

[se>re]

social enterprise through virtual
environments and remote entrepreneurship

Ebook for Social Innovation projects

Title Ebook for Social Innovation projects

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Project SEVERE (Social Enterprise Through Virtual Environments And Remote Entrepreneurship)

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social enterprise through virtual
environments and remote entrepreneurship

Ebook for Social Innovation projects

Foreword

Background

Ever since the World Health Organization officially declared Coronavirus a pandemic, and governments declared national emergencies and implemented lockdown policies including social isolation and social distancing, it became clear that there was an urgent need and an opportunity to change working practices. Working remotely, virtual mobility and online collaboration have become increasingly prevalent in recent years as tools are made available to us, but it was only when we were forced to use them that we began to recognise their full potential. These tools are not just relevant in response to the lockdown measures; this is a wake up call to the whole world because the volume of travel is unsustainable, and the declaration of a climate emergency in and around Europe demands that we re-calibrate our approach to working together.

At the same time, the pandemic brought into sharp relief the societal challenges that we are facing day-to-day, and the lack of resilience within our communities. Issues surrounding poverty, unemployment and loneliness as well as migration, health and well-being, have become more urgent as we emerge from the immediate health crisis. Yet, what is also clear is that communities have proven their ability to find their own solutions and develop their own initiatives for tackling seemingly insurmountable problems. There has been an upsurge in solidarity that should be tapped, not just for extreme circumstances but also for the more chronic ailments of our society. In this sense, COVID-19 has greatly impacted on how charities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations operate. Some are experiencing huge demands in services, while others struggle to remain sustainable. The inevitable economic downturn has been challenging for all businesses but where it affects social enterprises and other values-led entities, its impact has resonated beyond the companies themselves, to the particularly vulnerable populations who rely on their support.

Social Enterprise through Virtual Environments and Remote Entrepreneurship (SEVERE)

In light of this situation, many universities and institutions have been looking at different ways of working and engaging their students in new areas of activity. The SEVERE project was specially designed to prepare students to respond more effectively to these needs, first by creating a virtual incubation programme for remote collaboration on social innovation projects. Its second goal was to respond directly to the needs of communities and social enterprises by creating a virtual marketplace for micro-internships whereby students can work – remotely – with social enterprises on specific projects.

As such, the project attempted to reflect the shifts in the way we design, implement and evaluate our higher education programmes. For example, the notion of microcredentials is increasingly gaining traction in the field of further and higher education. Their growing popularity is rooted, not least, in the rejection of the traditional idea that adults front-load their education and skills development into four years in their early 20's, and this foundation equips them for the ensuing four decades of their working life. Surely, in such a fast-paced, volatile world of work, your primary degree taken decades before is hardly likely to equip you to lead through the turbulent technological change that is ever present in business.

The half-life of the skills, models and frameworks learnt in college lecture halls was always brief and now is even shorter than ever. But the durable, sustainable things are now referred to as transversal skills: skills like teamwork, leadership, ethical decision-making, entrepreneurial mindset, creativity, appreciating and seeking diversity, and confidence and resilience. These are the skills that form character and give people a sense of purpose and, a confidence and competence to succeed.

The project also sought to reflect the growing importance of digital technology as a way of supporting a new approach envisaging “a type of social and collaborative innovation in which innovators, users and communities collaborate using digital technologies to co-create knowledge and solutions for a wide range of social needs and at a scale and speed that was unimaginable before the rise of the Internet” (NESTA, 2015).

In particular there are four trends that are becoming increasingly relevant, in particular for achieving socially innovative goals:

- Open data: Capturing, sharing, analysing and using open data to tackle social challenges;
- Open hardware: Making things with open hardware to tackle social challenges;
- Open networks: Growing networks and infrastructure through technology from the bottom up to tackle social challenges;
- Open knowledge: Harnessing the power and assets of the crowd to tackle social challenges.

A major aspect to the project was to explore the extent to which these tools could help us to achieve better communication, collective intelligence, collaborative action and collective impact, and more resilience.

Given all of the above, the SEVERE project aimed to develop a transnational programme for nurturing entrepreneurial mind-sets and skills in order to encourage active citizenship and social entrepreneurship.

It defined a number of specific objectives:

1. develop a deeper awareness within universities in order to prepare their students for direct community action through digital means;
2. create a suite of online tools housed within a virtual collaboration space that will help students but also social enterprises to collaborate and create joint ventures remotely;
3. validate the tools by incubating 12 social innovation projects with partners in six different countries;
4. establish a platform for virtual internships whereby students will be able to work remotely for social enterprises and community groups on specific projects;
5. create and promote a SEVERE network open to promote digital social innovation.

The project was coordinated by Glasgow Caledonian University which has several years' experience coordinating projects under the Erasmus+ programme, specialising in the field of Social Innovation. The project partners also presented a range of specialist experience in areas relating to the field:

- Universidade de Aveiro, specialised in design-thinking and social innovation;
- Dublin City University, specialised in student entrepreneurship and ideation;
- PIN S.c.r.l. (associated with Servizi Didattici e Scientifici per l'Università Di Firenze), specialised in social enterprise support and the related ecosystem;
- Universitat Pompeu Fabra, specialised in service learning, accounting and microcredit;
- Montpellier Business School, specialised in responsible finance and social innovation.

The E-Book

After three years' working with the partners and students of the SEVERE project, we feel that our experience can benefit other colleagues facing similar challenges and arm them with the resources to develop equivalent programmes. As such, this e-book on 'Remote Social Innovation Projects' is designed both as a promotional tool and as a manual for other institutions wishing to carry out similar initiatives.

The book consists of a:

- I. blueprint of the programme including access to the virtual incubation space;
- II. case studies of the student projects;
- III. reflections on other aspects of the project such as management, dissemination, etc.

All six partners contributed to this e-book, demonstrating how the project was developed over time and how it began, to allow potential users to recognize the process.



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1.

Methodological note

This book has been created to support organisations and institutions to use the tools and resources we have developed in order to run similar programmes of their own. As described above, the project was conceived and designed in response to a number of specific circumstances and the results and our approach should be viewed within this context:

1. It was part of a European Programme – Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships – which placed a number of demands in terms of project management and implementation (see below).
2. As a European project, it operated on a transnational basis with partners from different countries. This obviously meant that the management meetings were mostly held virtually with the limitations that such an approach entails. Every deliverable of the project, and even this book was developed collaboratively, which can be extremely challenging but also highly rewarding.
3. Another aspect which needs to be taken into account is its timeframe. As all European projects, this is finite and its structure and objectives are defined accordingly. The intention of every project is to make it sustainable in the long term and this Handbook is in part an attempt to do this. However, a project that is considered open-ended from the outset might be conceived differently.
4. The project is by definition transnational and predominantly virtual, and although some tools and methods could be applied to face-to-face, the methodology should be understood within this context. This resulted in unique challenges in terms of the commitment and monitoring of students which again affected the approach we developed in order to mitigate against some of the issues that might arise for such a programme.

European Projects

For anyone who is not familiar with the way European Programmes are managed and delivered, it is important to understand the strict compliance aspects that shape the project itself. The funding attached to the SEVERE project was predicated on the budget items recognised as eligible under the Programme:



- Management costs – an overall fixed cost for overseeing financial and logistical aspects of the project
- Transnational meetings – fixed unit travel costs associated with attendance of management meetings
- Intellectual Outputs - Fixed unit staffing costs based on the production of tangible “Intellectual Outputs”
- Student travel and accommodation expenses – Fixed costs for any trainings and activities held in any of the partner institutions
- Multiplier events – fixed costs based on attendance to support dissemination activities
- Other costs – for such items as website and quality evaluations, requiring 25% match-funding.

These funds were crucial for the delivery of the project. In many ways this e-book aims to provide the tools and resources that would help to limit costs to the travel required by staff and students.

2.

Project management



2.1. **General management**

The project activities were divided into six work packages (WP). While all six partner institutions were involved in each WP, there was one partner that took on the lead role, and another who acted as deputy. This is a good tip for anyone running a structured project such as those funded by the European Union. It alleviates the burden on single partners, and mitigates against absence or poor performance.

