Innovating a Civic Mission - Valleys Innovation Project (VIP) Evaluation

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Innovating a Civic Mission

Enterprise Educators UK Funded Research

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1. Background and Context

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Civic Mission: Embedded policy within several universities

Civic mission is defined by Thomas and Vokes (2018):

- Combination of strategic and action orientated activities by educational institutions
- Boundary spanning civic leadership
- Links with schools and colleges
- Active citizenship
- **Social enterprise and innovation**

Key Driver: Understanding if and how industry and civic missions align and misalign with educational priorities. Learning is useful for the future success of these social innovation initiatives .
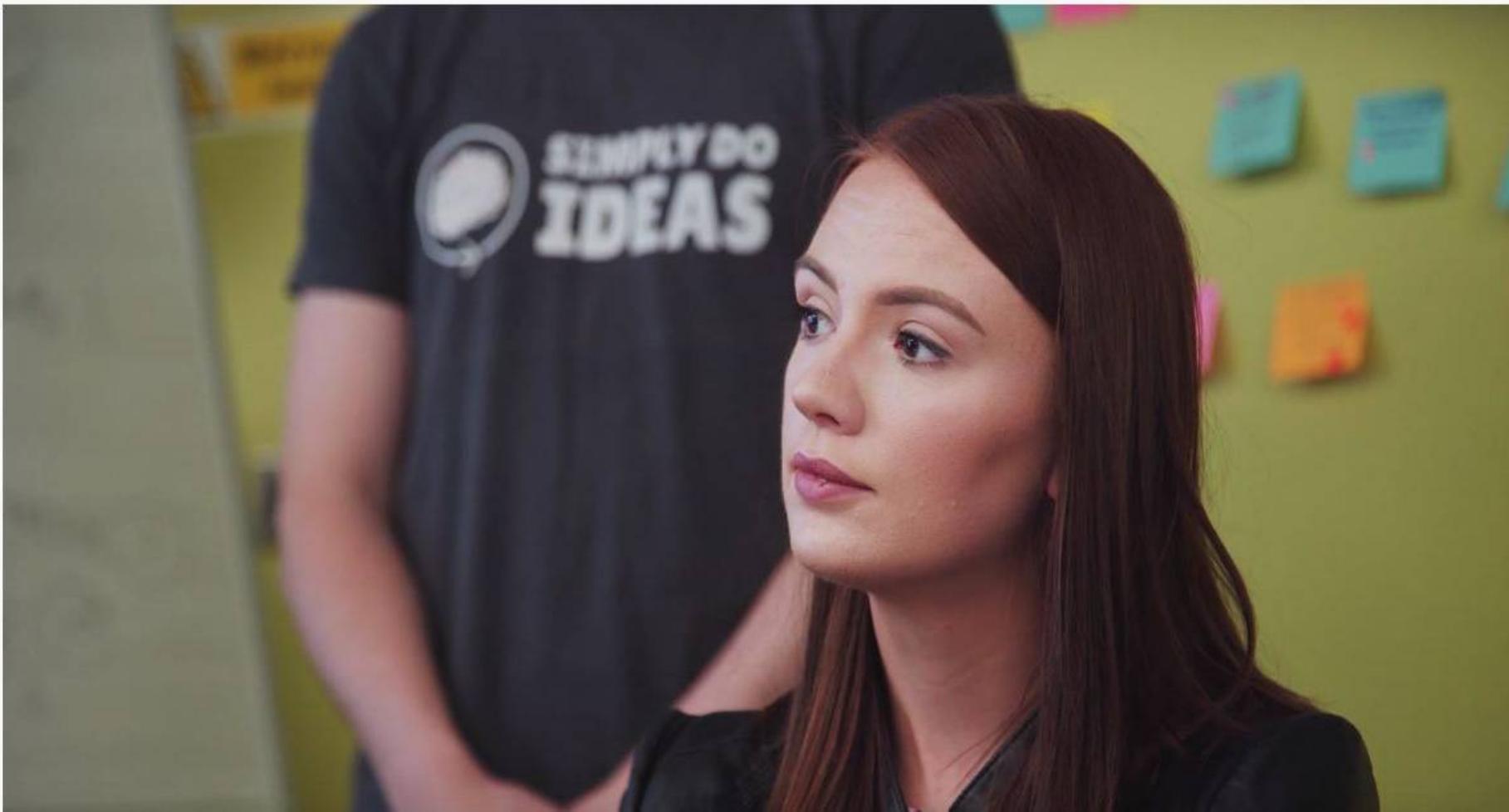
The Valleys Innovation Project
On-Demand Innovation Through Digital Collaboration

