Study on promoting cross-border activities for social economy; description of 52 cases

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Study on promoting cross-border activities for social economy

Description of 52 cases

July 2022

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2023

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction

The current report has been elaborated during the course of the study entitled "Promoting cross-border activities for social economy, including social enterprises" (EASME/COSME/2018/032). The overarching objective of the study has been to study, assess and diffuse transnational social economy initiatives and activities of as well as corresponding European and national policies with a view to promoting successful approaches that could help social economy to enter the Internal Market by establishing cross-border activities and cooperation. The study has been implemented by Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL (Q-PLAN) in collaboration with the Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation Research (MERIT), Ashoka CEE (Ashoka), and Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovaçao (SPI), with the support of Dr Effie Amanatidou and Dr Dimitri Gagliardi.

In the framework of the study, **52 cases of social economy entities involved in cross-border activities have been successfully selected and interviewed by the partnership**. More specifically, the study team gathered a pool of social economy entities which included initiatives either already engaged in transnational business activities (exporting or importing) or multinational social economy start-ups with international outreach. From a geographical perspective, the following 14 EU countries – schematically depicted on the map below – were covered: AT, BE, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GR, IT, NL, PT, RO, and SI, complemented by the following 3 non-EU COSME countries: Turkey, Serbia and Albania. Apart from the countries aforementioned, cases from the UK and Ireland were included as well, as they are important players in the social economy arena – and also represent different legal forms (cooperatives, mutuals, social enterprises, etc.), business models, sectors of operation and different types of transnational activities.

Figure 1: Countries covered by the study

Overall, concise – yet thorough – individual case study summary reports have been developed for every case including: (i) a brief overview of the initiative; (ii) challenges and legal barriers encountered, (iii) the mitigation and support measures as well as (iv) the future prospects and recommendations. When relevant, the role of technology in relation to the internationalisation of the case has also been reviewed and included in the summary reports.

2. Cases of Social Economy Actors involved in cross-border activities

The table below presents the 52 cases explored during the context of the study in alphabetical order:

No	Name of case study	Country
1	Ackerdemia	Germany
2	AfB France	France
3	Atempo	Austria
4	BANCA ETICA	Italy
5	BE MY EYES	Denmark
6	Citizens in Power	Cyprus
7	Care Innovation Center in CrossCare	Netherlands
8	COLIVE OIL	Cyprus
9	Cycling Without Age	Denmark
10	Designathon	Netherlands
11	ECHO by Hospice UK	United Kingdom
12	EPEKA	Slovenia
13	EUSKAL Herriko Ikastolak Europar Kooperatiba	Spain
14	eyesfortheworld	Belgium
15	FAIRBNB	Italy
16	Fairphone	Netherlands
17	Fédération Nationale de la Mutualité Française (FNMF)	France
18	FLOOW2	Netherlands
19	Fundatia Alaturi de Voi	Romania
20	GELECEKDAHA NET	Turkey
21	HELSINKI FOUNDATION	Finland

No	Name of case study	Country
22	IES-Social Business School	Portugal
23	IPOP	Slovenia
24	Irrsinnig Menschlich	Germany
25	JUMPMATH	Spain
26	KLABU	Netherlands
27	LIBRE SPACE FOUNDATION	Greece
28	LYGO	France
29	Mobility Factory	Belgium
30	Montepio	Portugal
31	Myability	Austria
32	mymind	Ireland
33	Nasa Kuca	Serbia
34	PRAKSIS	Greece
35	PROGETTO QUID	Italy
36	Qlu Ltd.	Finland
37	Rádio Miúdos	Portugal
38	Regionalwert AG	Germany
39	REScoop	Austria
40	Rosia Montana	Romania
41	SEAL CYPRUS	Cyprus
42	Simplon.co	France
43	SMART	Belgium
44	Stichting Justdiggit Foundation	Netherlands
45	TABIT	Turkey

No	Name of case study	Country
46	TEAM U	Germany
47	Too Good To Go	Denmark
48	WHEELMAP	Germany
49	WISE GREECE	Greece
50	YAPS	Albania
51	YouthBank International	United Kingdom
52	Zeitpolster	Austria

2.1. Ackerdemia

Name of company / entity	Acker e.V. (formerly Ackerdemia e.V.)
Website	https://www.acker.co
Country	Germany
Legal status	Non-profit association
Main sector(s) of operations	Environment, Education
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2021 (first activities already in 2018)
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Austria, Switzerland

2.1.1. Overview

Acker e.V., which was founded in 2014, develops and realises sustainable, impact orientated and scientific concepts, which contribute to a responsible and healthy contact to nature and foods. They developed several projects tackling education, research and solutions. GemüseAckerdemie is their practically oriented educational program, which was developed for schools and kindergartens. Kids learn where food comes from, how it's grown and how to consume it consciously. Their main goal is to maintain contact with food and food chains, and strengthen a sustainable, climate friendly approach for the future. The entity is based in Germany and is currently replicating in Switzerland and Austria. They are constantly researching and evaluating their work, as well as finding new approaches and solutions in the field of environmental studies, nutritional science and agricultural economy in order to counter the alienation of food production. Their AckerPause project is mainly created to consult entities and companies, as well as providing trainings for them, concerning social responsibility and reconnecting with nature. In this context, they created concepts, such as Urban Farming and Office Gardening. With their BlackTurtle project Acker provides at-home Farming Sets for individuals.

Through the GemüseAckerdemie, Acker e.V. has a total of 100 employees and 500 volunteers in Germany. They are implementing their program in around 163 kindergartens and 480 schools with 2.800 teachers and 875 educators in Germany and 12 schools in Austria. So far, they already reached 48.200 children in schools and 17.300 children in kindergartens and day-care.

Their main cross-border activity is replication. They set up subsidiary companies in new countries that operate programs and fundraise for them. Country managers are usually recruited from existing staff. In 2021, they began to replicate their program in Austria. An important motive to replicate their work outside of Germany, was their strong will to accomplish a system change in the educational system in all German speaking countries, in order to bring more awareness to climate change and challenges concerning the food sector. Their goal is to scale up, multiply their impact and reach every child in the DACH

region until 2030, and therefore achieve a market penetration of 100%. Key partners for their activities in Austria are Bio Austria, which connects farmers, consumers and sellers. They are supported by the Klimabündnis Oberösterreich & Salzburg (a regional network organisation promoting climate protection) and receive funds from an EU Interreg project they started in 2018. Those partnerships had the effect of strengthening their networks in Austria and facilitating fundraising.

2.1.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

One of the main barriers is their lack of funding opportunities in the process of transnational replication, because of bureaucratic barriers and the limited size of possible funding sources in the educational and agricultural sector. Especially in the founding process, it was complicated for the GemüseAckerdemie to draw seed funding. Since its core concept has already been developed and implemented in Germany, GemüseAckerdemie is not considered a StartUp. At the same time, there is also no business promotion for their commercial GmbHs, since they provide non-profit activities in Austria and therefore do not fit into the funding schemes. That's why the affiliated entities are getting the majority of financial support from the mother organisation in Germany (2021: 10.000€ seed funding for GemüseAkcerdemie in Austria). This leads to the ambiguity of the affiliated entity to, on the one hand, wanting to act more independently, on the other hand, needing systematic accompaniment by their mother organisation, as well as by governmental actors and institutions. Furthermore, the entity is concerned that their intellectual property cannot be protected properly. Their programs are distributed widely and could potentially be reproduced by other entities. This is one of the main reasons why Acker e.V. decided to set up subsidiary entities in new countries that can assure that their programs follow their unique approach and are not being imitated. Finally, because of the different school framework in Austria, they had to adapt the program regarding minor disparities, like summer breaks or language differences.

Next to the funding from Acker's equity capital, GemüseAckerdemie, has some sources of support. Because of the bureaucratic barriers, for example challenges with accounting and billing, as well as their problem to obtain proper funding so far, they have been working with pro bono lawyers, as well as tax accountants and auditors. The Ashoka Network turned out as very useful for the mediation of lawyers and legal experts. The EU Interreg project supported the GemüseAckerdemie regarding cooperation, communication and networking between Austrian and German entities. At the moment, the GemüseAckerdemie is considering planning a new project with ERASMUS plus, which could further strengthen their network, but is not yet realised because of the lack of time and related resources. Through cooperation with more countries, their impact can be increased, and more funding sources can be identified and utilised.

Role of technology

As part of their education program Acker e.V. has created an educational platform for schools and kindergartens, which provides teachers with material, as well as training. They are aspiring to create a hybrid model in the future and work on further developing the educational platform. Nevertheless, they are facing the challenge of adapting this platform to the curriculum in Austria.

2.1.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Acker e.V. want to disseminate their impact in Austria even more, by implementing their concept in more countries all over Europe. There are already countries interested in transferring the entity's approach. In order to enable cross-border replication of Acker e.V., GemüseAckerdemie asks for less bureaucratic barriers and a manageable overview of bureaucratic processes, for example when it comes to funding, tax regulations or legal information regarding impact transfer. Acker e.V. also asks for easily accessible funding schemes and consulting, that supports impact transfer and the setup of an existing curriculum in other countries. In order to reach more people and therefore enable a system change in the educational system, Acker e.V will work more with hybrid models, connecting online tools with real-life programs for children. With the aim of transferring their program internationally, their products will be translated in multiple languages.

2.2. AfB France

Name of company / entity	AfB-France
Website	https://www.afb-group.fr/en/home/
Country	France
Legal status	In Germany: Gemeinnutziger Gmbh (in short gGmbh) Company with status of non-profit for employing disabled people In France: company, with non-profit general interest
Main sector(s) of operations	IT equipment
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2011 (AfB in Germany started in 2004)
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	In 2011 Austria; 2012 France; 2013 Switzerland; 2018 Slovakia

2.2.1. Overview

It started in Germany 15 years ago with the 'Innitiative 500', referring to the target to aim for 500 positions/jobs for people with disabilities. In 2021 500 people are indeed employed. AfB stands for "Arbeit für Menschen mit Behinderung" in German, in English: work for people with disabilities.