WP1 Management This work package largely revolved around overseeing the achievement of all deliverables as described within the original project proposal, and overseeing any changes in activity. It also involved the drawing up of a partnership agreement between the consortium members, and liaising with the National Agency representing the European Commission. As with any project, these activities largely entailed ensuring all timeframes were adhered to, financial and technical reports were compiled and submitted, and an Advisory and Evaluation Committee (AEC) for Quality Assurance was established. One of the roles of the AEC was to monitor relevance and impact of objectives as well as assessing risk. Of course the structure of this WP was largely determined by the demands and requirements placed by the funding programme. However, any type of project, particularly one that is largely executed virtually, needs a clear definition of how it is to be managed. Monthly meetings were held virtually with occasionally face-to-face meetings held to coincide with training workshops as described below in later chapters. The Advisory and Evaluation Committee was formed from contacts recommended by the partners and met every six months. The AEC will be discussed further in Chapter 8 - Quality Assurance.

WP2 Handbook This work package focused on defining and collating the accompanying materials for the incubation programme we proposed. The handbook also serves as a complement to this e-book so the materials can be made available to other institutions wishing to emulate the project. The actions defined within the WP helped to contextualise the generic and specific conditions for implementing the project. It is essential that any project of this kind has a clear understanding of and linkages to their local communities. In order to achieve this, consortium partners developed definitions and identified case studies of social innovation and enterprise in practice. There was also an exploration of the social needs and challenges within the communities of the participat-

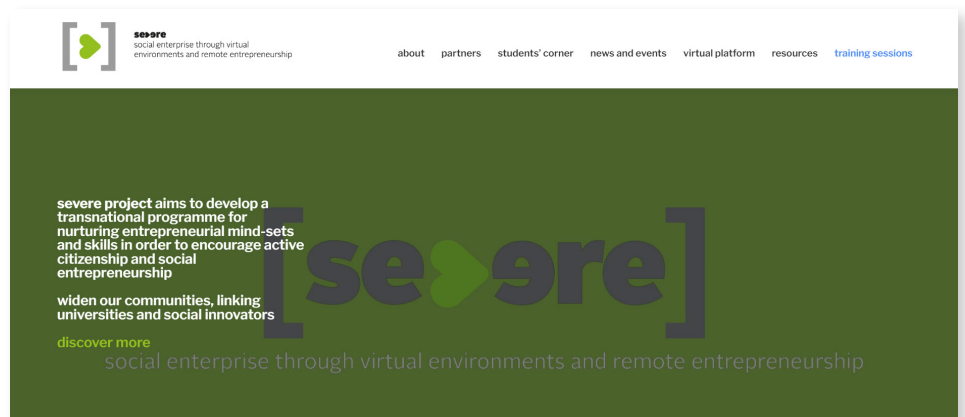
ing regions, especially in the wake of the coronavirus. It was also important to develop an understanding of the latest digital technologies and their applications for remote working, especially for socially innovative collaboration.

WP3 Training With a shared understanding of the challenges faced and resources available in the respective regions, partners were able to create content for early stage social innovation training which focused on ideation, design thinking and project development. Through the WP, partners oversaw the selection of students for virtual social innovation projects. Each of us also adapted the content of Handbook into local training programmes, and all together led the delivery of Summer School, Winter School and Pitching Workshops. These face-to-face training were specially designed to complement the virtual incubation and mentoring where the students needed to work independently and remotely in transnational teams.

WP4 Virtual Incubation The whole project was predicated on the notion that students would be required to work together remotely and develop their social innovations in their own time. This was extremely challenging and could only be made possible by identifying and adapting existing online tools and resources for remote working and social innovation development. The students were required to use the materials and guidance developed as part of the Handbook, but also to develop their projects through a Virtual Incubation Platform which gave them access to more tools as well as a global network of social innovators.

WP5 Internships One question that we often face in these kinds of projects is how we can create something sustainable, which has a legacy, both for the universities and the students involved. Of course, part of this is the creation of the handbook and this e-book. However, we also wanted to deliver a resource whereby students could apply some of the skills they developed in a real-world situation. In response to this need, we developed a Virtual Micro-Internship Platform which would match the needs of social enterprises (whose resources are often limited) to the skills acquired by students. Instead of promoting physical internships carried out over months, the Virtual Internship Platform (VIP) encouraged short term projects (such as the design of logos, reports and research activities) that could be carried out by students to complement their studies.

WP6 Dissemination and Sustainability In addition to the development of this E-book, the project needed an outward platform to disseminate its results, such as a website and social media to capture some of its activities. All projects need a visual identity, presented consistently to promote and identify the project. The branding of the project was crucial to make the students feel they belonged to an identifiable initiative. It is easy to underestimate the power of identification, especially when most of the project's activities are carried out virtually. By the end of the project, the students felt a sense of belonging and loyalty towards the project that went beyond the activities of their specific projects, which also formed their own identities. The branding also helped to promote the project among other universities and external partners which was crucial when we organised Multiplier Events to showcase the results of the project.





2.2. Summary of Project Activities

WP1 Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Drawing up partnership Agreement – Establishing an Advisory and Evaluation Committee for Quality Assurance – Overviewing the development of project deliverables and actions
WP2 Handbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developing relevant definitions for social innovation/enterprise – Reviewing the latest technologies and their applications for remote working – Identifying case studies – Adapting material into a manual for remote working
WP3 Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Devising programme content – Overseeing the selection of students for virtual social innovation projects – Organization and delivery of Summer School, Winter School and Pitching Workshops – Establishing mentoring sessions and providing support to all mentors
WP4 Virtual Incubation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developing content for Virtual Incubation Platform – Integrating methodologies and processes included within Handbook into Virtual Incubation Platform – Ensuring Platform supports students throughout the validation period
WP5 Internships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Liaising with social enterprises and other social innovation stakeholders to assess needs and opportunities for Micro Internship Opportunities – Auditing of skills matching between students of partner institutions – Developing of a Virtual Micro-Internship Platform
WP6 Dissemination and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Project branding – Developing and maintaining a website and certain social media accounts – Dissemination of materials such as Handbook and E-book for the promotion of the project and exploitation of results



2.3. Insights

What went well	Lessons Learnt
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Setting up clear goals and milestones for the project- Clear and effective communication between partners- Using right tools to monitor progress (Glocal, Basecamp, regular catch ups, delegations of responsibilities)- Selecting and working with flexible partners whose skills combine well	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- When there is a limited budget and defined timeline, it is often challenging for partners to combine SEVERE project tasks with other commitments.- It is crucial for partners to feel ownership of their WPs and tasks.- A clear definition of the objectives and rationale behind each WP and its tasks is therefore very important.- It can be challenging to balance a democratic approach to project delivery and the need for partners to take their own initiative and drive the project forward.- It is important not to introduce excessive planning meetings which involve too much talk and not enough action.

3.

Recruitment and Preparation

A Preparation programme was delivered at a local level within each of the participating universities, raising awareness of social innovation, especially digital social innovation, remote working tools and technologies, project management and collaboration techniques. As part of these activities, students were required to identify and characterise local needs. From these activities the most suitable ten participants were selected to take part in the Summer School.

Main aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To promote the project – To provide students with successful case studies of social enterprises from partner countries – To educate students on social innovation/social enterprise – To recruit students for the training programme
Main actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Breakfast events (5 online meetings with various social enterprises) – General presentation of SEVERE – Preparation programme – Application – Students' selection
Timeline	March 2021 – May 2021
Documents (if available)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Description of the key steps – Overview of the breakfast sessions and links to the recordings – Example of recruitment process at MBS – Persona presentation – General presentation of SEVERE – Preparation programme

3.1. Recruitment Process

The recruitment was carried out by each partner between March 2021 and May 2021 and consisted of:

1. General presentation of SEVERE to as many students as possible to raise awareness. Institutions shared a general draft that they adapted to their local environment.



[Preparation Programme Draft.pptx](#)



[Preparation programme MBS.pptx](#)



2. Preparation programme (aiming at 40 students in attendance per institution): More precise presentation to further explain what SEVERE is about, what students need to commit to and the benefits for them. They were presented with a persona of a strong applicant to the SEVERE programme.