Local Organisations Social Challenges

Students in HE & FE

Education

NEED ON-DEMAND SOLUTIONS

NEED SKILLS

POTENTIAL EMPLOYER?

HAVE KNOWLEDGE / SKILLS / IDEAS

NEED EXPERIENCE

POTENTIAL EMPLOYEE?

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Area of Significant, Historical Economic Deprivation
SOMETHING DIFFERENT NEEDED!

1. *Innovation:* Unlock the potential for innovation in the Valleys (startups, businesses, public services)

- *But what is 'innovation'? This isn't for us!*

2. *Skills:* Unlock employability and entrepreneurial capabilities of young people

- *But real-world experience is hard to get with local employers!*

3. *Jobs:* Unlock attractive, local work opportunities to drive economic growth (e.g. digital)

- *But recruitment is risky and I don't have time!*

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"NETFLIX" GENERATION Z
(Typically up to 22 years old)

1. Socially-minded, problem solvers
2. Enjoy on-demand, bite-sized experiences
3. First ever digital natives
4. Recognise value of work and money

They have time, energy and talent!

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Project Summary

5 x Educational Partners

10 x Industry Partners

1,080 Potential Creators

195 Ideas Created

4 x Industry Challenges

Recycle
Scooters & Bikes

Intellectual
Property
Office

reddragon
flagmakers

Prince's Trust
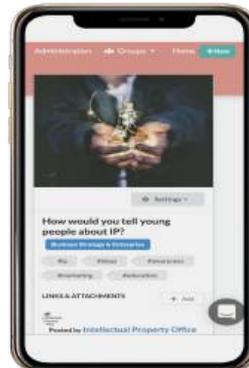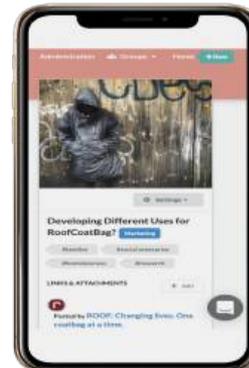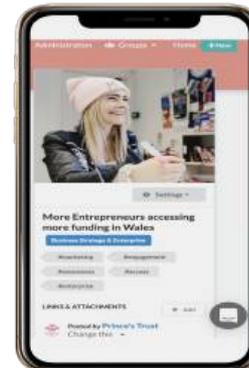
Sales	Marketing	Marketing	Marketing
22 Ideas	31 Ideas	70 Ideas	72 Ideas

But the project needed a full and robust evaluation…..

REntEd
research in
enterprise
education

Enterprise
Educators
UK

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2. Research Questions

To explore the impact of the Valleys Innovation Project, the proposed research project sought to answer the following research questions:

Research Question 1: Do learners gain entrepreneurial confidence and skills through social innovation challenges?

Research Question 2: What is the economic impact for local businesses using socially-driven innovation challenges?

Research Question 3: Does the civic mission of VIP educational partners align with local business priorities?

 Research Question 4: How does a digital solution enhance proximity between education and industry?

3. Methodology

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Quantitative Data → Qualitative Data → Analysis

Why: Adopted for pragmatic reasons as capturing representative interviews with learners across the 5 institutions would have been difficult within the time constraints of the project.

- 20 questions - Qualtrics Survey platform based on literary drivers.
- Distributed to 115 learners
- 17 responses received (14.78% sample of the total population)

Why: Semi-structured interviewing with employers and the educators due to limited sample size and the need to explore results of quantitative surveying through a narrative form.

