we started, we didn't know that we were a social enterprise but no one else knew what a social enterprise was so it didn't make that much difference.
- The synergy in relation to social enterprises, networking and relationships is a microcosm of what is represented in the chamber with relationships forming and collaborations taking place, some planned but others spontaneous. In both supplying and purchasing from social enterprises, it is great to see the relationship building and collaboration that is underway.
- There's an opportunity to influence businesses in relation to their own policies, not just in procurement but also how they see their own corporate social responsibility, and to challenge them.
- Businesses and charities have met or been introduced to each other at Third Space and have proceeded to collaborate on different projects. This natural networking is part of the essence and lifeblood of the social enterprise ecosystem; as we grow and develop, it's essential to keep this and is really important that we don't structure it out of existence.
- Another director of Third Space heard from a customer that is a CEO of a major business in the area, who was full of praise and told of how he brought other CEOs to show them the space and to tell them about it. He had noticed how one of the café staff members had transformed from being cautious to confident over the few months working at Third Space. This story rings true of many social enterprises and while we may not be sure of what we're doing all the time, whatever it is, it's working so let's make sure it continues to work.

# Social Enterprise Summit

DUBLIN CITY HALL  
09:00-13:00      16/10/2019



Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council



EUROPEAN SOCIAL ECONOMY  
REGIONS 2019 PROJECT





An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development

## National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland

William Parnell  
Assistant Secretary General  
Dept. of Rural and Community Development





## What is a Social Enterprise?



A Social Enterprise is an enterprise whose objective is to achieve a social, societal or environmental impact, rather than maximising profit for its owners or shareholders.



It pursues its objectives by trading on an ongoing basis through the provision of goods and/or services, and by reinvesting surpluses into achieving social objectives.



It is governed in a fully accountable and transparent manner and is independent of the public sector. If dissolved, it should transfer its assets to another organisation with a similar mission.

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## What do Social Enterprises look like?

- Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs)
- Enterprise Development social enterprises
- 'Deficient Demand' social enterprises
- Environmental social enterprises
- Social Cooperatives which do not distribute profits

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## Rationale for a Policy

- Social Enterprises deliver **important economic, social and environmental returns**
- A **spectrum** of Social Enterprise exists in Ireland
- Social Enterprises are about **purpose over profit**
- Up to now, Social Enterprise **poorly understood** in Ireland
- **Limited data about the scale, scope and impact** of Social Enterprise in Ireland
- **Difficulty in accessing supports** and expanding market opportunities – restricting their potential for growth
- Many years of effort by stakeholders advocating for a policy

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The Policy is based around 3 Objectives:

**1**  
Building  
Awareness  
of Social  
Enterprise

**2**  
Growing and  
Strengthening  
Social  
Enterprise

**3**  
Achieving  
Better Policy  
Alignment

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**1**  
Building  
Awareness  
of Social  
Enterprise

- Develop **Awareness Strategy**
- **Best Practice** examples
- **Annual Social Enterprise Conference**
- Work with **education and research bodies** to support development of Social Enterprise

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## 2

### Growing and Strengthening Social Enterprise

- **Enhance availability of business supports** to Social Enterprises to facilitate start-up and growth
- Provide information on available **funding and financing** supports
- Work to improve capacities and opportunities for **business-to-business and public procurement**
- Consider existing **legal forms** and assess potential for distinct legal form

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## 3

### Achieving Better Policy Alignment

- Promote **greater understanding of and interaction with** Social Enterprises across Government
- Alignment with **National Policies** (APRD, Future Jobs Ireland, Climate Action)
- Ensure **international engagement** including with the **EU, OECD and British-Irish Council** on Social Enterprise
- **Improve data collection**
- Develop a **Social Enterprise impact measurement methodology**

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## Role for Local Authorities

**Dublin City Social Enterprise Awards 2019**

**PUBLIC PROCUREMENT**

**Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil  
Local Enterprise Office**

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## In summary, the Policy...