[recruitment persona.pptx](#)



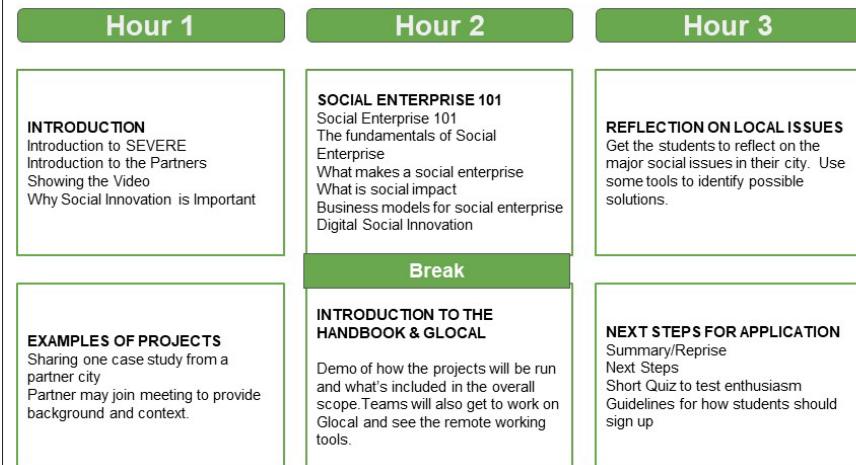
3. Applications, consisting of:
 - A motivation letter answering three questions:
 - Why do you want to participate in the Severe project?
 - What inspires you?
 - If you could solve one wicked problem, what would you solve?
 - A presentation on one social need they would like to tackle
 - Signing up for Glocal
4. Selection of students (aiming at 10 per institution)

At the end of the preparation phase 60 students were selected (10 from each partner institution). All students came from a range of different backgrounds and degrees.

Example of recruitment process at MBS

- Presentation of the project persona to the whole consortium (developed by DCU in our case) (see appendix 1 for the persona presentation).
- General presentation of SEVERE (~10 minutes) in front of 400 Master students, on **8 April 2021** (see appendix 2 for the corresponding slides). The point is to raise awareness and invite students to attend the preparation programme.
- Preparation programme held in front of 15 Master students (~2,5 hours), on **30 April 2021** (see appendix 3 for the corresponding slides). The point is to invite formal applications.

The programme was organised as follows (it ended up lasting 2,5 hours):



- Application deadline (CV and cover letter): **9 May 2021**.
- Interviews: During **May 2021**.
- Final acceptance letter: **1 June 2021**. 10 students were selected.
- The Summer school being early September 2021, we organised 2 social events in July and August with the selected students, to get to know them, further introduce ourselves and the programme.

General presentation of SEVERE



[General Presentation of SEVERE](#)

Preparation programme



[Preparation Programme](#)

Comments from Dublin

In Dublin, within our university, DCU, we promoted the project right across our 5 faculties as we were keen not to have any single faculty dominate the Irish delegation. Sure enough, we got scientists, teachers, business and IT students - we got men, women and students from minority groups, students who are neuro-diverse, people in their 20s and one or two approaching 30. We had to cut off the recruitment when we had reached ten - but the demand was high and we resorted to psychometric testing to make sure we had the right candidates on our team. The psychometric testing made sure we had cognitive diversity in our group as well as the demographic diversity we already had.

3.2. **Breakfast events**






In order to help students identify and characterise local needs in their cities and understand the concept of social innovation and social enterprise, Breakfast Events were organised where different themes were discussed and various social enterprises from each city were invited. Each Breakfast Event had similar agenda:

1. Introduction to SEVERE
2. Introduction to social innovation, social enterprise and SDGs
3. Reflection on local issues
4. Examples of projects (sharing case study from each partner city)
5. Introduction to Glocal and Handbook
6. Next steps for application (main criteria: proficiency in English, commitment for at least 1 year, availability for the major steps of the project, interest in social enterprise and travel in Europe, good IT skills, academic achievement, interest in developing skills in working remotely on international projects with international teams.

SEVERE has encouraged me to be more engaged in my community, I find myself looking for news articles related to social issues and I am more open to having conversations on how to help me.

Esme Allen Glasgow Caledonian University

Overview of the breakfast sessions and links to the recordings

Event	Date	Speakers	Facilitator	N° participants
 Engaging marginalised young people	18.03. 2021	Geoff Leask Young Enterprise Scotland Robbie Norval Lingo Flamingo James Johnstone Social Enterprise Academy	Mark Majewsky Anderson Siobhan Doyle Natalia Popielska Rose Cawood	40
 Health inequalities	25.03. 2021	Pasna Sallis Weekday Wow Factor Matt McCann Access Earth Robbie Norval Lingo Flamingo	Mark Majewsky Anderson Siobhan Doyle Peter Robbins	35
 Homelessness	31.03. 2021	Zakia Moulououi Invisible Cities Jerome Boudet Abri Cocoon Lila Ruiz de Somocurcio Deliv'rue	Mark Majewsky Anderson Siobhan Doyle Elsa Kassardjian	30
 Circular economy	08.04. 2021	Jon Dawes Repair Cafe Glasgow Elizabete Eufemia Hive Work Social Leonardo Borsacchi What is circular economy presentation	Mark Majewsky Anderson Siobhan Doyle Samuel Nyarko	30
 Poverty	15.04. 2021	Claire Lilley Well-Fed Caterina Segata Societa Dolce Alisa Clark InspirAlba Miriam Feu Caritas Spain	Robbie Norval Mark Majewsky Anderson Siobhan Doyle	28



3.3. Insights

What went well

- The design of Breakfast Events allowed students not only to learn more about the project and social innovation but also to meet and get inspired by social innovators/enterprises, ask questions and create first contacts. All webinars contributed to a better understanding of local issues and social needs within 6 partner countries. They also created a space for networking between several social enterprises and community groups.
- All events were recorded and uploaded on the Glocal platform so students could re-watch them as many times as they wanted to. The videos were also very useful for any new students joining the training at different stages of the project.
- Students who participated in these events had the opportunity to experience cross-disciplinary engagement, learn more about social innovation and social enterprise from leading experts in these areas.

Overall positive points noted in relation to the programme and the recruitment in particular:

- Making the students understand that this is a journey, managing expectations, close mentoring, flexibility
- Engagement with experienced social enterprises, and other experts in the field of social innovation/enterprise
- Sense of belonging
- Creation of transnational groups.

What could be improved

- Once students are recruited, it is important to keep their motivation and energy going. We strongly recommend that you organize informal events within your institution to create a bond and get them started on SEVERE.
- Although Breakfast Events were very successful, webinars could be more dynamic and involve students not only through the panel discussion but also through short workshops in breakout rooms, life surveys etc.
- When inviting social enterprises or other third sector organizations, it would also be good to hear from the beneficiaries of the projects apart from the staff members/funders.
- We found that keeping students' commitment throughout the whole project was sometimes challenging. We therefore recommend spending more time developing that aspect.
- One path to explore would be to link SEVERE to students' curriculum. Otherwise, it might always be difficult to keep them motivated (although we noted that they were more active before the trips!). Something else to consider would be to spend more time identifying students' interests, expectations, and groups dynamics. Several groups mention that a specific more detailed timeline and deliverables would help them to achieve more within their projects.

4.

Training

As previously mentioned, the training programme was designed for early stage project development. The face-to-face trainings complemented the online incubation, and gave the students opportunities to meet one another and interact outside their Zoom meetings. Each training was hosted by a different partner university, and were scheduled such that there was enough time in-between them for the students to further develop their projects based on their learnings from the previous workshop.

After SEVERE, I want to be more involved in tackling social difficulties in my country, so it has really changed my way of viewing things.

Manuel Santos University of Aveiro

4.1. Summer School

Dublin,
September
2021



[SEVERE Agenda
summer school](#)

Once the groups were formed, the Summer School was held in order to establish the collaborative projects with teams of students from the six different countries. The School consisted of ideation workshops to help students formulate their concepts as well as further development of remote working techniques. At the end of the Summer School, the groups had devised a social innovation project that:

1. tackled a social challenge common to their communities;
2. could be developed through remote working using digital tools;
3. deliver impact within the six communities.

