



SE-NEWS

A Newsletter for Social Enterprises in Ireland

January 2022

Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of **SE-NEWS**, the newsletter for social enterprises in Ireland brought to you by the **Department of Rural and Community Development**. We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and safe New Year.

2022 will be a critically important year for social enterprise in Ireland as the current Policy concludes and work on its successor progresses. The Social Enterprise Data Collection exercise and the OECD Review of the Social Enterprise Policy as well as the implementation of Schemes such as ARISE will be particularly important.

As always, our aim is to share information and news of interest to social enterprises throughout Ireland, to help build and strengthen the Social Enterprise community and to share examples of good practice.

In this edition, we look back on some of the events that took place throughout 2021, and provide links to videos shown at these events, and links to some discussions of interest to the social enterprise community. We also take a look at the landmark EU Social Economy Action Plan that was launched in December 2021.

Our 'Focus on SE' feature provides regular case studies highlighting the many ways social enterprises are making a difference in our communities. In this issue we put the spotlight on a wonderful community based social enterprise, *Spraoi agus Spórt* in Donegal.

If you would like your social enterprise to feature in an upcoming edition or to suggest news to be included in the next edition then please email us at senews@dracd.gov.ie

The Editor

NOTICE BOARD

DRCD is maintaining a list of supports for social enterprise. The list includes sources of funding, training or advice.

[Supports for Social Enterprise](#)

If you know of any supports available for social enterprise that are not on the list then let us know.

If you are organising any **events or training** in the near future that you think others in the social enterprise community would be interested in, send details to us at senews@dracd.ie

Changing Ireland is an independent, community-based magazine focused on community development and social inclusion. You can find a link to the Changing Ireland magazine archive [HERE](#).

Social Impact Ireland 'Business for Social Impact' Incubator Programme Spring 2022

The spring 2022 Incubator Programme, will be run online and includes a series of interactive workshops, mentorship, personal journey support and more – all customised to each participant's unique journey. Applications close 4th February 2022.

Click [HERE](#) for more details

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Send your email address to senews@dracd.gov.ie

NATIONAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE CONFERENCE 2021

The third National Social Enterprise Conference took place on 18 November 2021, and focused on *The Future of Social Enterprise in a Changing Ireland*.



The event was hosted from Dunhill Ecopark in Co. Waterford, and streamed live to over 400 stakeholders.

A number of social enterprises were showcased at the conference, links to these videos can be found here:

- [Dunhill Ecopark](#)
- [Rediscovery Centre](#)
- [Castlecomer Discovery Park](#)

There was an interesting panel discussion filmed at the Rediscovery Centre in Ballymun entitled – ‘*Social Enterprise and the Circular Economy – Complementarity of Purpose*’ chaired by Siobhán Cafferty, (Social Enterprise Project Manager, Criminal Justice Sector), and included Dr Sarah Miller (Rediscovery Centre), Una Lavelle (Chairperson CRNI) and Eoghan Ryan (Head of Social Enterprise at Rethink Ireland). This discussion can be viewed [Here](#).

The highlight of the event was a lively panel discussion entitled ‘*Shaping the Future of Social Enterprise in Ireland*’ that was chaired by Dr Andrew Forde (DRCD) and included Clodagh O’Reilly (ISEN), Elaine McGrath (Paul Partnership Limerick / ILDN), Fergus Finlay (SERI), Ivan Cooper (The Wheel) and Pauline Gannon (Social Impact Ireland). This discussion can be viewed [Here](#).

DRCD HOSTS BRITISH IRISH COUNCIL (BIC) VIRTUAL SHOWCASE OF IRISH SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

One of the institutions created under the Good Friday Agreement is the British-Irish Council (BIC). The purpose of the BIC is ‘*to promote the harmonious and mutually beneficial development of the totality of relationships among the peoples of these islands... the BIC will exchange information, discuss, consult and*

use best endeavours to reach agreement on co-operation on matters of mutual interest within the competence of the relevant administrations’. Social enterprise is included as one of these matters of mutual interest under the heading Social Inclusion.

