



Event Report from Annette Dupuy

Community Connects Conference

Waterford 1st March 2017

Community Connect Regional Conference in Tower Hotel, Waterford on 1 March 2017. A conference for the community, voluntary and charity sector.

Event Description

The conference was opened by Deputy John Halligan TD, Minister for Training, Skills and Innovation. The conference was be addressed by Ivan Cooper, Director of Advocacy for The Wheel. The keynote conference speech was delivered by Fr. Peter McVerry, Peter McVerry Trust. The event included general sessions and education sessions, where participants went to three of nine Educational Sessions across the course of the day.

Overall I found the conference very worthwhile – from the opportunity to network and chat to other participants and to engage with speakers who were very relevant to PPN organizations.

Ivan Cooper of The Wheel gave an address on The Community, Voluntary & Charitable sector. Some key reference resources from this session were;

- Benefacts.ie - for stats about the sector
- TCD Hidden Landscapes Report 2006.
- ictr.ie – for fundraising governance information

The Educational Sessions I attended were;

- Social Enterprise
- Governance
- Charities Regulator Authority

Social Enterprise

Description - Ms. Nicola Kent, Management Consulting will share her skills as an entrepreneurial skills tutor and a start-up consultant to help you get that social enterprise up and running! Visit <https://ie.linkedin.com/in/nicola-kent-07a98584>

In this session Nicola discussed the stages for idea generation and development of a Social Enterprise. She talked about four steps;

1. Brainstorm
2. Business Model Canvas
3. Act, Ask & Adapt
4. Start Small & Grow

1. Brainstorm

Focusing on ideas that satisfy a need or solve a problem. Focus on why the customer would want what you are suggesting – it must have both a commercial and social impact to be successful.

2. Business Model Canvas

This is a one page template used before business plan development to help identifying and developing the idea. This has 9 boxes to complete and as you fill each one you should try to identify the commercial and social impact of the proposed social enterprise. Below is an example of a community vegetable garden to help in explaining use of the model

| | Social | Commercial |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Customer Segments | Reducing unemployment | Fresh local veg to sell at a farmers market |
| 2. Value Proposition | Education and learning about growing Increased wellbeing | Offering tracability of product Local product with low food miles |
| 3. Customer Relationships | Get through DSP, local Partnership etc Keep through community employment schemes etc Grow through further education and courses | Get through farmers market Keep through developing regular customers and loyalty Grow through speaking to customers about other veg they would buy – developing the offering |
| 4. Channels (touchpoints – how you reach the person) | Develop awareness through DSP, Partnerships etc | Promote through leaflets, facebook, stand at farmers market. |
| 5. Revenue Streams | Scheme payments for workers initially Funding, donations | Pay for produce Workshops held at the garden School tours |
| 6. Key Activities | Skills development, employment | Production, service, sales, marketing, finance, logistics |
| 7. Key Resources | Current skills of employees or volunteers | Knowledge, buildings, land, premises |
| 8. Partnerships | DSP, local Development, Social Farming | Linking with others who have skills or service – e.g. local man with a van for deliveries |
| 9. Cost Structure | What will be the key costs for labour and training | What will be the other costs associated with the social enterprise |

3. Act, Ask & Adapt

A focus on what people want & regularly re-evaluation to grow the business

4. Start small & grow

Don't try to do everything together and build up the enterprise. This will lead to greater success

Presentation slides available on request

Governance

Description - Ivan Cooper, Director of Advocacy, The Wheel will discuss the role of governance within the sector including the role of the board and the importance of being transparent and accountable. Visit www.wheel.ie

In this session Ivan discussed the role of Governors/Trustees/Directors/Board Members

In effect this is the role is the authority to put in place and ensure adherence to rules and regulations to ensure proper controls. The Governors should ensure limits are set for the safety of the organization. Governors should 'steer the ship' provide direction to ensure the organization goals are met.

They should have a vision (bigger picture) and a mission (goals and objectives to achieve the vision).

Governors should set a reporting framework to allow them to ensure they conduct the control requirement. They may delegate the workplan but the responsibility remains with the Board/Governors.

Five principles of Good Governance

1. provide leadership
2. exercise control
3. are transparent and accountable
4. work effectively
5. behave with integrity

The presentation slides provide more detail on each of these aspects.

Key website – governancecode.ie

Charities Regulatory Authority

Description - Eamonn O' Halloran will discuss the steps required to register as a charitable organisation; the information you need to gather, and other helpful registration information.
www.charitiesregulatoryauthority.ie

This session focused on the types of charities, who should register and the steps to apply

The key takeout for this is that not all groups should register as a charity. To be a charity an organization:

1. Must have a charitable purpose:
 - (a) the prevention or relief of poverty or economic hardship;
 - (b) the advancement of education;
 - (c) the advancement of religion;
 - (d) any other purpose that is of benefit to the community.
(includes a range of purposes such as environmental protection, promotion of health, animal welfare, community development)
2. Must provide clear public benefit
3. All income and property (aside from operation and maintenance) must be used to advance the charitable purpose

The example that he gave is a residents association – if they are only working as a residents association they don't have a clear public benefit.
He said also Sporting organizations also can't be charities

7 Steps to applying

- 1: Visit our website charitiesregulator.ie.
- 2: Read Guidance and Research requirements.
- 3: At Board/Committee meeting discuss and make a decision to apply for registration status.
- 4: Create a User Account on our Online System
- 5: Review Application Form and prepare/gather necessary documents i.e. constitution, trustee declaration, financial accounts, bank statements, safeguarding policies etc.
- 6: Complete and Submit application.
- 7: Work with Charities Regulator team in answering queries so we can make a decision.

The presentation discussed developments that are ongoing with the Charities Regulator including planned website development. They are focusing on following up on larger organizations but highlighted that all will need to register as future grant applications will begin to require confirmation of registration or non-applicable status for those applying for grants.

Also mentioned the difference in a registered charity no and a CHY no and developing awareness of this aspect.

Presentation slides available on request.