The full program of the Summer School may be accessed on the [SEVERE website](#).



Comments from the hosting partner

The first challenge for SEVERE was the organisation of the very first Summer School, scheduled for August 2021. We had expected this to be hosted in Italy but it then emerged that various governments, because of the pandemic, were introducing travel restrictions to named destinations - and as Italy had been associated with the first wave of the outbreak, it was off the travel list for most other countries. I remember the Zoom call very clearly when as a faculty, we didn't know each other too well and were still a little tentative with our decision making. For me, each of the partners was still merely a panel on a Zoom screen (just as I was for them) - with some projecting more personality than others. But one of the partners, a very bright and well spoken woman, called Rose, from Scotland popped up with a suggestion - 'What about moving everything to Dublin?' she said. She had recently been wedding planning for her sister and had discovered that Dublin ticked all the boxes - it was on the A list for all of Europe and on the A list for Scotland too. And, so it was decided that Dublin's turn to serve the project and act as host for the 60 students and 20 or so faculty was being brought forward by 18 months.

This was a little daunting for me but someone gave me the very helpful idea of calling my SEVERE students together and empanelling them as an 'event' team. Together we developed a project plan and each took a role. One was responsible for accommodation - one for dinners or events off campus. One took charge of developing campus and local maps and tourist-type information to be issued to the visitors. Two took care of the agenda and the technical side of our guest speakers - one of whom was Mohamad Yunus - they had to create several Zoom links for each day and make sure the speakers and anyone joining remotely had the right links. One was our speaker liaison and we had several speakers planned for each day and another managed the social media for the event ensuring posts went out regularly on twitter and LinkedIn. We had two people devoted to health and safety - we called them Covid Officers as the pandemic was in full swing and we needed to ensure masks were worn and social distancing observed throughout our workshops.

Being blindsided by the event having to move to Dublin had the effect of getting us working as a team before the project officially kicked off. It was something of a blessing as it forged a great team bond with the Dublin group and made them think of themselves as almost professional hosts to the visiting students. The event in Dublin was a great success but we definitely learnt a few things along the way. First, we packed the agenda too tightly - trying to inspire the students with the most impactful stories of heroes of social enterprise. But in exposing them so extensively, we rather overlooked the part where they should internalise all they'd heard and discuss it and reflect on the stories and insights. Our Dublin event was also constrained by Covid and so all group working or team discussions had to be mediated through surgical grade masks and observing the 2m distance rule - and so it all felt a little strained.

4.2. Virtual Incubation



[Glocal online platform](#)

The projects were then developed remotely over the following year and monitored and mentored by the partner institutions. The students were required to record their progress through video diaries and prepare a report after six months and after one year.

Over the course of the year, the students were expected to develop their project into a potential social business, using the Virtual Incubation Platform and the Handbook to work transnationally, digitally and remotely in order to apply their vision for effecting positive change within their communities. The transnational nature of the projects ensured that they needed to find common goals and continually engage with each other to enhance the impact in their different communities.

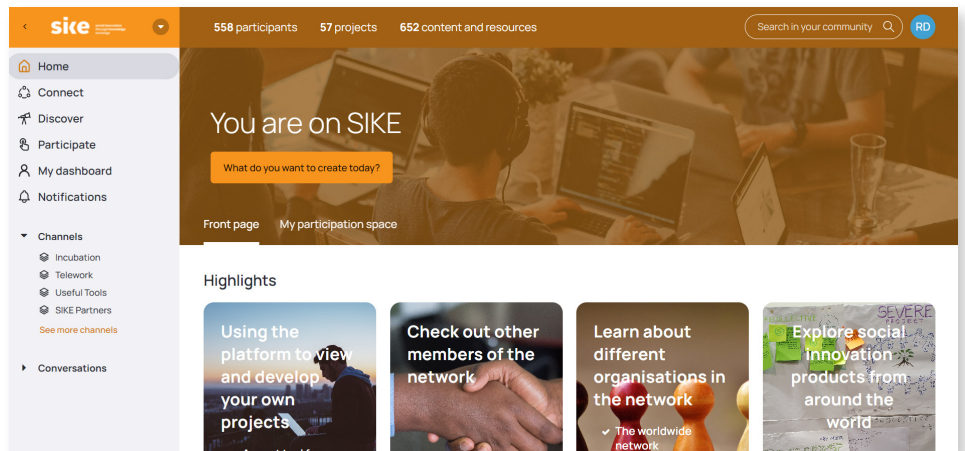
The main Platform used for compiling tools and resources and student projects was [Glocal](#). Described as “The Smart Network to Grow Your Community”, Glocal is an online platform specifically designed to facilitate networking, knowledge exchange, project management and so much more. It allows users to connect with the people, projects, and organisations in the areas that matter to them most, whilst at the same time allowing them to manage their own teams and projects remotely. Currently the platform has over 500 members from 40 different countries.

By signing up to Glocal students could:

- Create an individual or company **profile**, to showcase their skills, experience, projects and work.
- House their own **projects** and manage these in one central place.
- Subscribe to thematic **channels** in order to receive personalised information.
- **Publish** news, events, training activities and any other content to an ever growing community.
- Grow their **network** in order to connect with like-minded people.
- Access **resources** to expand their knowledge and learn more about a particular topic.

Glocal also housed a range of templates and strategy tools students to use:

- SWOT Analysis
- PESTEL
- Porter's Five Forces
- Greiner Stages of Development
- McKinsey 7 S's
- Business Model Canvas
- Value Proposition Canvas
- Journey Map
- VRIO ANalysis



4.3.

Winter School

Montpelier,
April
2022

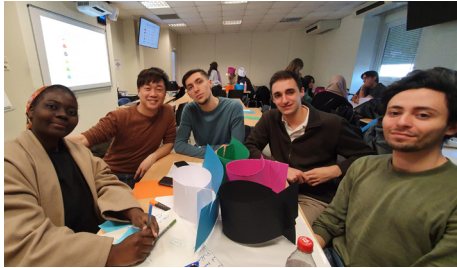


[Winter School
Agenda](#)

After six months, representatives from each team gathered for a Winter School where they were given the opportunity to showcase their progress and initial activities. The full program of the Winter School may be accessed on the [SEVERE website](#).

SEVERE has been so much more than what I had imagined [...] the whole experience has been unbelievable, life-changing.

Rose O'Dwyer Dublin City University



View from one of the partners

The naming conventions for the project became a little confusing with the summer school in the autumn and the winter school in the spring. As it so often is, the sun was high and bright over Place de Comedie when we arrived in Montpellier. The Business School in Montpellier is a private university and this is evident in the high quality of the facilities. Also, France is so very civilised and convivial that someone had the bright idea that, on the final day, it would be fine to serve beer and wine with lunch. And, so it was...but it wasn't long before the students were teaching each other their national dances from the Highland Fling to Riverdance with some Flamenco thrown in too! These are the memories both the students and faculty will cherish for a long time. They also provided a much-needed shot in the arm of social contact with colleagues and new people that had been missed by everyone for so long.

Accompanying event

Brokering for change - an opportunity to showcase projects and develop new partnerships (Montpelier April 2022)

Our team and partners had the opportunity to meet and share ideas with our speakers who came from different parts of Europe to come and make the most of this event. From SEVERE students showcasing their projects, to shaping policies and two rounds of revolving cafes, this event helped to shape the idea of students but also presented an opportunity for stakeholders and partners to explore new approaches to supporting and driving social innovation. It was also offered the project an opportunity to promote the Handbook and Virtual Incubation Platform.

Revolving Cafes

The first Revolving café consisted in discussing social entrepreneurship support on Creativity (Universidade do Minho, Universidade Federal da Bahia & Crealead), Enterprise (Social Business City Barcelona and Business Innovation Brokers) and Incubation (The Melting Pot and INCUB Online).

We then debated on what makes European projects successful with Connexx-EU and David Alpera (EU Projects evaluator). In the afternoon, our panel discussed the question of social investment and how social innovation can be supported effectively on a large scale (Estonian Government, Fondation Grameen Credit Agricole & Unidade de Investimento Social SCML).