- 2 Question banks for different audiences
- 4 educational partner interviews (80% response)
- 2 interviews with employer partners (50% response)

Quantitative: A combination of descriptive and inferential analysis was performed on the statistical data using SPSS. This inferential analysis is not presented due to the small sample.

Qualitative: Thematic analysis of transcribed data was performed using Nvivo. Specifically, Corley and Giola (2004) analysis was completed to enable the development of Grounded Theory (Glasner & Strauss, 1967) .

Mixed method "fortifies and enriches" to ensure findings are triangulated and provides more generalisable results (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 3).

3. Quantitative Results

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Figure 1. Gender Profile
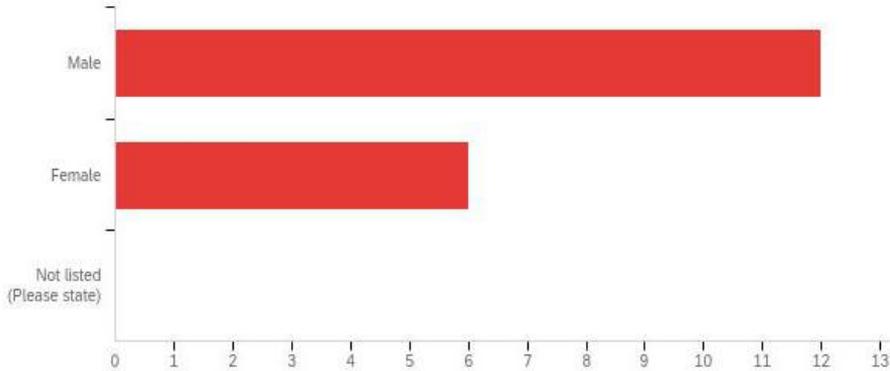
- Male bias with over double the male participants.

- Broadly representative of the project's total accessible population which featured 52% of male respondents.

Figure 2. Age Profile
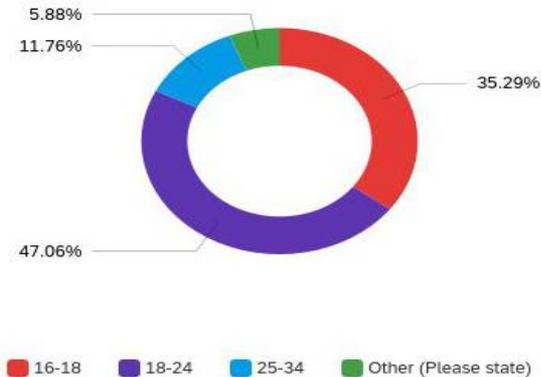
- 81% of participants are below the age of 25 are within this age bracket.

- 11.76% in the 25-34 age bracket.

- The age of participants is predominantly aligns with the typical FE/HE age demographic.

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Questionnaire asked learners to **self-assess their skills** in-relation to 7 EntreComp competencies **before the project and after the project** using a 7-point Likert scale.

EntreComp Identified Skill	Before VIP (percentage above average)	After VIP (percentage above average)	Gain/Loss (+/-)
Creative thinking	73%	100%	+27%
Creating and seizing opportunities	71.43%	100%	+28.57%
Digital skills	66.67%	100%	+33.33%
Making ideas a reality	60.87%	94.12%	+33.25%
Self-reflection	**46.67%**	**93.75%**	**+47.08%**
Decision-making	69.23%	88.24%	+19.01%
Communication skills	**33.3%**	**85.71%**	**+52.41%**
			Average Gain/Loss: +34.37%