Gemeinnutziger Gmbh (in short gGmbh) is a non-profit company with limited liability under German law (gemeinnützige Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung. Gemeinnützig means 'non-profit', that the purpose of the company is to benefit the common good.

The exact same legal form does not exist in France, but they looked for the form that fits with the same idea. In France AfB is a normal company, but with a special status, complying with the status for helping people with a handicap on the labour market. AfB Austria is also a 'gemeinnutzige'. The legal form of AfB Switserland is 'Stiftung' (foundation). In Slovakia it is a normal company, with the status of non-profit.

Eric Laur (AfB France CEO) and Alexandra Rabiller (Directrice Communication et Marketing) explained in the interview that: "All are kind of independent but use the same tools".

Today the German holding for all countries replicates the activities in other countries by contacting social entrepreneurs in new countries that organise themselves with similar legal status and collaborate internationally, but also keep some of their independency.

Local subsidiaries employ disabled people. The motive of internationalisation and selection of new countries is based on multinational companies that ask AfB to collect their used IT equipment. Used computers are refurbished with disabled staff and resold to SMEs or other second-hand buyers. German multinationals actually asked AfB in a way to follow them internationally and also serve them in Austria, France, Switzerland and Slovakia. This is done by replication.

The entities are to an extent independent but use the same tools and offer the same services. Serving multinationals in Europe (collecting their IT equipment) they collectively offer a European solution. In all 5 countries there is collection of IT equipment. Old equipment is collected and either deleted or cleaned and refurbished. This means the equipment gets a second life, by selling it to private people or SME companies that get it for an attractive price.

The social impact refers to employing people with a handicap. The green impact relates to re-use, but also the recovery of raw material from end-of-life equipment.

The AfB group is represented in five European countries. Please select the appropriate website for your country.

AfB Germany	AfB France	AfB Austria	AfB Switzerland	AfB Slovakia
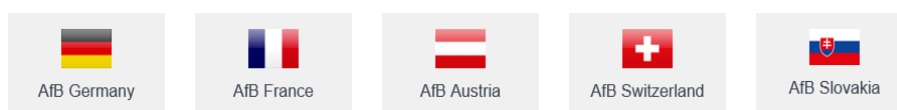
The following short overview is provided at the group website:

"Certified IT-Remarketing in Europe, For Business. For Society. For Environment; As Europe's first non-profit IT company, we are specialised in data erasure and remarketing of decommissioned IT and mobile devices from European corporations, insurances, banks and public institutions. With this IT services we create jobs for people with disabilities.

We are experts for IT-Refurbishment: We retrieve the devices with trained personnel, transports these to the nearest AfB location. There the devices are checked, all data is removed in a certified manner and required repairs are undertaken. Throughout 20 locations and online the IT-devices are remarketed with up to three years warranty. Old or defective devices are disassembled and recycled under highest ecological and ethical standards, resulting in the production of new resources in Europe.

AfB stands for "Work for people with disabilities"; Inclusion at work is a matter of course for us. For our successful social & green IT concept we have been awarded, among others, as Europe's Social Firm of the year 2020 and with the German Sustainability Award 2021.

We live CSR - We live Responsibility: Digital inclusion in society, creating jobs for people with disabilities, and conserving natural resources are firmly embedded in the core of what we do and form the basis of our daily work processes."

Our IT services company offers you top-of-the-range services in the refurbishing of your IT assets. Each step of the process is carried out in complete transparency: equipment collection, secure data erasure, equipment testing, reconditioning or material recycling. AfB combines professional service quality with ecological and social added value.

AfB is currently present in five European countries. Beyond this geographical scope, they also operate in neighbouring countries such as Italy, Spain, Benelux, Slovenia, Croatia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. E.g., on request AfB could collect hardware from those neighbouring countries.

Within Germany there are now many new locations (12), involving offices, but also shops where people can buy refurbished IT. Also, in France the number of regions and locations have grown, there are four subsidiaries in France by now, each of them are native local social entrepreneurs. "it is a soft growth model, all are social entrepreneurs". Eric Laur, started 9 years ago and leads AfB France.

Impact model

Activities	Target group(s)	Impact on target group(s)
Refurbish IT	disabled	Jobs, social
Dismantle IT		green

Business model

Offers	Customer group(s)	Type of revenue
Employing disabled, respecting their ability		Compensation for employing disabled
Collecting and Refurbishing IT	multinationals	Social, CSR
Selling refurbished IT	SME's	Sales of low-cost IT

2.2.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

It was pointed out that a couple of rules regarding employing handicapped is different between countries. This relates to subsidies and touches on the business model. In Germany 50% of employees should have a handicap to be subsidise d; in France 80% needs to be with handicap. AfB would not call this difference in regulation an 'obstacle' for starting up in France. "I would say it is a difference which may impact the business model and where French AfB needed to adapt the model to fit with the German concept".

"We do not care about the legal form", as long as it is non-profit. The difference in legal form between AfB Switserland and AfB France does not really matter, it is about finding the right people with the same attitude in their networks. "They often are partners we already have worked with before" explains Eric Laur, the AfB France CEO

On funding to start in a new country: the funding should be self-depended. The group can help, but the concerning social entrepreneur should go with a business plan to local investors.

In each location the search for local investors to fund their business plan.

Subsidies for employing disabled people is an important aspect of the business model.

Working with large multinationals that have offices in many countries and want to be served by AfB has a major benefit for all within the group. It provides a large and secure stream of IT equipment.

We all use the same tools, e.g., the same software for on-line sales, same services, same processes.

The competition is different in the various countries, it depends on local circumstances.

2.2.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

"Only when new opportunities become evident, when we have enough new customers that want us to collect their old IT we expand to new countries. For instance, a large multinational asked us if we could also do the same for them in a country, we currently have no AfB location. We are working on it, but it is quite a long process.

The 'green' impact has grown in importance, but it sometimes challenging to do that with the same social impact.

2.3. Atempo

Name of company / entity	Atempo
Website	https://www.atempo.at
Country	Austria
Legal status	Limited liability company
Main sector(s) of operations	Inclusion, access to information, equal rights
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2005
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Germany, Switzerland

2.3.1. Overview

The atempo group includes several offers, areas and entities. The following offers belong to the atempo group:

- atempo Bildung (education) supports young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, in order to find a profession or education. They make them ready for work on the computer or in gastronomy.

- In the inclusive restaurant with the name "das Lorenz" they cook freshly every day.

- capito stands for easily understandable texts and barrier-free houses.

- nueva conducts surveys of people with learning difficulties and disabilities in homes and workshops.

- ava is a homepage, where people, who look for assistance, and people, who offer assistance can connect.

An important part of the atempo group is the association "atempo zur Gleichstellung von Menschen". The non-profit organisation atempo GmbH was founded in 2005 by Walburga Fröhlich and Klaus Candussi. atempo GmbH implements the offers "Bildung", "das Lorenz" and "capito" for the region of Styria (capito Graz). With "capito" and "nueva" atempo has built up a social franchise network, for which the company called CFS (Consulting, Franchise & Sales GmbH) is responsible. CFS also develops the homepage ava. Altogether the atempo Group has around 80 employees. Approximately 20 of those employees are people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

2.3.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Social sector response to social business and social franchising: In the past, Atempo's main challenge was the negative perception of social franchising and social business by social economy entities. Social economy entities wanted to use the capito methods but did not want to act or appear as profit-driven or market-oriented „businesses ". Atempo adapted the way it promoted its offer to potential partners emphasising the notions of partnership and networking and – with support from the social entrepreneurship ecosystem – tried to promote social entrepreneurship in the social sector.

Entering new markets and ecosystems: The upcoming challenge for Atempo is to enter the US market, which means that, for the first time, they have to provide their translation services in a non- German speaking market. Another challenge Atempo is facing is the search and cooperation with new partners.

Today (2021), Atempo has 21 social franchise partner entities in Austria, Germany and Switzerland. 60 additional entities use capito internally for their own communication and are connected to the capito network, as so-called quality partners. Such quality partners are, for example, non-profit NGOs, but also government departments or disability commissioners. These partnerships also contribute to changing society's perception of people with learning and reading difficulties. Atempo's franchise partners are legally and economically independent entities or individuals, who represent capito regionally on the market or act as sales partners for the capito network nationwide. At the beginning of their partnership with capito, they received a detailed know-how transfer.

Role of technology

Technology is changing the work, roles and skills in the franchise network. Everyday information (like Wikipedia) should be accessible for every user. There should always be the possibility to translate this information (i.e., through FREEMIUM) and to facilitate communication. Atempo's demand is that every sender makes use of professional services, in order to facilitate complicated information. These offers can be made by service providers or franchise partners, like i.e., editors or people trained with the atempo tools.

The application of artificial intelligence and apps will change the provision of services and the roles and tasks performed by social franchise partners. Soon, users will be enabled to translate "everyday life" information by themselves using the AI driven capito app (Freemium model). For areas where proper understanding is crucial and where the sender will continue to be responsible for providing clear and comprehensible information, a professional service provided by editors will still be offered. This service can still be provided by franchise partners and other service providers. Or client staff can be trained to work with capito tools that will be supported by AI (automated recommendations, readability checks, etc.). But also, franchise partners will be assisted by AI in translating complex information. The challenge, the entity is facing within this digitalisation process, is the assumed impact on partnerships and network.