The 2nd Revolving café was a series of workshops in which social innovators debated how we should approach major challenges, such as: Tackling Glocal problems (Vento di Terra, Business Innovation Brokers), New concepts (Cite du design, Tandem Social & WHY3C) and No one left behind (Invisible Cities and Fundacio Arriels).

We finished the day with a speed networking session where participants were discussing and switching tables to try and respond to various potential EU calls, an opportunity to develop new partnerships for change.



4.4. **Pitching Bootcamp** Prato, September 2022



[Pitching
Bootcamp
Agenda](#)

After one year, the project teams attended a pitching workshop and project showcase where they were expected to present their projects to representatives of community groups, policy makers and potential investors. The full program for the Pitching Bootcamp may be accessed on the [SEVERE website](#).



View from one of the partners

We stayed in a small town outside Florence called Prato from where we took the train every day to take us to Florence. The meeting in Florence was a major milestone for the students and for the projects.

Our colleagues in PIN University in Florence had arranged a large group of social entrepreneurs and social finance people to attend the showcase event and to hear and provide feedback on each of the ideas. The students' preparation for the event was intense, they were fact-checking, creating wonderful powerpoint, choreographing the presentation, working on their scripts for a full two days beforehand.

And, their preparation paid off. Their presentations were very slick and professional and received glowingly positive feedback from the judges.

Accompanying event

**Pitching night - A showcase of the projects to an audience of impact
(Florence, September 2022)**

The pitching night, held on September 7th at the Murate Caffè Letterario in Florence was the culminating event of the Pitching Bootcamp in Italy. The evening was an opportunity for the students to present their business idea to an audience of investors, social innovation experts and entrepreneurs, who gave feedback and suggestions.

Each group had about 10 minutes to pitch their business idea, highlighting its strengths, and detailing their activities and operations strategies. At the end of each pitch, the audience had the opportunity to ask questions to clarify different aspects of the project and learn more about what they had just heard. At the same time, they voted via Mentimeter on various aspects of the pitch (intro, prompt, project, route to market, operational strategy, financial projections, social impact, summary), which made it possible to arrive at a ranking of the various business ideas presented.

We finished the day with a networking session and an aperitif all together, which enabled all of us to talk more deeply with the students who had presented the most interesting ideas for them and also allowed us to get to know each other better, and exchange ideas and opinions.

Both multiplier events presented an opportunity to share in-person progress and outputs during this project. We were able to engage with our target groups (professionals, students and other institutions) in a conducive way, as we recognize the benefits of face-to-face events. Furthermore, this not only helped our students gain confidence and a sense of legitimacy in their project, but also promoted the growing interest of the youth in social innovation.

Moments and interviews from the Pitching Bootcamp:

<https://youtu.be/qUkhma5nAQM>

Full event video of the Pitching Night:

<https://youtu.be/3cVd1o6x5TM>



[Moments and
interviews from the
Pitching Bootcamp](#)



[Full event video
of the Pitching Night](#)

4.5. Summary of Training Programme

	Summer school	Winter school	Pitching workshop	Final conference
Place	Dublin	Montpellier	Prato	Aveiro
Date	5 > 10 September 2021	4 > 6 April 2022	5 > 7 September 2022	20 > 22 June 2023
Attendance	~61 students ~11 Faculty members	~45 students ~15 Faculty members	~ 21 students ~ 10 Faculty members	~ 14 students ~ 12 Faculty members
Main aim	Faculty to students Provide students with the knowledge and tools they will need to work together virtually (introduction to social entrepreneurship, presentation of the platform..)	Students to students Progress as much as possible on the development of their projects	Students to general public Students should present their projects to representatives of community groups, policy makers and potential investors.	Faculty to students Give students feedback and tools to concretize their projects (1-to-1 coaching, creative workshops, public speaking exercises)

Selected feedback from students

Manuel Santos, UAv

[“After SEVERE, I want to be more involved in tackling social difficulties in my country, so it has really changed my way of viewing things.”](#)

Pau Verdu i Blas from UPF

[“I have an economic background through my studies, but before SEVERE I never thought of applying it to the third sector. Right now I am doing an internship with a third sector business in Barcelona, so SEVERE really got me into social businesses.”](#)

Rose O'Dwyer from DCU

[“SEVERE has been so much more than what I had imagined \[...\] the whole experience has been unbelievable, life-changing.”](#)

Esme Allen, GCU

[“SEVERE has encouraged me to be more engaged in my community, I find myself looking for news articles related to social issues and I am more open to having conversations on how to help me.”](#)

4.6. **Second cohort** February-June 2023

During the third year, a second pilot was tested whereby the student teams were formed remotely, and did all their training remotely as well. Around 40 students participated as part of the second cohort, and between them formed six groups. Apart from the staff mentors, some students from the first cohort also volunteered to mentor groups, allowing them to share their learnings and experiences from their previous training.

Between January to April 2023, monthly sessions were organised for the second cohort on the following topics:

- **January** Ideation Workshop
- **February** Presentation of Project Concept Boards
- **April** Design Thinking Workshop
- **April** Utilising TikTok for a Business Pitch

All teams were asked to submit TikTok videos as their final output. The most active students in each of the teams were then selected to participate in a three-day workshop, and the project's culminating event, in Aveiro in June 2023. Some of their student mentors from the first cohort also joined the final activities in Aveiro.



Although an initial agenda had been prepared, we also took the opportunity during the first day to ask the students what they wanted and needed during these trainings. Based on their requests, different aspects of social entrepreneurship were reviewed such as ideation, operations and financing, communications, and social impact.



They were also able to present their projects to a wider audience, which included their fellow students and mentors.

Here you can find one of the project presentations from Cohort 2: [HomeCycle.pptx](#).

During the final trainings in Aveiro, we also designed and printed [posters of all the projects](#) which was another way of showcasing the students' ideas to one another.



[HomeCycle.pptx](#)



[All posters](#)

View from one of the partners

The Final meeting in Aveiro allowed the students from the second cohort to present their wireframe prototypes of their ideas - some were concepts and others were closer to prototypes. But it also allowed us to workshop with the students about their experiences with the project. We got them to do some creative writing and we got them to create an anonymous word cloud of their experience with SEVERE.





4.7. Insights

What went well	Lessons Learnt
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– The pitching workshop that followed the winter school provided a pathway for the integration of those who missed the summer school.– Students made a lot of progress during the 2 events where they could physically meet (decide on a topic to work on, create a group dynamic, progress on the development of their project...).– The format of the winter school allowed students to reflect, rethink, and reshape their ideas during the three days.– There are a lot of business and design faculty members in the team and the selection and availability of the tools was straightforward.– We also workshopped the tools with the students at our various bootcamps - and this worked well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Face to Face meetings are crucial as they not only helped students to work intensively on their projects together with experts but also created relationships between team members and improved groups' dynamics.– Organisations should ensure that students selected to participate in the 3-year training will stay at the University during the whole training. If that is not possible the training should be shorter and perhaps divided into few smaller cohorts.– It is difficult to keep students motivated and engaged during the whole training thus if possible the training should be embedded into existing curriculum– The role of mentors is crucial. It is important to select mentors who can not only help students to develop their ideas but also help them with other challenges such as conflicts and disputes between team members. Mentors should have abilities to bring students from different backgrounds and cultures together.– Recruitment process should ensure that selected students are high calibres and they are highly motivated and prepared to commit their time and energy to additional activities– More intercultural training should be provided– It's hard to know to what extent the students continue to use the tools outside the formal classes we provide.

5.

Student Projects

Our first cohort of students produced a total of nine social innovation projects of which eight completed the course and were presented in Florence. Given the challenges of engaging students in extra-curricular projects, we were proud to see their commitment grow as they became more aware and engaged in solving social issues. Many have reported by the end of the project that their intention had evolved, from being enticed by international travel to caring deeply about their project and their social impact.