- Recognises the value, impact and potential of SE
- Includes specific, time-bound commitments
- Seeks to build on existing SE stakeholder experience
- Complements other policy initiatives
- Will be delivered in partnership with the sector
- Overseen by an Implementation Group, with 50% stakeholders

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## Implementation has begun!

- Training and Mentoring call for proposals announced
- Implementation Group being established
- Social Enterprise “Impact” Research Fellowship launched
- National Social Enterprise Conference – 21<sup>st</sup> November
- Engagement commenced with HEIs to explore contribution to Policy commitments
- Further funding announcements expected shortly

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Community Development

Thank You



Building the social economy in Ireland and the role of social enterprises as system change leaders



Deiric Ó Broin  
Head of Social Enterprise  
Dublin City University

Convenor  
Social Economy Research Network of Ireland

Key macro factors for  
success



Supportive policy framework ✓

Engaged public agencies ✓

Sectoral accord .....

# Social Enterprise Summit



DUBLIN CITY HALL  
09:00-13:00 16/10/2019



Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council



EUROPEAN SOCIAL ECONOMY  
REGIONS 2019 PROJECT



## Sectoral accord .....



The social economy in Ireland is Irish, European and *unusual* in a number of important ways.

Very significant and distinct cleavages between the primary components of the social economy.

Shared leadership is historically limited and its absence is limiting.

Understanding the importance of interstitial spaces.



**Social Enterprise NI**  
**A Flourishing Sector in NI**

**Colin Jess**  
**Director Social Enterprise NI**

**16th October 2019**



**Social Enterprise NI**

**Activity Update**

- **Social Economy Policy Group**
- **National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019/22**
- **Submitted Response to DUP Economic Pre-Consultation**
- **Attended Sinn Fein New Economic Strategy Policy Launch and Roundtable**
- **Perm Secs of Finance, Education & Senior Economy Officials**
- **Cabinet Office Meeting re Social Value Legislation Updates England & Wales**
- **Dormant Accounts and Ongoing dialogue around Social Value in Procurement**





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## Activity Update

- QUB Science Shop Students Research Paper
- Belfast Metropolitan College Programme being Launched
- British Council Meetings
- Private & Public Sector Meetings and Membership
- Awards Evening
- SEUPB visits to ROI and Scotland
- Natwest Wise100 Nominations



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## What is the Economic Contribution of SE's

	2013	2018
Organisations	473	843
Employees	12,200	24,860
Turnover (£Million)	592.7	980
Economic Contribution (£Million)	N/A	625



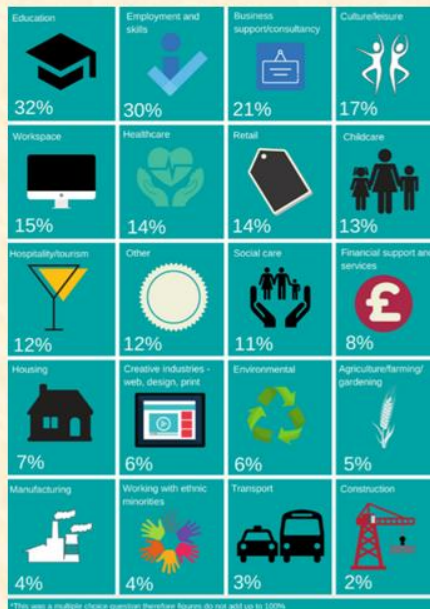
Social Enterprise NI

## HOW ESTABLISHED ARE SE'S

Age of Organisation



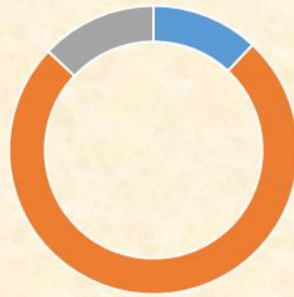
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## PROFITABILITY OF SE's IN 2017-18 FINANCIAL YEAR