2.3.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

In the future Atempo is planning to enter the US markets, which means they need more scaling capital, as well as an evaluation of local markets and needs. Therefore, they will need to meet regional stakeholders, authorities and possible partners.

2.4. Banca Etica

bancaetica

Name of company / entity	Banca Etica
Website	https://www.bancaetica.it/
Country	Italy
Legal status	Cooperative Bank
Main sector(s) of operations	Financial services
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2005
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Banca Etica has physical branches in Spain, by replicating its model on the ground and recruiting local staff. The bank aims to create impact investment in Spain in partnership with local networks like REAS (Red de Redes de ECONOMIA ALTERNATIVA Y SOLIDARIA). Furthermore, Banca Etica supports projects implemented in Southern countries through participation in relevant networks and associations, like the MICROFIDES (Microfinance and Development Foundation) through which micro credit is provided to projects implemented in Southern countries, e.g. such as social businesses in Africa. The projects are selected via the involvement of local partners/members of the networks.

2.4.1. Overview

Banca Etica was first conceptualised at the end of the 1980s, following the notion of Mutua per l'Autogestione (MAG), the financial cooperatives operating in the field of ethical and critical finance in Italy, and the need of social entities and individuals for a financial institution that would be driven by the desire for a transparent and responsible management of financial resources and would be able to fund socio-economic initiatives inspired by the values of sustainable social and human development. The bank became a reality in December 1994 with the founding of the Verso Banca Etica Association, that was then transformed in 1995 into the Verso Banca Etica Cooperative. In the process of raising the necessary share capital (at the time it was 6.5 million Euros), thousands of citizens joined the founding entities[1] in becoming shareholders of the bank. The total amount of required share capital was raised by 1998 and shortly afterwards the Bank of Italy granted Banca Etica with authorisation to operate. In 2000 Etica Funds was established, a mutual fund aiming to invest only in sectors and companies that meet certain criteria for protecting the environment, human rights and good corporate governance.[2]

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[1] ACLI (Associazioni Cristiane Lavoratori Italiani), AGESCI (Associazione Guide e Scout Cattolici Italiani), ARCI (Associazioni Ricreative Culturali Italiane), Ass. Botteghe del Commercio Equo Solidale, Ass. Italiana Agricoltura Biologica, CGM (Consorzio Gino Mattarelli), Cooperativa Oltremare, Cooperazione Terzo Mondo, CtmMag (attuale Consorzio Etimos), Emmaus Italia, Europe Conservation, Fiba-Cisl Brianza, Gruppo Abele, Janus, Mag 2 Finance Milano, Mag 4 Piemonte Torino, Mag Venezia, Mani Tese, Overseas, Uisp, and Ust-Cisl Brianza. Source: https://www.bancaetica.it/about-us

[2] https://www.eticasgr.com/en

Shortly after the establishment of Banca Etica in Italy, the idea for the establishment of an Ethical Bank in Spain spurred. In 2002, Banca Etica's story intersected with that of FIARE, a Basque Popular Foundation. The shared values and goals between the two facilitated the cultivation of collaboration that resulted in 2005 in the creation of the FIARE Agency, which placed Banca Etica's products in Spain. In 2012 Area FIARE was established that allowed the first Spanish members to invest in Banca Etica's share capital, twinning with volunteer members of both countries supplemented by the appointment of the first Spanish councilman to the Board of Directors. In 2014 the first branch opened in Bilbao, under the brand name FIARE Banca Etica. Currently, there are three (3) offices in Spain operating (Bilbao, Madrid, Barcelona), while several info points are established in the most important cities of Spain supplemented by an online banking platform facilitating financial transactions[3]. Overall, in about 12 years' time Banca Etica managed to create a replica of its model in Spain using a banking and savings management model following the principles of ethical finance.

Apart from its expansion to Spain, Banca Etica also engages in microfinance activities in Southern countries (e.g., in Africa) via the networks and associations it participates in, e.g. the MICROFIDES (Microfinance and Development Foundation) network, the INAISE (the International Association of Investors in the Social Economy) or the CRESUD S.P.A., a large network for social enterprises that provides opportunities of financing. To this end, the local partners identify interesting projects that are then shared with the networks and Banca Etica. Should the projects receive a positive evaluation, both from an economic and social perspective, then they are funded.

Regarding its business model, Banca Etica is characterised by the principle of shareholder supremacy: all shareholders have the same voting power, regardless of the number of shares owned, according to the principle 'one person, one vote'. Currently, the bank has more than 40,000 shareholders. As reported in the 2020 Annual Impact Report[4], based on the framework proposed by the OECD in 2019, Banca Etica works in the field of both social financing (i.e., generating a social return and with a below-the-market rate) and impact investments with financial returns in line with market rates. Some of the bank's lending activities also fall under the category of "Sustainable and responsible investments", i.e., financing (especially personal loans) granted by only taking into account the exclusion criteria adopted by the bank, which, in any case, guarantee the "non-detrimental" nature of the investment.

Concerning its impact model, Banca Etica aims to:

- provide credit to any entity founded on ethical values, helps the disadvantaged or vulnerable, conserves the environment or respect peoples' rights,
- form partnerships with social economy entities, local authorities, religious associations, environmental associations, trade unions, local committees, etc., to support other entities and projects with high social impact.

The funding of enterprises or projects is performed against a set of social, environmental and economic criteria, which guarantee ethical behaviour and social impact. The evaluation model used is called 'VARI' (Values Requisites Indicators) requiring two steps: firstly, each financing request must be preceded by an application form in which the social enterprise is described in its essential lines (such as type of entity, human resources framework, main activities, main economic information) supplemented by a review of the ethical values followed to ensure that ethical financing can be given. If this step is completed, the enterprise is evaluated based on the VARI model, which consists of 9 basic Values. For

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[3] Dumitru, A.; Lema-Blanco, I.; García-Mira, R.; Haxeltine, A. and Frances. A. (2015). WP4 Case Study Report: Credit Unions. TRANSIT: EU SSH.2013.3.2-1 Grant agreement no: 613169

[4] Banca Etica, Impact Report 2020, Executive Summary / June 2020

each value Requisites and Indicators have been developed that help the Bank explore the extent to which the enterprise or the project guarantees the respect of Values.

2.4.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

FIARE Banca Etica is the first credit cooperative with branches in two European countries. The challenges in this endeavour associated with the establishment of good cooperation and collaboration between FIARE (in Spanish, "the Foundation for Investment and Responsible Saving") and Banca Etica before the second would proceed to establishing branches in Spain. To this end, a contract was signed in 2005 between Banca Etica and FIARE through which FIARE was established as an "exclusive operating agent" of Banca Etica in Spain. From the 2005 agreement, FIARE launched its financial activities in the country. After years of stable collaboration between the two entities, FIARE merged into Banca Etica in 2013. A year later, in 2014, FIARE obtained the formal authorisation of the Spanish regulator (Bank of Spain) to operate as a bank under the Spanish legislation. Regarding the legal aspects associated with the expansion of Banca Etica in Spain, the target country was selected due to the similar legal frameworks governing banks between the two. Indeed, the legal framework in this occasion facilitated the process of opening branches in Spain.

Currently, as discussed with Banca Etica representatives, the bank is aiming to address the following challenges in relation to its future transnational activities:

- the differences in the legal frameworks of social enterprises that operate in Italy with those that operate in Spain, which have to be properly addressed by the Bank in both countries,

- the use of ICT in the bank's operations, and the insurance of data flows of client data, and

- the further expansion of its services to countries beyond Italy and Spain that can only be performed through participation in relevant European and international networks and collaboration with local partners therein. Moreover, they are also exploring how technology and fintech, in particular, can help further sustain their services in the long run.

The challenges abovementioned are addressed by Banca Etica through building trustworthy relations with European and international finance networks that can help Banca Etica to obtain a better understanding of the enterprises or projects to be funded in the countries outside of Italy and Spain. For example, Banca Etica has developed collaboration with two Equity Crowd-funding platforms that have helped Banca Etica to extend its network and fund businesses and projects in Southern countries in the areas of circular economy, or digital start-ups with high social impact.

Regarding the use of ICT, it is considered a challenge that the bank addresses via the elaboration of its own applications. As discussed during the interview, they updated their technological infrastructure so as to better analyse impacts of prospective borrowers. Most importantly, Banca Etica and FIARE Banca Etica work together to develop (digital) financial solutions that abide both to the Spanish and the Italian laws.

In terms of support, as discussed during the interview and identified via the relevant reports, the bank has mainly relied upon the relevant European and international networks that it is part of or collaborates with, while financial support is obtained via relevant funding streams such as the European Investment Fund or World Bank.

2.4.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

The future prospects of Banca Etica concern the further digitalisation of its financial instruments – while ensuring the secure data flow between the Spanish and the Italian branches – and more advancements in the fintech area, that may be used by Italian, Spanish or any other entity across the world. Such advancements can foster Banca Etica's social impact on global scale. To this end, apart from the creation of new apps or platforms, the bank aims to further train its employees both in Italy and Spain on relevant tools and applications.

As discussed also above, Banca Etica wishes to continue its international activities by offering new services and products primarily to Southern regions of the world. To this end, building further its ties with relevant European or international associations, such as CoopMed (Microfinance Fund in the MENA countries), CoopEst (an Impact Investment fund created by FEBEA to promote social and economic development in Central and Eastern Europe), the Global Alliance for Banking on Values (GABV) , will continue helping the process.

In collaboration with Caritas and PerMicro (a microcredit company), they recently launched a guarantee fund that will help vulnerable people and families as well as small enterprises to gain access to microcredit, supplemented by financial training courses. This agreement has been made so as to counter the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable people and small enterprises primarily in Italy but may be expanded elsewhere.