5.1. **Study Space** Health

- Cristina Monteiro UAv
- Costantino Pio Landi PIN
- Costanza Cappelli PIN
- Maria Pinheiro UAv
- Mathilde Le Floch MBS
- Julze Alejandre GCU
- Roisin McDonald GCU
- Maria Morim UAv

Study Space is an online and offline application that aims to tackle isolation, depression and anxiety in students, especially those with mental health conditions. These motivated social innovators draw on their own experiences of struggling through the COVID-19 pandemic to create a tool that will support students going through mental health difficulties. After conducting a market analysis and finding the gap left by current available tools, they have designed a centralised digital platform to build a social community and provide users with productivity and wellbeing tips, motivational videos, curated music playlists as well as socials and forums. With the help of their well-devised financial plan, they are hoping to develop the application further with real-time chats and other features.

Study space has received encouraging results from conducting a trial run on students, of which 67% would like to use the application in the future.



[Study Space Instagram](#)



5.2. **Endii** Disability/ Accessibility

- Katie Donoghue DCU
- Chiara Canneva PIN
- Clara Serano UAv
- Georgia Grogan DCU
- Catarina Cruz UAv
- Marie Prat MBS
- Elettra Sarno PIN

Endii is a HR platform with customisable profiles for neurodiverse job seekers that highlights skills and interests rather than employment history and credentials. Coming from a neurodiverse team, this project aims to counteract the systematic overlooking of candidates with conditions such as autism, ADHD, OCD, dyslexia, etc. Despite excelling at innovative thinking, problem solving, creativity and passion, neurodiverse individuals are often judged solely on characteristics and stereotypes about their condition. Thus, 80% of neurodivergent are unemployed as they do not conform with the biased company fit.

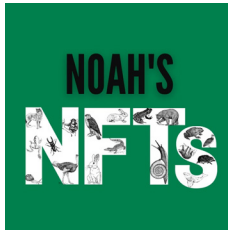
Endii therefore offers a personalised platform for neurodiverse applicants, where the focus will not be on ableist questionnaires or gaps in employment, but on their talent and who they truly are. Supported by AI technologies and machine learning, candidates will be matched with companies looking for skilled and talented individuals. These companies will in turn access a database of tips for creating an equitable hiring process.



[Endii Instagram](#)



[Endii evaluation video](#)



5.3. **Noah's NFTs** Environment

- Pau Verdú i Blas UPF
- Jonathan Lieber GCU
- Rose O'Dwyer DCU
- Léane Folituu MBS
- Joan Freixa Martínez UPF
- Sabrina Marchi PIN

Acting on the alarming fact that 22.7% of European wildlife species are in threat of extinction, **Noah's NFTs** aims to assist small wildlife protection NGOs gain access to a new type of income: NTFs sales. NFTs are the property rights over a piece of digital art which would be created according to a specific threatened species, making it an accessible strategy for NGOs with little starting budget. Furthermore, using blockchain technology, **Noah's NFTs** plans on curbing the instability of the digital market through the unique registration of each NFTs and the involvement of numerous businesses.

The targeted charities are smaller, often unknown NGOs, which are closer to European threatened species but also suffer from little brand awareness. Thus, **Noah's NFTs** plans on assisting with brand awareness strategies, as well as donating 75% of the NFT's auction, in a transparent and durable way.



[Noah's NFTs
Instagram](#)



[Noah's NFTs
evaluation video](#)



5.4. **The Recollective** Fast fashion

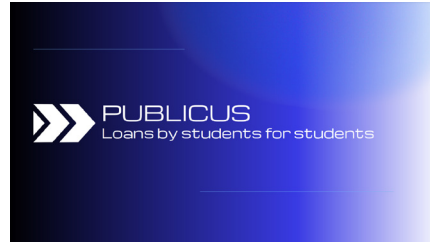
- Isobel Malone DCU
- Adrià Baselga UPF
- Taylor Byrne DCU
- Celia Burrel Esteban UPF
- Esme Frances Laurence Allen GCU
- Asmaa Rhallab MBS
- Mehetabel Ojienor DCU
- Elisa Cappiello PIN

The Recollective presents a community-based solution to fast fashion through the creation of a platform mapping second-hand and vintage alternatives to global retailers. The fashion market is in dire need of social innovation initiatives, as it is the third most polluting industry in the world and produces 20% of all water waste. Despite this, our consumption of clothes is exponentially increasing.

To combat this, **The Recollective** is creating a mapping website that will bridge the gaps left by mainstream map applications when it comes to lesser-known addresses offering slow fashion wares. Thanks to this accessible digital platform, tourists and locals both will be able to share sustainable spots, but also tips through chats and blog posts. The aim is to create a vibrant community of people sharing the same values and making sustainable fashion easy and accessible. The mapping will first start in Dublin, then expand to Glasgow and finally Montpellier, before a possible further expansion as the platform grows. A thorough communication plan has been devised to grow both an online and offline presence through social media, events, meet-ups, etc.



[The Recollective
Instagram](#)



5.5. **Publicus** Social finance

- Leonardo Fossi PIN
- Albert Cabané Ballester UPD
- Dominic Lo GCU
- Rifa Abderrahim MBS
- Paule-Valere Mabounda MBS
- Giovanni Mannucci PIN

Publicus has devised a simplified loan scheme catering to international students who face numerous obstacles to financial assistance when abroad. Indeed local loans schemes usually require paperwork that is unavailable to foreign students; using the example that one needs a French sponsor to apply for a loan in a French bank. These administrative obstacles can make the difference between affording basic necessities and going overdraw, especially when 20% of youth in France lives under the poverty line.

To remedy this issue, they are offering short-term loans as well as long-term loans and advertising to a wide market that has been overlooked for too long. **Publicus** will therefore have a multiple scaled social impact by lowering inequalities while supporting student wellbeing and empowerment.



[Publicus Instagram](#)



DEVICEUS

5.6. **Deviceus** Circular Economy

- Isaac de la Cruz Orriols UPF
- Conor Stapleton DCU
- Amina Abaryoud PIN
- Somto Amechi GCU
- Inês Martins UAv
- Veronica Miedico PIN
- Liliana Araujo PIN

Working towards a circular economy, **Deviceus** proposes a way for people to discard their unused phone in a sustainable manner. This social enterprise plans to operate on a phone refurbishing model and sets itself apart with the fact that it will accept working phones to be resold, but also non-working phones. These defective phones that will not be put back into the market, will then be sold in bulk for their raw materials. **Deviceus** plans on installing collecting bins, starting in universities and later expanding to supermarkets and other public spaces. As an incentive for people to give their phone, they plan on making merchandise available to donors, also serving as a marketing tool.

This way, **Deviceus** plans to not only reduce the global emissions of CO₂ through the upcycling of phones, but also hopes to raise awareness about the inhumane conditions of raw material mining often involving child labour.



[Deviceus Instagram](#)



[Deviceus
evaluation video](#)



5.7. **3 of life** Social Justice

- Sabina Ruíz-Herrera UPF
- Manuel Santos UAv
- Tanguy Schubert MBS
- Leah O'Connell Oseni DCU
- Samuel Pagani PIN
- Carolina Neves UAv
- Claudia Fernandes UAv

3 of life tackles a deeply concerning flaw in society: the marginalisation of the elderly – out of 29 million surveyed senior citizens, 59% report feeling lonely –. The solution they offer is a 3-stage program, compiling a variety of key activities, involving animals, art, cooking, languages, music, nature, etc. to cater to the diverse elder demographic. Starting in Portugal with powerful partnerships and physical advertising of pre-established activity centres, they hope to eventually own their own community centre where they will hold their events.

Through getting the elderly – especially those who live by themselves – to spend more time out of their isolation using physical and mental health, **3 of life** wants to create a real impact when it comes to social inclusion.



[3 of life Instagram](#)



[3 of life
evaluation video](#)



5.8. **Cate** Social Justice

- Renato Silva UAv
- Eva Oliveira UAv
- Stan Goodwin DCU
- Celine Massari MBS
- Pauline Corre MBS
- Cecilia Zurli PIN
- Ana Rita Gaspar UAv

Cate stirs two concepts together to create long-lasting social impact: food and the integration of refugees. All the while 1 out of 78 people have to flee conflict at some point in their life and find themselves uprooted into a new country, we are still practising very poor integration of refugees into local communities. But how can we get people with different cultures, traditions and language to connect?

