

The Secret *of* Change

How to bring about
change when
change is hard.

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CEO, Social Entrepreneurs Ireland

social
entrepreneurs 
IRELAND

AT SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS IRELAND WE SUPPORT HIGH-POTENTIAL SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS ALL THE WAY FROM START-UP TO SCALE-UP, AND WE HAVE DEVELOPED THREE PILLARS TO HELP THEM SUCCEED:

Spark We believe that great ideas come from the people who are closest to the problem, who see first-hand what needs to be done, and have the passion and personal experience to make their ideas happen. Every year we support people in communities around the country to come up with new ideas and help them to get the idea off the ground.

Seed We back a portfolio of these ideas at an early-stage, providing a range of supports and funding. We take a chance on organizations before anybody else will, because we know that big change always starts small.

Scale After we work with social entrepreneurs in our Seed program, we pick the best ideas, follow our money and double-down on the successes. Too often funding in the social sector is used to maintain projects or just to keep organizations going, but we've seen that when you give the right support to the right social entrepreneur at the right time, they can grow their impact exponentially.



Awardees at the 2017 Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awards

Social entrepreneurs are people who develop new and innovative approaches to solving our social problems. They apply all the skills of an entrepreneur, not to make a profit, but to solve a critical social issue.

Today in Ireland there is a massive challenge for existing social services to keep up with the quickening pace of change in society. Emerging technologies and economic growth offer huge opportunities but are also presenting completely new societal challenges. We are facing increased migration, shifts in employment, growing demands on our education system and rising inequality. Our existing services and institutions were built for a different time and a slower-paced world. They are often not designed to meet the needs of these emerging challenges and so we need to encourage fresh and dynamic ways of solving our social problems.

Over the past 13 years we have learned the secret to driving this innovative approach. The secret is that the same entrepreneurial approach that has been so powerful in driving change and disrupting

industries in the commercial sector, is being used to solve some of Ireland's biggest social challenges. Social entrepreneurs are as important to our society as commercial entrepreneurs are to our economy.

The support from The Ireland Funds has been crucial to our success in making this secret work. We have now worked with over 200 social entrepreneurs and in 2017 alone they impacted the lives of over 1.7 million people across the island of Ireland. Ideas such as FoodCloud, Pieta House, Men's Sheds, AsIAM and CyberSafeIreland all came to us in their early days, and it is hugely encouraging to see them and many of our other Alumni go on to secure further support directly from The Ireland Funds. This shows the strong potential for even more collaboration between Social Entrepreneurs Ireland and The Ireland Funds in future.

We want to create an Ireland where every social problem gets solved quickly and effectively. The ongoing support of The Ireland Funds, and the Irish around the world, will be crucial to making that vision a reality.

social entrepreneurs IRELAND AWARDS 2017

SUPPORTED BY
DCC



Awardees at the 2017 Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awards

211

NUMBER OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS SUPPORTED SINCE 2004

1,345

JOBS CREATED SINCE 2004

MONEY INVESTED IN THEIR PROJECTS SINCE 2004

€6.7 million

LIVES IMPACTED IN 2017 BY THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS IRELAND ALUMNI NETWORK

1.7 million



PROFILE: CYBERSAFEIRELAND

A Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awardee

Children today are growing up in a connected world and are fluent in the use of technology in a way that most of their parents will never be. They are not, however, equipped with the skills that they need to navigate the online world safely and responsibly. We need to mitigate against risks such as loss of personal data, cyberbullying, exposure to inappropriate content and, online grooming and extortion.

CyberSafeIreland believes that the solution lies in education and our focus is on reaching children in primary schools aged between 8 and 13, when they are first starting to use smartphones and tablets more independently. Our classes are interactive and fun and we engage the children in discussions on important topics such as peer pressure and what it means to be an “upstander.” We target parents too, because it is essential that they are engaging in their children’s online lives.

In 2016, we won a place on the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awards program which has made an enormous difference to our organization, particularly in terms of developing our strategy and building good communications but also in terms of raising our profile, which in turn, allows us to reach a much wider audience. Social Entrepreneurs Ireland helped us to “think big”: we’ve engaged over 8,500 children to date but our aim over the next 5 years is to reach at least 200,000.

We won’t rest until we have national solutions to this growing problem and the support of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland has meant we’re one step closer to doing just that.

— Alex Cooney, CEO and co-founder of CyberSafeIreland