Finally, Banca Etica – as part of FEBEA – advocates the improvement of financial instruments for social economy, and to this end they are contributing to the preparation of the European Social Economy Action Plan expected to be released in Q4 of 2021.

2.5. BE MY EYES

Name of company / entity	Be My Eyes
Website	https://www.bemyeyes.com/
Country	Denmark
Legal status	Start Up Company (Application)
Main sector(s) of operations	Start-Up/Technology/Communication
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2015
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Worldwide

2.5.1. Overview

The Be My Eyes was born in 2012 when Hans Jørgen Wiberg, a Danish furniture craftsman, worked at The Danish Association of the Blind, had his blind friend use video calls to connect with family and friends who could help with the everyday tasks. Having been visually impaired, Wiberg knew that blind or low-vision people often needed a little assistance to solve their everyday tasks. Wilberg, then, came up with the idea of Be My Eyes. He believed that the technology of video calls could be used to visually assist blind or low vision individuals without them having to rely on friends and family but using a network of volunteers.

Even though the company was built in Denmark, Denmark is just a place to test it since Be My Eyes was designed to be used internationally from day 1. On 15 January 2015, Be My Eyes was launched and was featured in Danish media. Surprisingly, within 24 hours, Be My Eyes gained 10000 volunteers and 1000 blind/low vision people registered. And within a week, the number of the app users increased up to 10000 blind/low vision people and 100000 volunteers. By 2021, Be My Eyes has obtained 5 million volunteers.

The concept of the application is to be downloaded freely by both users, blind/low-vision people and volunteers. The volunteers help the blind/low vision people on navigating and implementing daily activities. As the app is free for all users, the main funding came from corporate volunteering as many big companies are highly interested to collaborate with Be My Eyes, such as Microsoft and Google, who have been Be My Eyes' partners since 2018. Furthermore, Be My Eyes gained support from other governmental institutions and entities, such as ministries of health, pharmacy industries, and others. Be My Eyes also opens to all big companies to feature them on the app and give them recognition for supporting the initiatives with a fixed monthly price to be on the platform. However, this is according to the scale of the company- the larger the company, the bigger the price.

The application is designed to be user friendly, and it is provided with 185 languages as Be My Eyes is available in 197 countries, and the main market is in the USA. The application can be downloaded from Google Play and Apple Store.

Be My Eyes has customers/app users all over the world. The initiatives achieved a good reputation and business value as the biggest community of blind people in the world.

2.5.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Since its establishment, Be My Eyes has surprisingly gained overwhelming success in getting people on board. However, the challenge came from the financial aspect of making a sustainable business model. In the beginning, The Foundation Velux provided a sufficient amount of funding to start a new company and develop the service. As Be My Eyes grew exponentially, now it has investor organisations that help to fund it in the long run.

The limitations to reaching new users in need in a specific territorial context are visible. For example, the communities with a lack of internet access and with less technology use, are unable to receive support from Be My Eyes. While the mitigation strategy depends on territorial development and access to the internet and technologies, Be My Eyes hopes that educational programmes and training will offer support that may reach the ones without internet or smartphones to receive assistance from the Be My Eyes.

Like any other free application, Be My Eyes needs sufficient data from the users. Consequently, Be My Eyes has to deal with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which is time and value consuming. Moreover, dealing with big companies like Microsoft and Google, they expected Be My Eyes to have a legal department as this is a challenge for the initiatives.

Another issue is the legal framework is the attempt to do business with financial institutions as they have too many restrictions when they talk to the customers.

Role of technology

As a start-up and app-based company, technology is the core of the business of Be My Eyes from the start. Hence, it is available in all countries rapidly and vastly. The main reason is caused by the unique service that was provided by the app because there were not many apps that can be used by blind/low vision people, especially for video conferences.

Be My Eyes kept growing by combining the application/software technology with the video conference platform and made sure that it is easily accessible for blind/low vision people.

2.5.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Be My Eyes plans to reach 38-39 million blind people users and 2+ million users with vision challenges. However, like smartphones and the internet sometimes are not accessible for everyone, and elderly people, unfortunately, may have less technology literacy in some areas (e.g. in some parts of India and Africa), Be My Eyes is developing an idea to initiate and develop educational programmes 'Blind to Blind' where the blind people can teach each other across the globe, for example learning Braille letters. Be My Eyes will develop things to be more go-to-place that those who are more capable of mobility can share with those who do not, and this hopefully will gain new competencies and become more autonomous and self-dependent.

Be My Eyes is tremendously helpful to be part of the Horizon 2020 project with the financial support, as well as a valuable experience as a small start-up company of 15-20 employees.

2.6. Citizens in Power (C.I.P.)

Name of company / entity	Citizens in Power
Website	https://www.citizensinpower.org/
Country	Cyprus
Legal status	Non-profit Organisation
Main sector(s) of operations	-Research and Development -Innovation and Entrepreneurship -Global Education -STEM Research and Development -Structuring and maintaining networks of individuals or entities for community building
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2013
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	All the countries of EU plus Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Tunisia under ENI CBC MED (Interreg Call for Mediterranean countries)

2.6.1. Overview

The entity covers and defends the rights and needs of youth through participation in the democratic and political processes. It also bridges the gap of people with different origins, language, history, culture and religion, and reduces discrimination, racial disparities and marginalisation, through volunteer contribution.

Through the realisation of the common European identity, Citizens in Power provides a means for young people to engage in any opportunities provided by the EU. It motivates young people to become active citizens coming from different economic, legal, educational, social, religious, national, and cultural backgrounds. By doing so, the entity aims to share the same vision with all volunteers for equal and fair opportunities in lifelong learning, in elections, and in communication between political officials and citizens on issues affecting young people and society overall.

The entity is also taking on a regular basis young volunteers as entrepreneurs who wish to implement their business idea via participating to EYE programme. The so-called 'Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs – EYE' is a cross-border programme facilitating the exchange of entrepreneurial and management experience funded under the COSME programme. CIP's target groups in this regard are youth workers, and especially persons who are unemployed and not receiving an education or vocational training (NEETS).

CIP is finally a member of the Fundamental Rights Platform (FRP). The FRP is FRA's (Fundamental Rights Agency) network of civil society organisations. Through this network, participant entities can play an active role in FRA's work to ensure that the fundamental rights of people living in the EU are protected.

2.6.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

CIP mostly works with European Grants. This implies that the entity's staff should remain very active and competent in drafting new proposals that are in alignment with the real needs of society whilst simultaneously being able to integrate all the latest innovation trends, and which can lead towards successful projects. This might entail an instability in the size of the annual budget of the entity, thus having a negative effect on the maintenance of its staff members.

The entity fulfils its vision through its collaboration with high profile entities such as HEI and R&D institutions, civil society organisations, SMEs and other corporate entities. Such entities are bringing us in touch with the real target groups; universities operate as a communication bridge with youth target groups, whilst civil society organisations with disadvantaged or marginalised populations, such as migrants, refugees, unaccompanied minors, detainees, NEET and long term unemployed, etc. On the other hand, SMEs and corporate entities ensure our strong affiliations with the labour market, while ensuring an increased potential for employability when it comes to our disadvantaged target groups.

Last but not least, CIP works in collaboration with local policy actors and governmental authorities which monitor our actions and results, while they are integrating them in their annual policy agendas.

2.6.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

CIP's future prospects are summarised below:

Conduct advanced research: CIP staff conduct scientific research in order to tackle systemic social, educational and economic problems.

Simulate technological innovations in the context of modern pedagogical methods: CIP's priority is to develop and incorporate modern technological innovations into learning, thus making the educational processes more effective, entertaining and motivating.

Produce innovative hands-on tools and products: CIP develops practical solutions that aspire to modernise both the pedagogical methodologies and learning tools on the basis of scientific conclusions and findings, by primarily employing and utilising the latest technological innovations.

Raise awareness on sensitive issues, inspire citizens and transform communities: Awareness raising -which is primarily being achieved through the provision of reliable and accessible information on socio-cultural and environmental challenges- can catalyse the exchange of ideas and facilitate mutual understanding, thus setting core values as inherent features of a democratic society. CIP's target is for such core values to be embedded in relevant national and EU policies that can bring about a genuine social change and lead towards the social transformation of modern communities.

Promote Equality and Diversity: CIP recognises and promotes diversity, by establishing an inclusive culture for both its staff-members and target groups, whilst ensuring that policies, learning materials and processes do not discriminate against any individual or social group. Our team aspires to break the stereotypes and eradicate any stereotypical behaviours which could lead towards the marginalisation of socially sensitive populations

Deliver high quality training activities and design online educational platforms to facilitate inclusive learning: CIP develops and delivers free training courses and e-modules. These courses are tailor-made for specific target populations and have been designed to facilitate and catalyse the acquisition of knowledge. Our unique material ensures that learners with fewer opportunities or participants who have been encountering

socio-cultural problems, economic obstacles, geographic barriers, disabilities or learning disorders have equal rights and educational opportunities.

Set up an entrepreneurial mindset: CIP encourages different target groups to think and act in an entrepreneurial way. This requires -apart from knowledge- out-of-the-box thinking, innovative ideas, inventiveness, creativity, communications skills and personal motivation. Through the offered programs as well as through the provision of consulting services, CIP aspires to educate, inspire and prepare the next generations of social entrepreneurs.

Establish a lifelong learning culture and cultivate the thirst for new knowledge: Lifelong learning constitutes a form of self-initiated education which is tightly interwoven with the individual's personal development. Such forms of learning can occur outside a traditional educational institute. CIP utilises non-formal education methods with the aim to encourage young people and adults to broaden their spectrum of knowledge by continuously obtaining up-to-date skills and capacities.