For **Cate**, the answer is culinary experience as “food is a bonding agent that brings people together”. Starting in Portugal thanks to a strong partnership with CPR (Portuguese council for refugees), the plan is to organise regular gastronomic experiences taught by refugees using school-based industrial kitchens. Eventually Cate would like to put together cookbooks, video tutorials and more to help break the stigma through multicultural experiences.

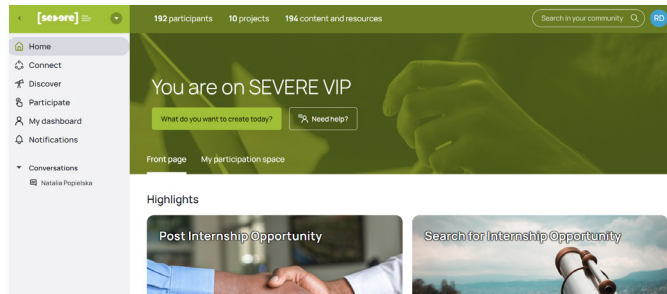
The results demonstrated the scalability of this project. Across international borders, young people are increasingly attentive to their surroundings and only need the tool and guidance to be able to pursue their potential in concretizing social innovation. Some students have said they wished to pursue their concept despite the SEVERE project ending, while others have moved onto professional opportunities within the third sector, showing the impact of this project on their career.



[All students' presentations](#)

6.

Virtual Internships Platform



An online platform was developed for promoting micro-Internship opportunities within social enterprises. The Virtual Internships Platform (VIP) was designed as a tool to increase the availability and visibility of internship opportunities – especially those that could be carried out virtually - within the Social Innovation/Social Enterprise sector, improving employability among young people interested in SI whilst also supporting social enterprises to recruit for small scale projects.

The platform identifies micro-internship opportunities which allows students/graduates and young professionals to work remotely on short-term projects while continuing to take courses, live in the halls and have other jobs. It also includes a space for students and stakeholders to communicate and share their experiences.

It has been 'road-tested' at the participant institutions who have been promoting the initiative to local social enterprises and other social innovation actors, as well as to their students taking part in the initial Preparation Programme. It was launched during the final year of the project and monitored/validated by the project partners. It is now openly accessible.

I have an economic background through my studies, but before SEVERE I never thought of applying it to the third sector. Right now I am doing an internship with a third sector business in Barcelona, so SEVERE really got me into social businesses.

Pau Verdu Universitat Pompeu Fabra

6.1. **Rationale**

Nowadays, internships have become an important tool to bring students, companies and universities closer to each other. The economic environment has become extremely challenging and entering the job market very competitive. Thus, internships are more important than ever, allowing young people to gain valuable experience and enter their first jobs. However, geographical, financial and time constraints can limit their attendance in internships. What is more, internship opportunities are not equally distributed in higher institutions. According to research, internship opportunities vary within the European Union: some universities offer full time or summer internships as an integrated element of the degree/programme, while others do not have this capacity or resources. In this case, students and graduates need to search for professional experience by themselves which is both, time consuming and very stressful.

In addition, students interested in social enterprises and community groups frequently report having difficulties locating a relevant internship in their field.¹ What is more, according to research 4 in 10 businesses in the European Union report difficulties finding staff with relevant skills.²

That is why new feasible approaches are needed to solve these problems. Virtual internships can be one of the solutions. Advances in technology changed how people study, work and participate in the community. Using digital technologies allow individuals to access information, opportunities, learning tools, share and create materials. What is more, the use of digital platforms and forums support open communication and collaboration. In that way virtual internships can offer the same benefits as traditional ones and much more.

¹ <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Why-Internships-Can-Ease-the/248031>

² https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3075_en.pdf

Virtual Internships:

Advantages	Disadvantages
No extra costs for students (money saved on moving to another country, rent etc.)	Lack of social interaction and physical space
Flexibility/accessibility	Different time zones
Autonomy	Information breach/ security
Languages	Self-organisation
Building up professional network	Limited subjects
Tackle climate change (save space, energy, resources)	Difficult knowledge transfer
Develop employability skills/help to define the career path	Language and cultural barriers
More opportunities available within SI	
Good solution for social enterprises with limited resources	
Use of technology	

Related articles

- Using Virtual Internships as an Innovative learning technique
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281452464_Using_Virtual_Internships_as_an_Innovative_learning_technique
- What next for digital social innovation
https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/dsi_report.pdf
- Virtual Internships: Opportunities for Experiential Learning and International Collaboration in Digital Curation Curricula
<https://cf5-www.ifa.org/past-wlic/2011/217-franks-en.pdf>
- Inclusive Education and Digital Social innovation
<http://116.203.177.230/index.php/ASSRJ/article/view/2861/1669>
- How 'Micro-Internships' Could Make All Types of Students More Employable
<https://www.chronicle.com/article/How-Micro-Internships-/245470>
- Insights into skill shortages and skills mismatch
https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3075_en.pdf

6.2. **Design**

The Internship platform was designed to be a valuable tool (a bridge between theory and practice) to gather opportunities for young people. These internships would help them to improve their skills and knowledge in the area of social innovation and give them relevant international work experience.

The platform would collect micro-internship opportunities which allow students/graduates and young professionals to work remotely on short-term projects while continuing to take courses, live in the halls and have other jobs. Enterprises would be asked to supervise a student and propose a small project to be implemented or a challenge to be solved. Interested companies will have to prepare a summary of their project/challenge along with transparent terms and conditions of the internship and submit it to the portal.

Target groups universities, NGOs, training institutions, social innovation enterprises, public/private institutions, companies, students, graduates, young professionals, people with disabilities.



[Digital Guide
to using
SEVERE VIP](#)



6.3. Insights

What went well

- We created some design principles of what was required from the platform.
- When looking at our requirements, we decided that rather than creating a website from scratch, that we could use the Glocal website which had all the functionality we required. This had the effect of both accelerating the project and reducing the costs.
- The Glocal website is also already being used by the SEVERE participants and this made it an even more practical proposition.

Lesson learnt

- Getting organisations and students to engage with the platform has been challenging. We have devised two approaches, uploading the company details, logos etc. or writing to the organisations we've targeted and ask them to upload their own details themselves. Which-ever approach we've used, ultimately the company's need to have a proactive interest in using the platform if they are going to post meaningful opportunities.

7.

Communication and Dissemination

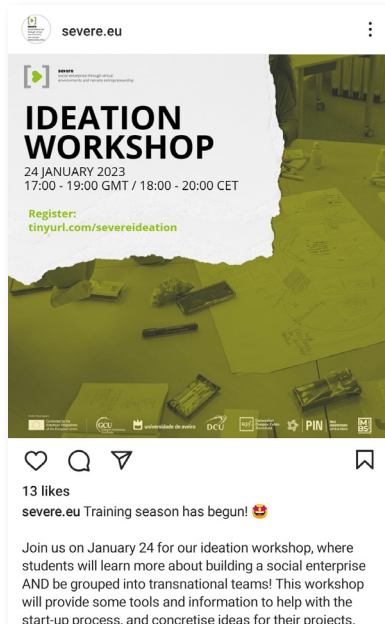
The dissemination and communication strategy was devised to fulfil the EU's criteria in maximising benefits from the projects and encourage scalability. Understanding the difference between Dissemination (promotion and raising awareness of project results and outputs) and Communication (making project activities known to society throughout the project) allows for accurate and targeted action.

We identified multiple target groups:

- Students to be reached for participating in the project (cohort 1 and 2), but also non-participating students who can benefit from awareness of such projects organised by their Universities.
- Social innovation organisations and enterprises that can benefit from accessing a pool of international and motivated students. Some have also been involved in Breakfast events, or for small sessions with similar interest student groups.
- Universities and organisations that would be interested in replicating the project. This target group supports sustainability and scalability of the project. They are to be reached by the ebook, and have also been involved during multiplier events.

A website was created to serve as the central platform for disseminating all the events, IOs, and resources while showcasing the student's projects. It also proves the implementation of the project. It was designed in-keeping with the brand of the project to contribute to a correct narrative of its objectives and activities.

7.1. Social Media Management



Considering the social media panorama nowadays, it is important to highlight video content and, thus, define a budget for professional recording and editing. We recommend a consistent content creation that makes the project engaging and visible.