Figure 3. Learner motivations

4.55%

27.27%

27.27%

22.73%

18.18%

Gain work experience   Help the local community   Build entrepreneurial skills

Build confidence   Other
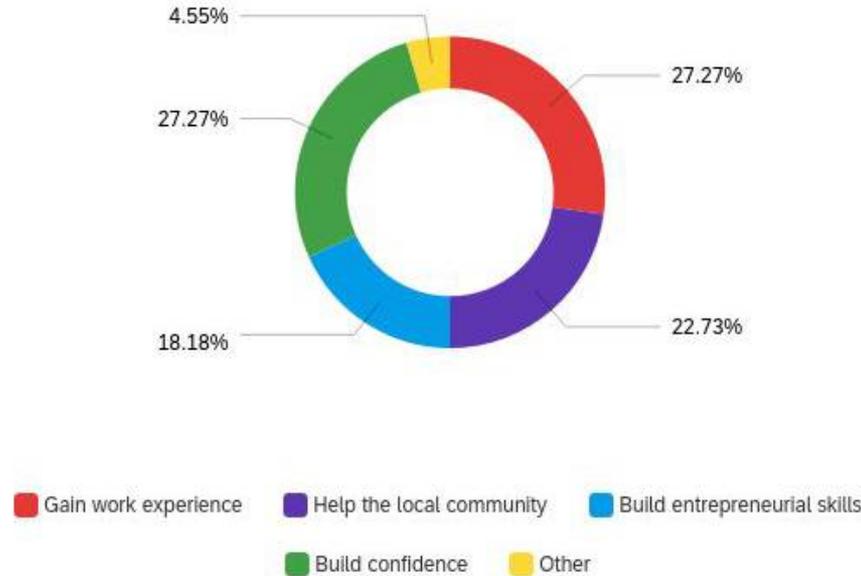
- Majority of learners were looking to build confidence and gain work experience.
- Importance of building confidence was also highlighted by the educational partners in the qualitative interviewing and should form part of the marketing and publicity of these projects to learners in the future.

Figure 4. Pre and post project entrepreneurial confidence

Before VIP — 3.18

After VIP — 4.81
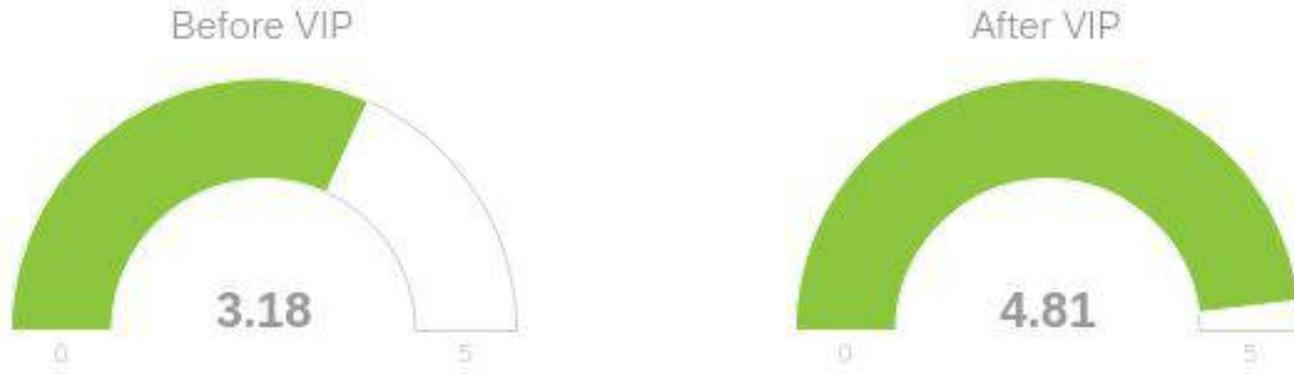
- Results illustrate the positive impact of VIP on entrepreneurial self-efficacy

- Learners built entrepreneurial confidence through social innovation activity in this project.

4. Qualitative Results

Education and industry partners identified economic benefits in social innovation:

"It can improve processes, then obviously that's going to improve value in terms of the business itself, whatever the business is." (Education Partner 1)

"I suppose wider economic impact is ultimately the program we chose that we wanted to try and drum up the ideas around is one that would contribute to the wider economic society, and young people starting a business, gaining income, and contributing to the economy." (Industry Partner 1)

Social innovation also offered partners cost and time-saving opportunities:

"It's like casting into an audience that you may not have considered who could generate ideas far more cost-effectively than in engaging in external agency for instance." (Industry Partner 1)