2.7. Care Innovation Center in CrossCare

Name of company / entity	Stichting Care Innovation Center West-Brabant, partner in CrossCare a cross border cooperation of livinglabs for care innovations
Website	https://crosscare.eu/care-innovation-center/
Country	Netherlands
Legal status	Foundation (Stichting in NL)
Main sector(s) of operations	Care, health sector
Starting date of Cross-border activities	CrossCare started in 2018
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Several livinglabs in Flanders (Belgium), but also cooperation with actors in France, Finland and others within the European network of LivingLabs.

2.7.1. Overview

CrossCare is a consortium of livinglabs in the Netherlands and Flanders which organise and accelerate cross-border innovation in the Healthcare sector. Care Innovation Center as one of the partners in CrossCare has been contacted. Chantal van Spaendonck (director of Stichting Care Innovation Center West-Brabant) explained how CrossCare has promoted transnational innovation activities.

According to the INTERREG website CrossCare is among the good practices: "CrossCare is a project funded by the Interreg VA Flanders - the Netherlands Cross-border Cooperation Programme. The total budget for the project is €10.091.625,55 of which € 4.999.353,18 (49.54%) is funded by the Interreg programme".

The evidence of success is reflected by the vast interest shown in the project and the number of applications received. Over the course of 4 waves/calls, Cross Care received over 160 applications. Of these, 19 have been supported financially and with the services of the livinglabs.

Strength of the project is that it allows for developments such as further standardisation of services provided to SMEs amongst the living labs. Harnessing this development of standardisation could/should become the next step in the development of sustainable, interregional or cross-border collaboration activities which could then be supported through national, regional or local funding."

Funding of the healthcare sector is complex and differs among countries. Healthcare entities have limited funding for innovation and the scale of the market for healthcare innovations differs per innovation. Transnational collaborations increase the scale of the niches. Seven livinglabs cooperated in selecting and accelerating innovations in the healthcare sector. In the 5 different waves 5-8 companies are selected and supported in co-creating and testing solutions on certain challenges. The innovation supply-side is linked to the innovation demand-side. Companies, care entities and citizens are involved.

They each play a different role and have their specific benefits of the innovation activities. Co-creation is a buzzword nowadays, but it is underestimated how much time and money it takes for the various stakeholders. But also, how valuable it is for developing successful innovations. The project CrossCare facilitates such activities involving the 7 labs on both sides of the border between Belgium and the Netherlands.

An example innovation is a smart tape that can prevent cardiac failure. Another is a mOSArt (Mobile Obstructive Sleep Apnea Remedy & Test). Calculating where and for who the costs and benefits are, is a difficult and delicate process.

By collaborating across borders, the markets for the companies that develop and commercialise the innovations, are enlarged. This increases their interest in taking part in the co-creating activities and testing in the living-labs with real patients and target groups.

2.7.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Cultural differences between Belgium and the Netherlands are important barriers. E.g. in the way that feed-back is given. There are also differences in regulation, but these are made visible in the CrossCare project, so they are no longer the main barrier. But, this barrier exists for other countries as their regulation differs even more, e.g. in the UK or Sweden.

Differences between legal forms in Belgium and the Netherlands are not really a barrier, but again this is also due to the fact that such differences have been made visible within the project.

The European support received in the frame of INTERREG is used for the following steps in the innovation approach: 1) matchmaking; 2) co-creation, where companies and care professionals interact and contribute; 3) life-testing; the solutions are tested in real care entities that participate 4) business-model: who will pay.

During the covid-19 period some of the meetings have taken place on-line.

Preparing proposals is time consuming, and without subsidising it, many proposals would not have been developed.

A national project proposal for ZonNW has been developed with partners in Flanders, this shows that national programmes can also facilitate internationalisation. Pitches and exchanges have taken place.

2.7.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

The contacts have become broader, e.g., they also have contacts in Finland for collaboration.

Innovation will become even more important in the care sector, and it is essential to involve SME companies, but for companies it only becomes interesting when the markets for such innovations are of larger scale.

Another element for the future is labour market aspects and training.

2.8. COLIVE OIL

Name of company / entity	Colive Oil
Website	https://coliveoil.com/
Country	Cyprus
Legal status	Social Business
Main sector(s) of operations	Food industry
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2017
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Colive Oil organises its packaging production based on imports from EU countries, such as Italy, Spain, Greece, and the Netherlands. The imported raw material contains cups, glass, and taps that can be used for the manufacturing of olive oil bottles.

2.8.1. Overview

Colive Oil was created with the purpose to reply to the decades of civil fighting that resulted in national crises that peaked in 1974 in Cyprus, when the country became geographically divided and resulted in the establishment of two separated ethnic communities. The idea behind this enterprise was to foster mutual dialogue in the post-conflict homeland of the two owners. Indeed, Colive Oil intends to offer employment to farmers from both sides of the buffer zone, as well as to their families who owned farms and olive groves, with the aim of producing local olive oil and selling it abroad. Today, olive oil production suffers on both sides of the conflict which have to deal with economic pressures on family farms, the impact of climate change, the access to fresh water and the high rates of farmland abandonment.

Hasan Siber (Turkish-Cypriot) and Alexandros Philippides (Greek-Cypriot) are the co-founders of Colive. Philippides and Siber identified olive farming as the key to reconciliation and employment. They work together with other changemakers at **Home for Cooperation,** where they are based, at the fringe of the United Nations-designated buffer zone.

Colive Oil aims to unite Cyprus through olives, which are seen as an emblem of the Cypriot culture and are associated with the concept of peace worldwide. In particular, the enterprise teaches farmers in post conflict zones about regenerative organic cultivation in a minimal carbon emission way that builds the soil for generations. They choose to cultivate an olive variety that carries symbolic meaning, known as Kypriaki or Kibrisli (meaning "Cypriot" in Greek and Turkish, respectively).

As stated by Hasan Siber, our interviewee, Colive remains mostly an e-commerce venture; its olive oil is also used in recipes of selected restaurants and distinguished chefs from each side of the divided zone.

The social impact of Colive can be measured via the following sectors:

- Production of olive oil from local farms (from both sides of the border): Offer for employment to farmers
- Food and chatting at the same table can help overcome barriers [and] build genuine friendships between the clients of restaurants. Colive Oil is used to break the barriers between people through food and conversation.
- Local farmers have the opportunity to not only find a work placement but also to cooperate with each other from both sides of the border zone: Building multicultural communities and giving opportunities for multinational friendships between Greek, Turkish, Maronite, and Armenian Cypriots for Turkish and Greek farmers
- The creation of 'United Cyprus': The creation of one communal land for the Cypriots for citizens of both sides
- Donations of 10% to other NGOs, start-ups or civil-society groups that address peace efforts in the island and need extra funding for peace education: Helping other social enterprises that have the same vision
- Engagement of refugees as employees into the farming activities: Colive provides refugees with a permanent job so that they can ask for asylum

2.8.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Once farmers are motivated to contribute to the social goal of Colive, it is expected that they respect the diversity of the population living in the island. However, there are political groups (e.g., the extreme Right party) that continue to strengthen disparities, and do not support the common businesses that are developed between the two borders. One such example is the fact that people may damage the products or harass the salespersons working in a specific store of Cyprus that sells Colive Oil products. Under these circumstances, Colive tries to convince these farmers to sell abroad, and to gain popularity for their products,

A barrier in conducting transnational activities, though, is associated with the transportation of raw material from the Turkish territory to the Greek/EU state of Cyprus. In particular, Colive needs to transport olives for harvest purposes from the North side of the island to the South side.

Moreover, Colive must overcome some challenges related to establishing a common language of communication among farmers. This is because many farmers from the Northern part of Cyprus do not speak English, neither do they speak Greek.

However, English remains the official working language of Colive with regards to operating its export activities, especially when viewed from the angle of competing with other EU countries that are also famous of their olive oil trade. For instance, the Cyrpiot olive oil has to compete with the Greek, the Italian, and the Spanish olive oil, since there is much offer in this industry.

Colive Oil founders receive support via networking activities with the mass media. For instance, a French TV station (France 24) broadcasted Colive as an innovative enterprise. Journalists helped in this way Colive to increase its sales abroad and to become famous outside Cyprus.

The founders of Colive consider that actions related to sourcing and distribution of their products are important for the transnational character of their enterprise. On the one hand, Colive's selling activities surpass the border of the island to 16 other countries, including UAE (Dubai and Abu Dhabi), Cyprus, Turkey, Greece, Germany, France, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Spain, Belgium, the UK, Mexico, Colombia, Australia, the USA, and Canada. On the other hand, the olive oil factory uses packaging material (cups, bottles, taps) imported from EU countries, such as Italy, Spain, Greece, and the Netherlands.

Regarding its outreach potential, Colive Oil holds its own e-shop via Amazon for selling goods overseas. The enterprise sells its products (olive oil bottles) particularly in the USA, via Amazon's Halfords web page. It used to also sell its packages to the European Market, but concentrated its sales within the UK, after Brexit, by moving its stock exclusively into the British market.

What is more than that, Colive Oil combines the knowledge of farmers from both sides of the border. Given that, the enterprise encourages mutual support and exchange of good practices via participation to food fairs organised by the national government of Cyprus. As mentioned by Hasan Siber during our interview, farmers have the opportunity to also take part in educational seminars that are organised by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Cyprus.

In this context, Colive accomplishes to engage Cypriot farmers, who on average are the oldest living in Europe (over 75 years old), into the society by offering them the opportunity to practice their potential with the activities offered in the farming sector of olives.

2.8.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Colive aims to expand its sales into the US. Moreover, it aims to engage more farmers in the future and to network with other social enterprises that share the same goals with Colive.