The BIC’s membership comprises representatives from the Irish, UK, Scottish, Welsh Governments, the Northern Ireland Executive and the governments of the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey.

In September 2021, DRCD hosted a meeting of BIC officials responsible for the social inclusion work stream. In advance of this meeting there was a virtual showcase of a cross section of Irish social enterprises. DRCD commissioned showcase videos and each social enterprise was available to provide further details and answer questions from the BIC members.

Links to the Videos can be found here:

- [Grow It Yourself \(GIY\)](#)
- [An Mheitheal Rothar](#)
- [FoodCloud](#)
- [Kilcannon Garden Centre and restaurant](#)

OUR RURAL FUTURE - RURAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE EVENT IN KILMOVEE

In line with a commitment of the Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy 2021 to 2025, DRCD in partnership with the Western Development Commission (WDC) held a Rural Social Enterprise Event in Kilmovee Co. Mayo.

The event featured discussions chaired by Tomás Ó Síocháin, CEO of the Western Development Commission and included Senan Cooke, Dunhill Ecopark, Ciaran Mullooly, Community worker, and Janet O’Toole, Connemara West.

Speakers noted the importance of social enterprises for sustainable rural development and the potential for significant further growth of the sector in rural Ireland.

A number of videos were also produced for the event to showcase some of the social enterprises operating in rural locations. These can be viewed by following the links below:

- [The Cottage Tearooms, Loughmore](#)
- [Aran Islands Energy Cooperative](#)
- [Spraoi agus Spórt](#)

EU ACTION PLAN FOR SOCIAL ECONOMY LAUNCHED



In December 2021, the European Commission published the new [EU Action Plan on the Social Economy](#). The Action Plan aims to help the European social economy thrive, tapping into its economic and job-creation potential, as well as its contribution to a fair and inclusive recovery, and the green and digital transitions.

Ireland strongly supports the new EU Action Plan on the Social Economy, and sees it as a significant opportunity to provide a more concerted approach to the development of this important sector across Europe and beyond. Ireland was proud to feed into the process of the development of the Action Plan through the EU Expert Group on Social Economy (GECES) and through written submission.



There are 2.8 million social economy entities in Europe that employ 13.6 million people and which offer solutions to key challenges in our societies. They span a diverse range of sectors and forms, from care services to recycling; from social enterprises to cooperatives. Enhanced support to the social economy not only creates jobs, but also allows organisations to increase their social impact across the EU.

With the launch of the Action Plan, the Commission is also launching a “transition pathway” to help the green and digital transitions of the social economy in dialogue with public authorities and interested parties. The Commission seeks public views on the transition pathway through an [EU survey](#) open until 28 February 2022.

The Commission proposes to act in three areas:

1. Creating the right conditions for the social economy to thrive

Policy and legal frameworks are key in creating the right environment for the social economy to thrive. This includes taxation, public procurement and State aid

frameworks that have to be adapted to the needs of the social economy.

To address these issues, the Commission will propose a Council Recommendation on developing the social economy framework conditions in 2023. It will also publish guidance for Member States on taxation frameworks for social economy organisations and facilitate easier access to guidance on State aid. The Action Plan also aims to improve good practice on socially responsible public procurement and promote the targeting of the social economy outside EU borders.

2. Opening opportunities for social economy organisations to start up and scale up

Social economy entities should benefit from business development support to start up and develop, as well as to reskill and upskill their workers. For 2021-2027, the Commission is aiming to increase its support beyond the estimated €2.5 billion allocated to the social economy previously (2014-2020).

Among other actions, the Commission will launch a new EU Social Economy Gateway in 2023 to ensure social economy actors can find all the information they need in one place on EU funding, policies, training and initiatives. It will also launch new financial products in 2022 under the [InvestEU programme](#) and improve access to funding. In 2022, the Commission will also set up a European Competence Centre for Social Innovation. (Note: A consortium from Ireland is in the [process of establishing a National Competence Centre for Social Innovation](#).)