Social media channels like Instagram and Twitter demand an eye-catching and succinct delivery. Showcasing students' experience and feedback in video format has proved to well our most performing posts, thus we underline the importance of sharing a relatable image of the project.

We chose to have four main social media channels ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#)) to maximise our online presence but also to make the most of different content formats, be it long-form written posts, videos, reels, images, etc.

Different target groups use social media channels, and we have noticed a better engagement from students on Instagram, while Facebook has been more inclined towards professionals. Twitter has shown to be a sweet middle spot between the two. As for the YouTube channel, it is mostly used as a host for video content to be posted elsewhere but has not been subject to engagement in itself. Students engage most with contents centred around students' experience like interviews and pictures.





7.2. Insights

What went well	Lesson learnt
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Having a coherent image and strategy from the beginning helped to convey the identity and contents of the project.- The website is well-designed and offers a professional display of the SEVERE project.- Taking advantage of all the events (whether in-person or online) for content on social media (i.e. live tweets and Instagram stories)- Using social media not just to share information about the project itself, but also to share posts on related topics (i.e. social enterprises, funding opportunities, tips for social entrepreneurs, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Terms of service are necessary when hiring external contractors, in this case, for the design and creation of the website. This allows for a clearly outlined set of expectations and services, which, for a website, should also include technical support and maintenance.- The hosting server for the website should also be big enough dependent on the perceived communication materials for the project (i.e. enough space for uploading multiple photos and videos).- It is crucial to set up a team for social media updates. At least two people minimum since preparing content always needs copywriting and image creation. Having templates and setting up programmed posts helps with engagement and results.



social enterprise through virtual
environments and remote entrepreneurship



Quality Assurance

The quality control, monitoring and evaluation of the project was carried out by project partners and a specially selected Advisory and Evaluation Committee consisting of representatives of community groups - social innovators, policy makers, educational organizations, minority groups, local authorities, NGOs, professionals, SMEs, and women and youth organizations and other relevant actors.

Each deliverable of the project was duly assessed and evaluated according to defined criteria outlined below, reports reviewed and partners results interrogated at the five meetings held over the course of the project. A neutral evaluator was also subcontracted by the project with the express purpose of assessing the project in a comprehensive and unbiased way.

A timetable is also included below to show the various deliverables of the project, and at what month they were expected to be completed or submitted. During the first year of the project, some of these deliverables were evaluated, and the table was reviewed and revised for years 2 and 3. This, of course, is flexible and will largely depend on how an institution envisions the project to be implemented.

8.1. **Quality Measures**

Although not exclusive, the specific quality measures for evaluating the project progress were as follows:

1. Ownership by beneficiaries – the extent to which community groups and other beneficiaries of the project have input into the design and delivery of the work packages and are sufficiently committed to ensure sustainability after the end of the EC financing.
2. Policy support – relevance of activities and deliverables to the sector and policy needs, and the extent to which the governmental organisations have demonstrated support for activities beyond the period of the project.
3. Appropriate technology – whether the technologies applied by the partners are suitable and sustainable in the long term.
4. Socio-cultural issues – the extent to which the project deliverables and activities take into account local socio-cultural norms and attitudes, and which measures have been taken to ensure that all beneficiary groups will have appropriate access to project services and benefits during and after implementation.
5. Gender equality – how the project will take into account the specific needs and interests of women and men and will lead to sustained and equitable access by women and men to the services and infrastructures, as well as the project's contribution to reduced gender inequalities in the longer term.
6. Environmental protection – the extent to which the project's deliverables and activities preserve or damage the environment and therefore support or undermine achievement of longer term benefits.
7. Institutional and management capacity – the ability and commitment of the consortium partners to deliver the project, and to continue to provide services beyond the time frame of the project itself.

8. Economic and financial viability – whether the incremental benefits of the project provide value for money, and if the project represents a viable long-term investment.
9. Consistency with the aims and objectives of the project as defined within the Logical Framework.
10. Transferability and scalability of the project results.

Timetable of delivery of reports including deliverable number and expected delivery date (year one)

Year 1 Deliverables	Delivery date
WP1 Management	
Kick-off meeting	M3
Formation of A&E Committee	M6
Technical and Financial reports	M12
A&E Committee annual review	M12
First SEVERE annual conference	M12
WP2 Handbook	
Review of needs and online resources	M4
Completion of handbook presentation (working version)	M6
WP3 Training	
Contents for Preparation Programme	M4
Preparation Programme launched and implemented	M6
Summer School programme devised	M6
Summer School delivered and teams formed	M12
WP4 Virtual Incubation	
Virtual Incubation Platform launched in partner HEIs	M9
WP5 Internships	
Stakeholders for Micro-Internship needs analysis recruited	M12
WP6 Dissemination	
Establishment of Visual Identity and Branding	M3
Dissemination event 'Concepts of Remote Working'	M6

8.2. Advisory and Evaluation Committee

The Advisory and Evaluation committee was constituted to ensure the input of an impartial voice throughout the project. The Committee was composed of seven social innovation experts, one from each partner country, with two from the UK. They represented academic institutions, SI agencies, development agencies, entrepreneurs, investors, community leaders, the private and public sector and civil society. All had expertise in some aspects of the project and were selected for their knowledge, experience and networks.

The Terms of Reference for the Committee can be found [here](#).

They played a key role in monitoring the project and reviewing its accomplishments, meeting every six months with an annual review meeting at month 12, 24 and 36. They were also invited to relevant consortium meetings. Their contribution held significant importance in guiding the consortium and providing an external opinion on the project's activities.

Members of the Advisory and Evaluation Committee

First Name	Last Name	Position / Organization	Country
Cecília	Peixoto Carvalho	Visiting professor in Minho University and a supervisor of master students within product and service design fields.	Portugal
Annabelle	Jaouen	Full Professor of En-trepreneurship, Head of MBS Entrepreneurship Center and certified coach at Montpellier Business School.	France
Marco	Bellucci	Assistant Professor in Accounting at the University of Florence, and professor of Plan-ning and Control.	Italy
Andrea	Battlebó	Member of Tandem Social since 2011, a non-profit cooperative that works to achieve social transformation by offering consultancy services and Social Business City Barcelona Association.	Spain
James	Finnie	Senior Business Ad-visor for Community Enterprise in Scotland (CEIS), the UKs largest social enterprise development agency.	UK
David	Bryan	Head of Sustainable Business in the Social Enterprise Academy.	UK
Susan	O'Dwyer	Chief Executive at Make-A-Wish Ireland where she heads up a staff of 12 and a volunteer force of 200.	Ireland
Matt	McCann	CEO and founder of Access Earth, an organisation that provides various service to make the world a more inclusive and accessible place for everyone.	Ireland



Conclusion

The project aimed to provide students with the necessary skills and knowledge to work remotely in the context of social innovation. Overall, the project has yielded positive outcomes in terms of both student training and the ideas developed by the students during the project, as well as in the development of Intellectual Outputs.

Among the most interesting aspects that emerged from reflecting on the project's progress is the improvement observed in the students between the Summer School and the Winter School. During these months, the students worked profitably on their ideas and were able to benefit from the in-person meeting in Montpellier to refine the ideas and improve group dynamics. In terms of the in-person training, it was important to create an agenda that was not too packed to allow students time to both assimilate the concepts learned and strengthen personal relationships in interaction with academics and other students. This aspect was taken into consideration for both the Winter School and the Pitching Workshop, during which time was dedicated to mentoring and group work. As it was designed to introduce the concepts and examples of social innovation, the Summer School, was denser with more presentations and less active workshops.

Although the face-to-face workshops were crucial for maintaining relationships within the Teams, the main focus and main proportion of the work was carried out virtually. The handbook and incubation platform were invaluable resources, but it was also vital for the partners to maintain constant virtual contact with the teams, mentoring them throughout.

We hope that this E-book will serve as a model for other institutions and organizations in developing similar collaborative initiatives and will contribute to the development of a new paradigm for social innovation and knowledge exchange across the sector.

We look forward to seeing the positive impact of other projects like SEVERE in the years to come!



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