2.9. Cycling Without Age

Name of company / entity	Cycling Without Age
Website	https://cyclingwithoutage.org/
Country	Denmark
Legal status	NGO
Main sector(s) of operations	Elderly, Intergenerational relationships
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2013
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New, Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, US

2.9.1. Overview

Cycling Without Age (CWA) is a movement started in 2012 by Ole Kassow. Ole wanted to help elderly people get back on their bicycles and had to find a solution to their limited mobility. He decided to use a trishaw and started offering free bike rides to the local nursing home residents.

Together with Dorthe Pedersen, the civil society consultant from the City of Copenhagen, he bought five trishaws and launched Cycling Without Age, which has now spread to all corners of Denmark, and since 2015 to another 50 countries around the world. Volunteers sign up as pilots for bike rides with elderly people as often or as rarely as they want to. A local CWA partner is called a "chapter": A chapter is usually a location such as a care home that buys, maintains and offers a "trishaw-bike" for one pilot and two elderly people. Chapters are often members of national CWA partner entities (25 in 2020). They are set up as non-profit entities and offer support to chapters. National entities enjoy some freedom in designing their membership (with or without fees, more or less services). At present (March 2021) there are 2,200 CWA chapters in 50 countries, that offer over 3,000 trishaws and work with 33,000 volunteering pilots. The Global CWA umbrella is located in Denmark. The booking of bike rides and the matchmaking between elderly and volunteers is organised locally. A small team of 5 employees coordinates and integrates the network with the support from CWA members. As CWA only has a small central team, it relies on peer-to-peer support within its network of national entities and chapters. CWA applies online tools to convene and inform the community. The entity wants to shift information exchange to the community, rather than answering requests centrally

2.9.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Neither the central team or task force should "push" national entities to scale. Scaling should be driven by local/national entities.

Providing access for underprivileged communities that currently cannot afford trishaws is a challenge. A solution could be the design of an open-source cargo bike, one that can be produced and manufactured locally, which would be way more cost efficient.

Cycling without Age is totally dependent on the hardware, which is also the main "cost item" the entity fundraises for. The entity needs an open-source hardware component side to support the movement.

In some countries there are legal restrictions that limit the movement/flexibility of elderly people residing in nursing homes. It can for instance be difficult to choose bike routes, which are suited to the flexibility of the elderly people.

One of the challenges CWA has been confronted with in the past and will have to work on the future, how to apply their principles worldwide. There is a constant ambivalence between providing flexibility to every chapter, but at the same time guaranteeing the quality of the program and that it will tackle the actual needs of the people affected.

CWA's partners are mainly care homes, municipalities and community groups as „chapters ", that offer a trishaw to volunteers and elderly people.

CWA 's partner search is driven by its principles and by determining whether the local means are in place to implement the model. In some countries, there are national entities, supporting chapters and offering a membership. Trishaw producers and traders are partners in the sense that some of them share their trishaw profits with CWA (gained when selling trishaws to newly established chapters).

CWA also has a partnership with Danish foreign representations and ambassadors and is part of the Ashoka Support Network, helping them with networking and pro bono support, especially in the field of legal and consulting assistance. Also, local authorities make sure CWA is implemented in the right environment and build social capital in the entire ecosystem. Finally, CWA gets funding from foundations.

Role of technology

Cycling Without Age offers an online platform called "The Hood". It allows the CWA community to share information in an easy and structured way. It is constructed for volunteers that have applied to become an affiliate and their co-pilots, that are engaged. This will facilitate a broader network, a higher benefit rate for all the members of the CWA community and more peer-to-peer learning. They also use open platforms like Facebook groups to provide easy access for everyone interested in the CWA projects.

2.9.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

CWA's impact looks impressive if you look at the global map, but a huge amount of work still needs to be done to have more impact on beneficiaries worldwide (including pilots). They state that there need to be more bikes on the road, more partnerships and more funding. They are seeing a huge success within the US markets with state and federal programs that will allow them to grow within the next 5 years and to be present in a lot of communities in the US.

2.10. Designathon

Name of company / entity	Stichting Designathon Works
Website	http://www.designathonworks.org/
Country	Netherlands
Legal status	Foundation (Stichting), with ANBI status, as an organisation for public benefit that allows donors for tax-deduction.
Main sector(s) of operations	education
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2014
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	45 countries

2.10.1. Overview

"Inspired by children and their capacity to imagine better futures, social designer and educator, Emer Beamer, founded Design-a-thon Works in 2014 in Amsterdam, NL. What began as a one-day design-a-thon in one city has expanded into over 55 cities and regions worldwide with multiple design-a-thons taking place each year. Design-a-thon Works is powered by an incredible network of people who believe in preparing the world's nearly 2 billion children to prosper in a rapidly changing and increasingly technological world".

The people in Amsterdam train the teachers on how to run a design-a-thon and make use of local and global partners that support.

From teachers to parents, to concerned policymakers and contributing organisations, we're on a mission to enable children to design a better world for themselves and for the planet.

During a design-a-thon children are guided through a 7-step experiential process, linked thematically to a bigger global challenge such as water scarcity, poverty, deforestation, or citizenship.

The design-thinking method consists of 7-steps: inspire; research; ideate; sketch; make; show; reflect.

In a design-a-thon [a design hack-a-thon], children (aged 8 - 12) come together to tackle issues that matter to them. Together, they: collaborate to envision and develop creative ideas; apply simple technologies and build prototypes; present their solutions to an audience.

"Local context, global vision and network: Thousands of children around the world are able to participate in design-a-thons because of our dedicated global network of regional partners and community entities. Children in communities around the world can participate in a design-a-thon through local entities we call Design-a-thon Hubs that are trained by us and our carefully selected Network Partners. This mode of delivery ensures children get involved in the issues that matter most to them.
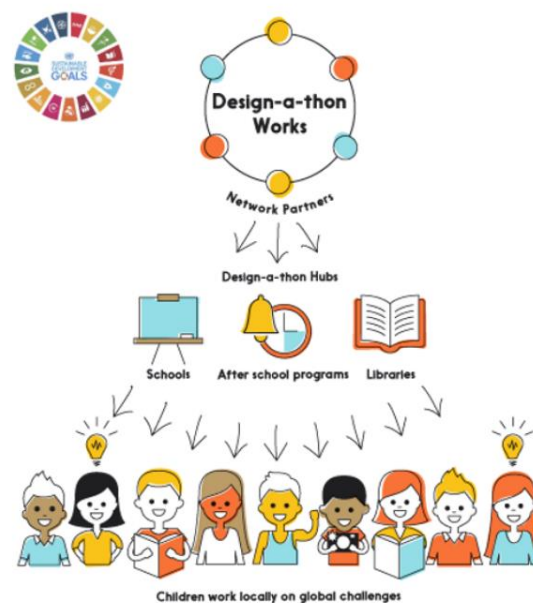
People can request and be trained to become a Design-a-thon Coach, or a local entity can enrol as a Design-a-thon Hub. *"Our Network Partners are on the lookout for schools, makerspaces and other community-based entities that want to become Design-a-thon Hubs — spaces and places where children gather to participate in design-a-thons. For teachers and adults who are experienced in working with children: our Network Partners make it easy for you to become a facilitator. They provide training on the method; plus all the needed lesson materials you need."*
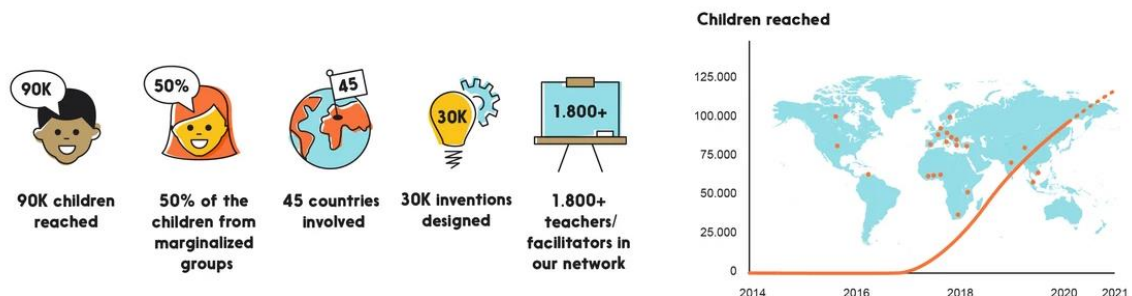
Design-a-thon Works can also be commissioned for a specialised program: "We develop customised design-a-thon programming with values aligned entities. Partners work with us in order to:

- achieve strategic impact objectives related to a specific global issue or a particular region;

- gain children's perspectives and insights to inform policy and decision-making;
- collaborate with a specific community by engaging its children.

Another option is to sponsor a global design-a-thon challenge: "Take your impact farther in the communities that matter most to your organisation". Our partners are already active in regions around the world and this year we're focused on the challenge topics of climate education & clean energy". Also, companies can sponsor: "Design-a-thon Works offers a clear pathway to engage both your employees and your customers on meaningful topics".

2.10.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Corona is a major challenge since it is difficult to organise design-a-thons on-line. With schools shut down the Amsterdam team of 12 people was reduced to 3 people in the middle of the lock-down. But people started to call again in spring 2021.

Emer Beamer explained in the interview that "It was difficult to get through in Afrika". Barriers to internationalisation consists of language barriers, since the learning material for teachers is in English. It is not always easy to find the right local partners.

The legal entity of Stichting (Foundation) is not a barrier: no problem to work internationally.

The recognition of a purpose driven legal entity is limited in the Netherlands, compared to the US and UK. In the Netherlands they have the ANBI status from the Dutch tax office, which has some tax benefits.