"It would be maybe more time-consuming. Well, definitely more time-consuming." (Education Partner 2)

Underlying theme is one of financial benefits for all partners involved in social innovation

Further education partners outlined positive proximity to the community:

"we've got close links with the town center, we've got excellent links in terms of word-based learning. I would say we've got a very strong community and we do live our values and live our mission in that way." (Education Partner 2)

"Help the whole community. That's people, the businesses, the charities, to help everybody just to give everyone-- to help that way in all aspects." (Education Partner 3)

Industry partners highlighted similar investment in the community:

"supporting young people with tangible skills, knowledge, and experiencing they need to progress in life is most important. Very closely aligned to that, is being able to contribute to society." (Industry Partner 1)

"We already support local schools, colleges, and universities with our work in the education sector. Raising awareness of intellectual property and where it fits. We also support local businesses through our outreach program." (Industry Partner 2)

Underlying theme for both education and industry partners was the development of skills in the local community

Industry partners highlighted digital platforms as a positive tool for engagement with young people:

"embrace digital platforms because that's the future and that's the future of where young people will be, will be working, where they need to develop key skills." (Industry Partner 1)

"we engaged with young people that possibly we wouldn't have engaged with if we'd launched the competition ourselves. It also enabled us to easily reach young people in different educational institutions." (Industry Partner 2)

The educational partners highlighted ease and effectiveness of a digital platform in supporting the activity;

" If we hadn't done it digitally then they would have had, you know, 25 bits of paper with the students' ideas on. I think that the digital platform is of huge benefit." (Education Partner 2)

"we realized how important digital connection is and perhaps we come to realize how we can use it more effectively." (Education Partner 1)

Underlying theme is a that digital platforms can support better engagement, effectiveness and ease of use for both industry and education in social innovation projects.

5. Conclusions

Q1) Do learners gain entrepreneurial confidence and skills through social innovation challenges?

- Learners do gain entrepreneurial confidence and skills through the social innovation challenges of VIP.

- 34% average increase across 7 skill sets mapped against the EntreComp competency framework.

- Learners also identified a specific rise in entrepreneurial confidence in setting up a business - illustrates the potential impact of social innovation on entrepreneurial futures.

Q2) What is the economic impact for local organisations using socially-driven innovation challenges?

- Participants highlighted a range of economic benefits of social innovation

- Cost and time savings were highlighted by industry and education

- Process efficiencies and potential income generation for learners were also identified as secondary benefits.

Q3) Does the civic mission of VIP educational partners align with local business priorities?

- Industry partners support the values of community and civic missions

- Key areas of synergy between education and industry include the development of talent and skills

- Matching of institutional values needs to be performed prior to project launch to ensure that the community-based values of educational institutions are not in conflict with the economic imperative of industry partners.

Q4) How does a digital solution enhance proximity between education and industry?

- Gains were seen in terms of project organisation, process, and engagement with learners using a digital platform.

- Feedback from employers about the need to meet the educational partners in a physical space to build longer-term relationships

Best Practice Report and Resources

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Q&A

# Civic Innovation Value Calculation (CiVIC): VIP Results

Academia (Education) Measures:

1) Presence of institutional Civic Mission values or statement (Secondary data/Participant interviews – (Average response across providers - Yes or No).
Score: 1

2) EntreComp: Development of learner skills in relation to teamwork and creativity. (Self-assessed – (Scale 1:10, Average >5)) Participant interviews)
Score: 1

3) Expressed interest in civic engagement (Evidenced by existing policy, strategy, roles, HEBCIS or narrative data)
Score: 1

Government Measures:

1) Evidence of local skills policy (Yes or No)
Score: 1

2) Local authority or regional employment rates aggregated and compared against national average. Evidenced by LG Inform data.
Score: 0

3) Rate of new enterprises starts (aggregated) in local authority compared against national average. Evidenced by LG Inform data.
Score: 0

Community (Learners) Measures:

1) Interest in social and civic issues (Self-assessed – Learner Survey (Scale 1:7, Average >3.5))
Score: 1