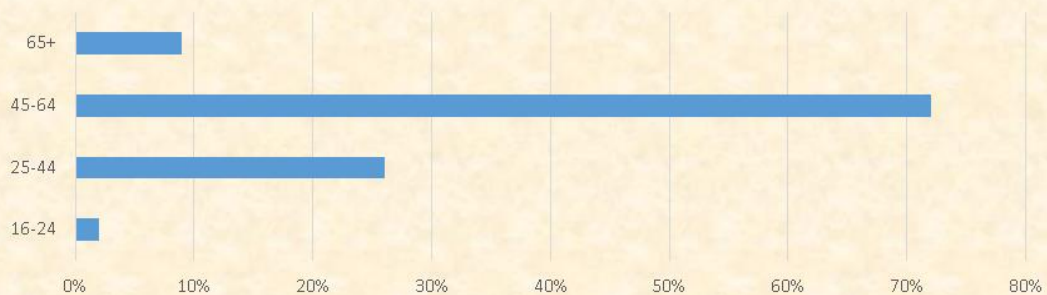


■ Broken Even ■ Made a profit ■ Made a Loss ■



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## AGE OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE LEADERSHIP

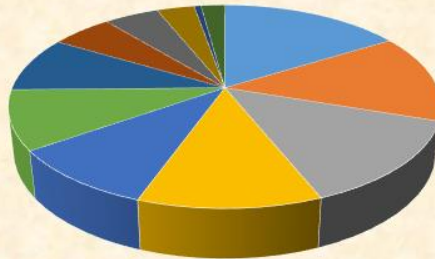


• 43% Of organisations are led by Women

- Between 50 & 99 Employees are much more likely to be Women led although this significantly decreases for organisations with more than 250 employees.



## Social Enterprise NI OBJECTIVES

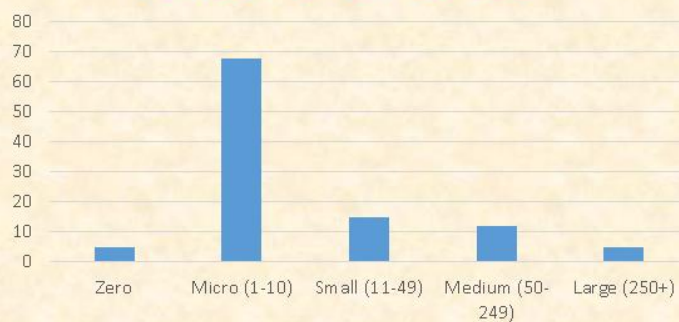


- Creating employment
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Community enhancement
- Addressing social exclusion
- Supporting other organisations
- Supporting vulnerable people
- Supporting children and young people
- Promoting education & literacy
- Environmental improvement
- Addressing financial exclusion
- Providing affordable housing
- Other



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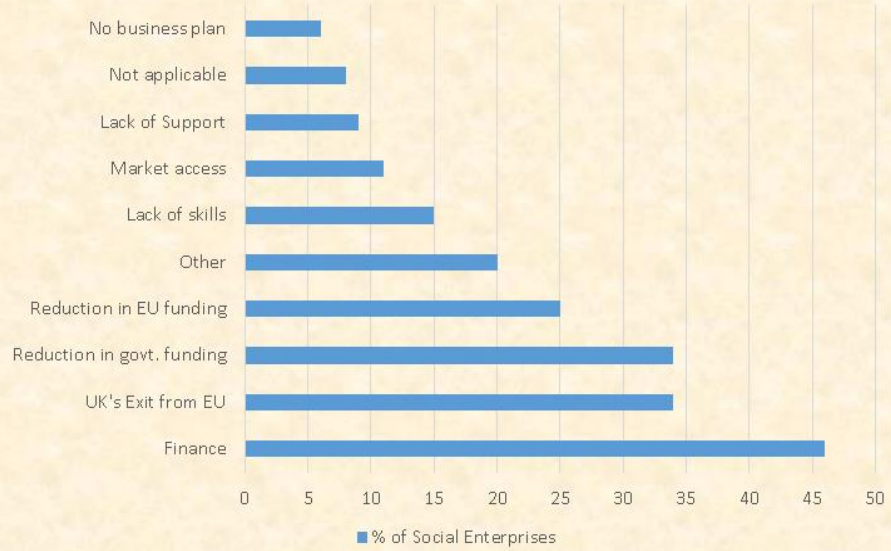
## SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SIZE BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES



