

Social entrepreneurship for the age sector, older people and communities

Dr. Hannah McDowall



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UnLtd: who we are and what we do

UnLtd is a UK-based charity which supports social entrepreneurs - people with vision, drive, and passion who want to change the world for the better - to start-up and scale-up social ventures.

UnLtd Awards

We provide a package of funding and support, to help these individuals make their ideas a reality.

- financial support for a venture idea
- 1 :1 support by a Development Manager
- Connections to organizations and markets



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UnLtd's ageing work

Social entrepreneurship for and by older people:

Largest older social entrepreneurship support programme in the UK

>200 people of over 50 years old and >80 social ventures addressing ageing issues supported in the last two years.

3 Programmes of work:

- **Bradford pilot:** 17 social entrepreneurs of 50+ to start up a venture of any social focus in Bradford (supported by Bradford metropolitan council).
- **Engage:** 30 social entrepreneurs of all ages running ventures addressing ageing issues in England and Wales (supported by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation).
- **Ignite:** 120 social entrepreneurs of 50+ running ventures of any social focus in Northern Ireland (supported by The Atlantic Philanthropies).



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Scope of social ventures for older people

Ageing issues most commonly addressed include:

- **Adult social care:** social ventures address the social and physical needs of recipients and givers of care. Some work in people's homes and others in residential contexts. Work to promote a dementia-friendly society falls into this category.
- **Intergenerational projects:** Through their activities, ventures bring communities together, build new relationships and pass on knowledge between generations.
- **Reducing Isolation:** Ventures target isolated older people with a great range of activities either group based or 1 to 1 such as befriending.
- **Extending healthy lifespan:** promoting mental and physical health of those in middle and older age.
- **Sharing skills:** ventures provide a means of enabling older people with a wealth of experience to pass it on to others, sometimes paid sometimes voluntary.
- **Poverty:** ventures provide employment opportunities to older people. Ventures provide advice or support to improve older people's financial situation e.g. fuel use or benefits entitlements.

Less likely to be capital intensive ventures such as technical solutions – more likely to be social solutions, low level support that improves wellbeing

Reach of social ventures for older people

The majority and small

- Small geographical reach
- Utilise community assets; spaces, volunteer help, networks
- Low cost
- Show community specificity
- Lead by one or two social entrepreneurs
- Informal/un-constituted
- Run by people over 50
- Beneficiaries reached: 2012 annual survey returned 124 ventures addressing ageing issues, total beneficiary No = 140,000

These ventures are highly valued by those that access them but with small reach and dependent on small number of leaders are *patchy* and *precarious*; **only some people benefit and they may not be sustained. Social ventures are not the ONLY method of addressing ageing issues – part of a wider picture of provision.**

Reach of social ventures for older people

The minority scale

- Most expand through a franchise model
- Can struggle to find a place in a fragmented 'age sector market'
- Sources of innovation
- Higher proportion of younger social entrepreneurs – but need to recapture full cost of labour

E.g.1 Menopause Self Care

Isabella Quigley Moriarty, South West England

- **Service:** Support for women going through the change support groups and individual.
- **Markets:** Private interest, funding from economic regeneration funds and job center. NOT health service.
- **Innovation:** Identified a life transition not recorded in literature.
- **Scaling Model:** Franchising.

E.g.2 www.grannynet.co.uk

Verity Gill, National

- **Product:** Social network website for grandparents providing substantial regular care for grandchildren with retail function.
- **Markets:** Commercial; advertising, retail function. Difficulty getting sponsorship / partners
- **Innovation:** first UK networking site for grandparents, but now competition from gransnet.
- **Scaling Model:** Hierarchical

Conclusions:

how do we maximize the potential of social ventures working on ageing issues?

Scaling out

- Supporting more people to start up social ventures addressing low-level support needs
- Change in culture to endorse social entrepreneurship by people in later life
- Linking social venture support with other age –friendly initiatives

Scaling up

- Finding a place in the market
- Pairing older and younger social entrepreneurs for design and delivery



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Contact and further information

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Social Entrepreneurship for and by those in later life: publications and events

- www.unltd.org.uk/research
- Publications
 - Golden Opportunities: The Role and Potential of Social Entrepreneurs in an Ageing Society (November 2011)
 - Case study Brochure (March 2012)
 - Ignite interim report (June 2011)
 - Engage interim report (July 2011)
 - Engage final reprot (August 2012)
- Events
 - Toolkit Launch Autumn 2012
 - Ignite Conference – Northern Ireland late 2012 or early 2013
- Other Resources
 - Toolkit for older social entrepreneurs and their supporters – Available Autumn 2012

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