2) Supporting businesses to innovate - (Self-assessed: Learner Survey (Scale 1:7, Average >3.5))
Score: 1

3) EntreComp: Creating and seizing opportunities (Self-assessed: Learner Survey – (Scale 1:7, Average >3.5))
Score: 1

Industry Measures:

1) Expressed interest in Corporate Social Responsibility, and or, civic engagement (Secondary data aggregated- company website/Self-assessed – Participant interviews)
Score: 1

2) Support for work placements/experience to develop applied skills and knowledge (Self-assessed – Participant interviews)
Score: 1

3) Evidence of engagement with HE/FE partners (Evidenced by case studies or Participant data)
Score: 1

Combined CiVIC Score: 10/12

THE SOCIAL CHALLENGE RESOURCE

PROBLEM - STATEMENT

- In a **single sentence**, what is the problem that you're trying to solve?

PROBLEM - CAUSES

- What are the 3 factors that **create the conditions** for this problem to **continue** and/or **worsen**?

PROBLEM - IMPACT

- What are three impacts of this problem?

POWERS

- What's going to help, or hinder, getting this done?

  Enabling

  Blocking

PROPOSITION

- What are the **outcomes** for the employer partner?

  Parameters

PRIORITIES

If we could achieve one thing…

Top 3

1

2

3

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USING THE SOCIAL CHALLENGE RESOURCE - COMPLETION GUIDANCE

1. **PROBLEM STATEMENT** - What are the social issues or problems that organisation or the person has experienced/witnessed during day-to-day life? Sum it up in a sentence.

2. **PROBLEM CAUSES** - Think about the root causes of the problem? Is it financial, social, environmental, legal, technological or policy driven? Prioritise a top 3 list of causes.

3. **PROBLEM IMPACT** - Think about the people, or communities, who might be directly affected by the problem? Relate your thinking back to the Problem Causes section to explore the impact.

4. **POWERS** - What are enablers and barriers to solving this problem. Again this could be financial, social, environmental, legal, technological or policy driven?

5. **PROPOSITION** - What's the value for the individual/organisation? How will you engage them from an economic/social perspective? What are the limits (parameters) of the challenge. How far can you go?

6. **PRIORITIES** - Think about what are the absolutely essential outcomes of the social challenge? Create a top 3 list of priorities and make sure they are specific measurable.

Social Innovation Top Tips: Organisations Working with Education

2. Use digital to drive engagement

Young people love technology and in-order to get them involved in social innovation you must engage with digital technologies such as social media and ideation platforms.

4. Supporting and improving the community

All partners should be bought-into improving the community through action to generate successful social innovation .

1. Adopt a challenge-led approach

Get the best results by setting a socially-driven challenge to inspire learners to build a better future for the local community.

3. Young People are agile and action orientated

Get access to the best ideas and new thinking from a generation of young people who react well to change and prefer actions to words.

5. Harness the economic potential of new ideas

Socially-responsible ideas can lead to new products, processes and services and support savings on marketing, engagement, and recruitment.

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Social Innovation Top Tips: Educators Working with External Organisations

2. Social responsibility builds engagement

Local employers are invested in the community and learners are engaged with helping and supporting their area. This helps build engagement in the activity for everyone.

4. SMEs in the locality

Try and work with small & medium-sized enterprises (SME) in the area as learners prefer to work with organisations that directly benefit their neighbourhood.

1. Skills building is a shared benefit

Employers want skilled recruits and social innovation offers learners the chance to build creative thinking, communication , and team-working skills in line with the curriculum.

3. Low risk innovation with real-world challenges

Employers get access to new ideas and low-cost market research while helped young people develop and accelerate their careers by working on current business challenges .

5. Go Digital

Use digital platforms to capture ideas and manage social innovation activity to ensure a one-stop-shop for organisations to monitor and manage the learner inputs.

Coleg Gwent

Coleg Penybont Bridgend College

The College Merthyr Tydfil Y Coleg Merthyr Tudful

Coleg y Cymoedd

University of South Wales Prifysgol De Cymru

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Part of the EEUK Social Innovation Toolkit