- A third said that 76-100% of employees are drawn from within a 5 mile Radius
  - A further 25% said that 51-75% of their workforce was local
- The above figures show that 53% of Social Enterprises, half of their workforce live in the immediate local area



## SOCIAL ENTERPRISE BARRIERS



## SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ENABLERS





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## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. CLARIFY DEFINITION OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES
2. APPROACH NEEDED TO EASILY ACCESS SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SECTOR
3. CONTINUE THE PURSUIT OF SOCIAL VALUE IN PUBLIC SECTOR PROCUREMENT
4. SUPPORT BUSINESS SKILLS TO ASSIST WITH INCREASING INCOME FROM TRADE
5. SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE TO CHOOSE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AS CAREER OF CHOICE



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# THANK YOU

#### 5.1.4 Social Enterprise Summit Exhibitors

<b>Social Enterprises</b>	<b>Website</b>
Aspire Productions	<a href="http://www.aspireproductions.ie">www.aspireproductions.ie</a>
Green Ribbon	<a href="http://www.neic.ie/news/green-ribbon-project">www.neic.ie/news/green-ribbon-project</a>
Innovate Dublin	<a href="http://www.innovatedublin.org">www.innovatedublin.org</a>
Pace - Mug Shot	<a href="http://www.paceorganisation.ie">www.paceorganisation.ie</a>
Pobal	<a href="http://www.pobal.ie">www.pobal.ie</a>
Quality Matters - We Make Good	<a href="http://www.qualitymatters.ie">www.qualitymatters.ie</a>
Recreate Ireland	<a href="http://www.recreate.ie">www.recreate.ie</a>
Siel Bleu	<a href="http://www.sielbleu.ie">www.sielbleu.ie</a>
SunFlower Recycling	<a href="http://www.sunflowerrecycling.ie">www.sunflowerrecycling.ie</a>
The Grow Dome Project	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/thegrowdomeproject">www.facebook.com/thegrowdomeproject</a>
The Impacter	<a href="http://www.theimpacter.com">www.theimpacter.com</a>
Third Space	<a href="http://www.thirdspace.ie">www.thirdspace.ie</a>
Walkinstown Green Social Enterprises / The Green Kitchen - Walkinstown Green	<a href="http://www.walk.ie">www.walk.ie</a>
<b>Support Organisations</b>	<b>Website</b>
An Cosan – Virtual Community College	<a href="http://www.ancosan.ie">www.ancosan.ie</a>
Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership	<a href="http://www.bcpartnership.ie">www.bcpartnership.ie</a>
Carmichael Ireland	<a href="http://www.carmichaelireland.ie">www.carmichaelireland.ie</a>
Collaboration Ireland	<a href="http://www.collaboration.ie">www.collaboration.ie</a>
Common Purpose	<a href="http://www.commonpurpose.org/ireland">www.commonpurpose.org/ireland</a>
Community Finance Ireland	<a href="http://www.communityfinance.ie">www.communityfinance.ie</a>
Dublin.ie	<a href="http://www.dublin.ie">www.dublin.ie</a>
Enactus	<a href="http://www.enactus.ie">www.enactus.ie</a>
HABIC Ireland	<a href="http://www.habic.ie">www.habic.ie</a>
Inner City enterprise	<a href="http://www.innercityenterprise.com">www.innercityenterprise.com</a>
Irish Social Enterprise Network	<a href="http://www.socent.ie">www.socent.ie</a>
Local Enterprise Office – Dublin City	<a href="http://www.localenterprise.ie/dublincity">www.localenterprise.ie/dublincity</a>
Northside Partnership	<a href="http://www.northsidepartnership.ie">www.northsidepartnership.ie</a>
Young Social Innovators	<a href="http://www.youngsocialinnovators.ie">www.youngsocialinnovators.ie</a>

### 5.1.5 Summit Photograph Gallery

















# Social Enterprise Summit

## Outcomes Report



Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council



European Social Economy  
Regions 2019 Project