Major challenges in internationalisation are mitigated by working with local actors, e.g. NGO's that work with children, a science museum, an innovation hub, living lab or organisers of TEDX activities. The Amsterdam team does not organise the events abroad themselves, but train others to do so, in collaboration with local partners. People pay to be trained and to receive all kinds of learning material. They for instance sell a maker-toolkit, including for instance little solar panels, which can be used by the children to develop prototypes.

Corona was a challenge. Training can be done on-line, but the local events are more difficult, and making the method on-line is a major challenge. Technology wise there was a shift from Skype to Zoom.

Designathon did not receive public support, except for support from Chief technology officer Amsterdam, which supported in digitalisation. From the Dutch embassy in Turkey, they got support regarding a local partner in Turkey. In the Netherlands we are a small player, but internationally we get more recognition for our international expansion model, e.g., from Ashoka.

2.10.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

People have started calling again with plans for after the lockdowns.

At the ministry of foreign affairs, and through embassies more support could be provided for finding local partners abroad.

2.11. ECHO by Hospice UK

Name of company / entity	Hospice UK as participant in ECHO
Website	https://hsc.unm.edu/echo/about-us/
Country	USA (Albuquerque in New Mexico) is where ECHO was started at the university
Legal status	Hospice UK is a charity organisation ECHO is a US based non-profit, social enterprise
Main sector(s) of operations	Care and health
Starting date of Cross-border activities	ECHO started in 2003; In 2017 Hospice UK took on the ECHO initiatives that were piloted in Northern Ireland.
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	ECHO has hubs in 50 countries and participants involved in ECHO are located in 130 countries.

2.11.1. Overview

Professor Max Watson of Hospice UK explains in the interview that Project ECHO started in 2003, based on the personal experience and initiative of Dr. Sanjeev Arora in the USA. He found that in Boston there was a better chance of surviving liver cancer than in New Mexico where doctors lacked the expertise and did not dare to provide a certain medicine to patients with hepatitis C. He asked: "if I support you on-line, would you give this medicine". This is how it began, and methods were developed to democratise care, organise learning loops, safe spaces for distance learning, peer-to-peer, in networks, establish virtual communities of practice. Facilitators who orchestrate the learning and are backed with sound IT support. The methods and projects have extended into 17 health area's and covering participants in many countries.

Entities can get training in setting up ECHO projects and ECHO hubs. The methods are designed to merge the hands-on knowledge with the professional expertise, since both can benefit from learning in decentralised networks. The methods are not based on the old way in which specialists' knowledge is diffused top-down from hierarchical centres of knowledge and power.

On the ECHO website we read: *"Every year, millions of people around the world die of diseases that are preventable, treatable and even curable because the healthcare providers in their communities don't have the knowledge and expertise needed to address their conditions." - Dr. Sanjeev Arora.*

In 2011, a rigorous evaluation published in the New England Journal of Medicine showed that the care delivered to hepatitis C patients by ECHO-trained providers was equal to that of University of New Mexico specialists. Dr. Arora's ECHO model does not just apply to improving hepatitis C treatment; today, it is being used to tackle the world's greatest challenges: healthcare, education, and climate change. With participants in more than 9,000 cities and 180 countries since we launched, Project ECHO aims to touch one billion lives by 2025".

ECHO Hubs and Superhubs

Source: https://hsc.unm.edu/echo/data-marketplace/maps/
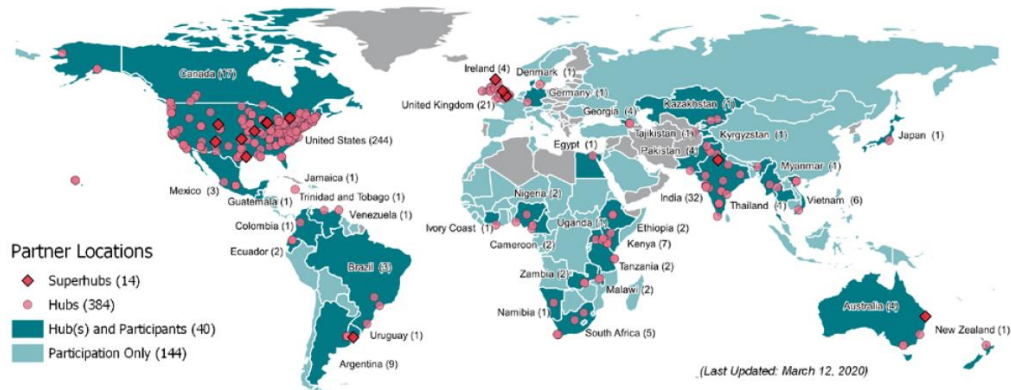
The website further explains How ECHO Works:

"What if everyone could get the high-quality services they need, from local people they know and trust? Using proven adult learning techniques and interactive video technology, the ECHO Model™ connects groups of community providers with specialists at centres of excellence in regular real-time collaborative sessions. The sessions, designed around case-based learning and mentorship, help local workers gain the expertise required to provide needed services. Providers gain skills and confidence; specialists learn new approaches for applying their knowledge across diverse cultural and geographical contexts. As the capacity of the local workforce increases, lives improve."

The principles of the model are:

Amplification - use technology to leverage scarce resources

Best practices - to reduce disparity

Case-based learning - to master complexity

Data: -monitor outcomes with our web-based database

"When all the principles are applied, a learning community in which "All Teach and All Learn" comes together. This includes:

Interactive Components

Guided Practice

Ongoing Mentorship

Peer-to-Peer Learning

Collaborative Problem Solving".

The above principles are also explained at the website of Hospice UK. Here we also see a statement from Professor Max Watson: *"Project ECHO provides a way where hospitals doing fantastic stuff can also help communities to do fantastic stuff, while learning about what they need to do together."*

For Hospice UK: *"Project ECHO is a distance learning methodology that breaks down hierarchies of specialist knowledge by creating virtual knowledge sharing networks. Project ECHO uses a 'learning loop' approach; specialist teams and local providers learn from each other by collaboratively problem-solving real-time experiences and sharing best practice via videoconferencing. ECHO's aim is to enhance decision making and transform service delivery".*

Hospice UK[5] is the national charity working for those experiencing dying, death and bereavement. We work for the benefit of people affected by death and dying, collaborating with our hospice members and other partners who work in end-of-life care.

Hospice UK is an entity with the following goals:

1 Extend our reach and enable hospice quality care to be delivered in any setting;

2 Tackle inequality and widen access to hospice care;

3 Work with communities to build capacity and resilience to care for those at the end of life;

4 Empower a strong, dynamic and responsive hospice sector.

Max Watson explains how ECHO came to the UK: "In the UK we have palliative needs. The ECHO approach was a proven safe way to serve these needs. In Northern Ireland they had training in how to run ECHO projects and 25 palliative communities have been set-up. The Health and Social Council of Northern Ireland had funded the first 5 pilots. The results were positive, so this government body asked: "do you want to do 20 more pilots". Then the Hospice UK took it on and trained 60 ECHO hubs after 2017, in less than 4 years' time.

There are costs and benefits of using the ECHO name. The benefits are: 1) it is a well-tried methodology, earned respect, based on evidence, world-wide; 2) really good IT support and methods. An ECHO-light was tried but it did not work. Good and tailored IT is underestimated. People often think we have our own system and own IT staff, so we do not need the ECHO support and method, but it is really important. 3) ECHO is a social enterprise, a non-profit, solidarity-oriented movement. The aim is sharing to support underserved areas. One has to pay for the IT support, the admin and facilitators, but the charged fees are to cover costs, not to make profits. When your expertise is called for in an ECHO project elsewhere you also get paid.

2.11.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Next to benefits, there are also costs of using ECHO. GDPR regulation is an important barrier, since ECHO asks for the data. Providing personal data to an entity in the US is complex matter that took quite some effort to resolve and keep it legal. An implication is for instance that the data should be on servers in Europe. Northern Ireland in this respect is part of Europe. Some ECHO projects that were set-up cross borders as they extended into the Republic of Ireland or involved participants in Scotland. The ECHO projects also started to extend to other fields in care, social and health. One project for instance aims at 'zero suicide in prisons.

We also participated in ECHO projects related to Covid in Afrika, or on palliative care in Bhutan.

A challenge remains to secure that ECHO is not used as a tool to broadcast, distribute, sell or tell others what to do.

Furter uptake of ECHO in European countries is challenged by suspicion of working with American entities. Some are hesitant to work with ECHO, but the results mitigate this barrier, and there is some activity and further interest in for instance the Republic of Ireland and Denmark.

It took quite some efforts to keep things legal, in terms of GDPR regulation.

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[5] https://www.hospiceuk.org/about-us

Nationally the decision was to publicly fund 30 ECHO networks. Proposals had to be prepared, goals defined, reviewed and selected. We are working on new proposals on COVID for general practitioners. In Southeast Asia there are international funded proposals. Since 85% prefer the ECHO approach, it has become part of the normal way to improve care, health and social issues in underserved areas.

International funding entities, but also national governments adopt ECHO and fund ECHO projects. Not only in Northern Ireland, but nationally in the UK, and for instance the government of India that wants to incorporate it in health services.

On the policy side ECHO is seen as a tool to transform health services, to 'build back better', move forward together. The risk that some see it as a way to 'broadcast' in a hierarchical mode and dictate others, is secured in the approach, since it is about co-creation.

2.11.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

ECHO will become part of the normal way. For the future we will also train new people. For this purpose, staff has had training in Albuquerque (USA) at the University of New Mexico, on how to train ECHO hubs.