3. Making sure the social economy and its potential are recognised

The Action Plan aims to make the social economy more visible and improve the recognition of its work and potential. The Commission will carry out communication activities emphasising the role and specificities of the social economy. Furthermore, the Commission will launch a study to collect qualitative and quantitative data to better understand the social economy across the EU. It will also organise training courses for public officials on various topics with relevance for the social economy, promote the social economy at regional and local levels by fostering cross-border exchanges, and much more.

Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas Schmit, said: *“Thanks to its strong local roots, the social economy can offer innovative bottom-up solutions to many of the global challenges of today, such as climate change, digitisation and social exclusion. The social economy works with and for local communities and has a huge job creating potential. With this Action Plan, I believe that social economy organisations will be empowered to scale up, be recognised, and make an even bigger impact on society.”*

Focus on SE



Spraoi agus Spórt is a great example of a business that works primarily to improve the lives of people. Their social mission is to ensure all children and their families have access to a range of quality and diverse social, recreational and educational activities which are fully inclusive and which are at a reasonable cost in a fun safe and stimulating environment.



Spraoi agus Spórt focus on connecting people and changing lives. They believe that ability, income and social circumstances should not limit opportunities. They

provide affordable and inclusive opportunities and deliver activities and experiences aligned with the needs of the community with a meaningful impact in improving:

- mental health,
- ensuring social inclusion and
- rural regeneration.
- a stronger community.

In April 2010 A group of young mums agreed to try to form a dedicated home for the Carndonagh Parent & Toddler Group “where parents could have a cup of tea and a chat while their children played”. They identified a lack of recreational activities for stay at home mums and their children in the town. Stay at home mums were feeling isolated and needed a safe space to meet with other mums. Spraoi agus Spórt identified that people are often frustrated because they can’t access the services that they need. They feel isolated and disconnected from their community.

The team at Spraoi agus Spórt listen to them and respond by delivering services that meet their needs. They know that when people feel part of something that they feel supported and connected, they grow in confidence and they feel happier.

Spraoi agus Spórt now employ 3 full-time staff, 9 part-time staff and 8 volunteers and has evolved into a leading social enterprise working across five key areas:

- Young Families are supported with Parent & Toddler groups, breastfeeding support, new mothers support group, baby massage, pregnancy yoga, antenatal classes, parenting courses, pre-school activities.
- Children can access school-age childcare, school of music, creative writing, sewing, holiday camps, birthday parties, tuition, counselling.
- Young People can avail of surfing camps, counselling, plans for a dedicated youth space for teenagers are in progress.
- Adults can enjoy camera club, dressmaking, quilting, interior design, flower arranging, couch to 5k, operation transformation.
- Enterprise facilities include venue hire, co-working space, Fadó charity shop, FabLab Inishowen – a digital fabrication laboratory.

Spraoi agus Spórt was a face-to-face social enterprise providing 60 activities per week to 700 participants before the pandemic. That all stopped on March 12th, 2020 when they had to pivot their entire business model. They responded quickly to the crisis by launching Project Cineál (meaning kind);



- Produced visors for frontline workers in supermarkets and community nursing homes as well as businesses returning to work.
- Provided a Helpline 8am-8pm, Monday-Sunday to help with grocery orders and delivery as well as prescription deliveries. Over 500 calls dealt with to date supporting 105 families.
- Establishing a Food Bank as part of an Inishowen wide collaboration with four other charities. Continue to support 30 families.
- Delivering online zoom classes to support 25 children and teenagers with a disability and/or autism.
- Delivering online zoom classes to over 100 service users such as creative writing, piano, guitar and cooking and baking.
- Establishing an online Book Club, yoga and crochet class for 30 adults.
- Provided online Mammy & Baby events.

CONTACT DETAILS

Spraoi agus Spórt

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If you would like your social enterprise to feature in a future edition of SE-News, please contact senews@drdcd.ie for an application form and mention ‘Focus on SE Application’ in the subject line.