



# Atlantic Social Lab

## Newsletter - November / December 2019

Find out the latest news from the Atlantic Social Lab project in Cork here!

We are an EU funded project which promotes the use of social innovation to address key societal challenges. The project involves 9 partners from across the UK, Spain, Portugal, France and Ireland. Cork City Council is the Irish partner and in Cork we are focused on using social innovation to address issues being faced by social enterprises and look at innovative ways of stimulating civic engagement in the city. This Newsletter will keep you up to date on all our activities in Cork.



*Participants at the Atlantic Social Lab Coordination Meeting in Aviles, Spain*

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**Cork Voices Initiative - The Winners !**



The winners and creators of a novel project which empowered the public to choose how public funds are allocated were invited to Cork City Hall by the Lord Mayor Councillor John Sheehan on Thursday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December.

The 'Cork Voices Campaign' was a participatory grant making scheme for Cork City Public Participation Network (PPN) members where shortlisted applicants were videoed outlining why their particular project should be funded. The public had the opportunity to view these videos and vote on how the grant funds should be allocated.

Open to all Cork City PPN members this campaign was created by a joint venture between two companies - StoryTracks and One Step Closer now working together as "One Story Closer". It was co-funded and run by Cork City Council, Enterprise Ireland, Cork City PPN and the Atlantic Social Lab project in association with Fingal County Council.

The winners included:

- Comhairle na nÓg
- Cork Gay Project - GOLD - Gay Older Gents Group
- Cork Nature Network
- Cork Cycling Campaign
- Mahon Family Resource Centre
- International Community Dynamics - Empowering independent living after direct

provision

- Boomerang Enterprises
- Meitheal Mara
- CouchSurfing - Be Welcome

Over this very successful campaign 2,555 public votes allocated a total of €5,000 to these 9 community groups and the Cork Voices social media pages had over 50,000 impressions.

At its core, participatory grant-making is about bringing positive projects that improve the community to the people and then giving the people a chance to influence what gets funded. Whoever gets the most votes – gets the most funding. It is a simple form of direct democracy which allows the public to have a direct say in how public funds are allocated.

While participatory budgeting and grant-making have been growing across Europe, they have not been tried in Ireland yet, so this was a first for the city and country.

The whole area of participatory budgeting is an example of best practice from the Atlantic Social Lab project's Spanish partners. During a study visit to Santiago de Compostella, project partners were shown a space dedicated to play and leisure which was the result of a participatory budgeting initiative run by the Santiago de Compostella City Council.

This Cork Voices Campaign was a direct result of Cork City Council's involvement in, and learning from, the Atlantic Social Lab Project.

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## **Successful Mentoring Programme - Ballyvolane / Dublin Hill Area Action Plan**

## BALLYVOLANE/DUBLIN HILL AND ENVIRONS ACTION AREA PLAN



The aim of this project was to develop an area based plan for the Ballyvolane/Dublin Hill area, using Planning for Real approaches. Developing an area based plan in this way facilitates a process whereby people living in local communities can identify the issues of concern to them and be central in leading out and generating solutions.

This project was more complex due to the level of residential development proposed for the area under study.

Through the Atlantic Social Lab project, Cork City Partnership and the local community association received the support of a community planning expert mainly in the form of advice/mentoring in relation to planning issues. This was particularly beneficial in this study area due to the large scale of proposed development for the area.

The mentoring not only directly informed the development of the Area Action Plan but also how the local Community Association will take the report forward and how they will approach developers/planning proposals. It will also inform future area based planning exercises carried out by Cork City Partnership where a similar context is found.

The long term benefits of this knowledge transfer for Cork City Partnership is that it will give another perspective to their area based planning processes. For the Community Association it provided a clear, evidence based report with which to approach relevant stakeholders. It has also provided them with an approach to use with developers when they submit planning proposals.

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## **Seminar on Facilitating Social Enterprises in Public Procurement**



### **Procurers and Social Enterprises Participating in Atlantic Social Lab Seminar**

The Atlantic Social Lab project hosted a Seminar on Social Enterprise and Public Procurement in the City Hall on the 13th of November 2019 which was facilitated by Emma McEvoy from Maynooth University and Chris Gordon from the Irish Social Enterprise Network.

This seminar focused on facilitating social enterprise participation in public procurement and looked at ways in which public procurers can incorporate social considerations into their public procurement procedures.

It gave an overview of the Irish public procurement landscape and of socially responsible public procurement and an introduction to public procurement legislation. It also looked in particular at the interaction between public procurers and social enterprises as well as providing tendering

techniques

hints

and

tips.

The seminar was attended by over 30 participants from a variety of backgrounds including public procurers, social enterprises and support organisations.

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## Upcoming events



Ask & Advise Evening  
January 2020

Partnering With Social Enterprises  
March 2020