2.12. EPEKA

Name of company / entity	Scientific and Research Association for Art, Cultural and Educational Programmes and Technology EPEKA
Website	https://epeka.si/en/
Country	Slovenia
Legal status	Association, social enterprise
Main sector(s) of operations	Education and Creative, arts and entertainment activities
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2013
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Turkey, Austria, Armenia, Czech Republic, Serbia, Montenegro, United Kingdom, Germany, Kosovo

2.12.1. Overview

The Scientific and Research Association for Art, Cultural and Educational Programmes and Technology, EPEKA, is a social enterprise and association, with its headquarters in Slovenia, founded in 2008. EPEKA's mission is "to provide young people with equal opportunities and empower them with skills, gained through non-formal education methods''. EPEKA develops activities in the field of EU citizenship, EU values and intercultural dialogue. EPEKA is a non-governmental, non-profit association, registered also as a social enterprise since 2013.

Its main activities can be segmented into:

- **Art –** EPEKA Gallery exhibits various works of art by known Slovenian and foreign authors.

- **Youth –** EPEKA participates and organises several youth projects, mainly developing youth exchanges and training courses for youth workers. These are focused on youth with fewer opportunities and collaborate in projects that promote the involvement of young people in the labour market and citizenship awareness.

- **Social Entrepreneurship –** EPEKA focuses on the active inclusion of vulnerable groups in social life and the labour market.

Education and knowledge dissemination are the core of EPEKA.

In addition to these activities, EPEKA is also active in the field of culture, volunteering, ecology and promotion of intercultural dialogue. In Slovenia, EPEKA has offices, restaurants, galleries and is working to acquire a farm. EPEKA aims to be a reference on the international mobility of youth and informal education (acquisition of learning competencies). In 2016, EPEKA established the "EPEKA Youth Cooperative Society" to support youth businesses.

EPEKA initiated its cross-border activities through the establishment of local branches in different countries. Currently it operates the following branches: EPEKA Turkey; EPEKA Austria; EPEKA Armenia; EPEKA Czechia; EPEKA Serbia; EPEKA Montenegro; EPEKA United Kingdom; EPEKA Germany and EPEKA Kosovo.

The work developed in each branch is unique and varies according to the local social and economic challenges. For example, in Turkey EPEKA works with women empowerment and inclusion; in Berlin, the work is related to arts. Nevertheless, the activities in the different branches are linked to EPEKA´s core mission to support European values and the promotion of human rights, creating equal opportunities for diverse groups. Therefore, the motivation to go abroad was related essentially to maximising EPEKA´s impact through pursuing its core mission also in other countries.

2.12.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Due to the high frequency and diversity of its cross-border activities, EPEKA faced many challenges over the years. These challenges vary in a broad spectrum, from language barriers to complex legal barriers.

The first barrier EPEKA met during its transnational activities was related to language. The administration, including the establishment and registration of entities, is taken care of in the local languages in many of the European countries. This also requires the social actors involved in cross-border activities to present documents and have interactions in the target countries´ languages when opening local branches. EPEKA managed to find ways to overcome this barrier by partnering up with local actors and using third-party services to support the preparation of documents when needed.

The second barrier was administrative burdens when initiating operations as a local entity. This concerns, for instance, the need to adapt documents (such as statutes) to meet the regulations and standards of each country, among other requirements. The digitalised administration of the establishment of entities would allow decreasing bureaucracy and speeding up these processes.

The third barrier is the lack of a consensus in the definition, nature and legal aspects of social enterprises across the European countries. EPEKA faced challenges to understand and act according to the local legal frameworks available for the operation of social enterprises. In Slovenia, for instance, a new law on social entrepreneurship, passed in 2012, establishes the legal form 'social enterprise' and regulates its scopes/activities and other aspects of its operations. EPEKA was registered as an Association but got also registered as a Social Enterprise after the new law was passed. This legal form is key for the entity as it allows it to conduct a diversity of activities in different fields. As an example, EPEKA also operates a Roma restaurant to diffuse the Roma culture and cuisine and secure the employment of Roma people. This is only possible for EPEKA under its new legal form: social enterprise. This legal form, however, does not exist in all countries. In Croatia, for instance, where EPEKA is also planning to expand through a branch, it is forced to operate as two different entities: an association and a company. This is the only manner to develop business-related activities (e.g., a restaurant) and maintain its status as an association. The complexity involved in the regulations makes it hard to identify which taxes to pay (risking overpaying), to have access to funding opportunities and of course, to develop the activities.

As mentioned before, EPEKA is a highly decentralised organisation. Due to its physical presence in a large range of countries, EPEKA had to establish itself in these locations in a way to meet the legal requirements that vary from country to country.

To implement such a complex model, EPEKA found support in its network – which was mainly built out from EU funded initiatives, such as Erasmus+ projects. With selected entities from its network, EPEKA was able to develop further alliances that enabled it to receive local support for opening branches in those countries. External consultancy and partner entities were fundamental and still are, in the process of establishing cross-border activities.

There is a need for a broader action at the EU level to change the mentality in the European countries, moving from competition to cooperation (foreign entities opening local branches are often seen as competitors). This would allow applying common EU values also in the strategies chosen for cross-border activities.

Role of technology

EPEKA sees technology as a tool capable of supporting and facilitating the way they conduct activities. Technology may contribute to EPEKA's expansion in what concerns the documental exchange and administration of processes governmental bodies in the target countries. It is pivotal that more and more public entities embrace digitalisation in its processes to facilitate cross-border activities.

2.12.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

It is in EPEKA's long-term plans to maintain its current operations across the EU and, somehow, expand its activities to countries situated outside the EU, especially in countries that are connected, in some way, to the EU, such as those in the Balkans and the Mediterranean countries.

It is recommended by EPEKA that the EU focuses on promoting and supporting good practices of social enterprises such as an EU school, in Georgia (https://europeanschool.ge). It is important to disseminate knowledge about the common EU values. It is also relevant for society to understand.

2.13. Euskal Herriko Ikastolak Europar Kooperatiba

Name of company / entity	Euskal Herriko Ikastolak Europar Kooperatiba (EHI)
Website	https://ikastola.eus/erakundea/ehi
Country	Spain
Legal status	European Cooperative Society
Main sector(s) of operations	Primary and secondary education
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2010, the initiation of cross-border activities as a European Cooperative Society
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	France

2.13.1. Overview

EHI is a European Cooperative that consists of 111 Basque-primary and secondary schools ('ikastolas') located in the Basque Country spanning across the border between Spain and France. The history of the ikastolas stretches back to the 1960s when the use of the Basque language and culture was still restricted by public policies. The Basque community wanted to find ways to preserve the Basque heritage for the present and future generations. The establishment of schools with the mission of transmission of Basque culture and language was one of the solutions. The schools initially belonged to five different administration bodies / federations (Bizkaiko Ikastolen Elkartea, Gipuzkoako Ikastolen Elkartea, Arabako Ikastolen Elkartea, Nafarroako Ikastolen Elkartea y Seaska Ikastolen Elkartea) across the two countries. Their cooperation started early on, so to achieve their mission in a collective way. However, over time more fragmented approaches and ineffectiveness in the management and coordination of their educational offers became apparent. During the operation of the schools, it also became evident that a more harmonised and effective approach would be required to be able to offer uniform educational services for the Basque community as a whole.

Other aspects, including legal and financial barriers, also acted as a catalyst of the creation of a more coordinated management system for the Basque schools that belonged to the five federations. In 2009, EHI was created for the purpose, as a single entity by the five federations ('elkarteak') that aggregates the 111 schools. EHI not only represents these schools but also manages and coordinates their pedagogical approaches, as well as creating and designing teaching materials, out-of-school activities and other support services. EHI was created as a European Cooperative Society. This allows it to operate across the border and administer the schools located both in Spanish and French territories. Through their membership to EHI, all ikastolas can now operate under the same umbrella and apply a unified approach in their teaching activities.

2.13.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Previous to its establishment, the founding entities of EHI faced a range of barriers that encumbered their effective transnational cooperation and common work. These especially included legal limitations that hampered joint and legally valid decision making (for instance, independent ikastolas registered in two different countries were not able to take legally binding joint decisions applicable for their own coordinated operations). Due to the legal position, it was not possible to create a single fund that could financially support the schools´ operations on both the Spanish and the French sides of the border. The creation of EHI as a European Cooperative Society made it possible to establish a single legal framework under which all (Spanish and French) Basque schools could start to operate according to the same principles and systems, applying a unified Basque educational offer across the two countries. Ikastolas (which themselves are also cooperatives registered in their own countries) became members of EHI and are able to take decisions together over the European Cooperative´s activities, through its annual assembly. They also created a single Solidarity Fund (to which each Ikastola contributes financially) to channel funding to those ikastolas that face economic difficulties or require financial support for special pedagogical projects.

There are challenges that affect the effective transnational cooperation of the ikastolas and which could not be overcome by the establishment of EHI. Basque schools belong to three different public administration systems (French Ministry of National Education, and the departments of education of the Basque government and the Government of Navarre) across the two countries. The schools, therefore, have to abide by the requirements and rules set by these three systems, including on eligibility for funding for educational activities received from these administrations. Since the schools follow a harmonised approach and are coordinated by a single entity, EHI, pedagogical initiatives tend to be unified across the schools. However, frequently such pedagogical initiatives must meet diverse standards and requisites imposed by the three different administrations – this means they the same initiatives often need to be adapted to the three different contexts in order to meet their specific eligibility requirements. More cooperation between public administrations is to be required to help overcome this barrier. European funded projects in the area of education (e.g. ERASMUS+) have proved to be good platforms to mitigate this challenge and to support joint work on the required adaptations of the initiatives.

The Statute of European Cooperative Society of the European Union (EU) from 2003 facilitates EU based cooperatives´ transnational activities. The five founder 'elkarteak' of the ikastolas that were in Spanish and French territories, opted to establish a single entity, EHI, under this legal form to jointly coordinate and administer their activities. Without this legal form, it was not possible to work together across the border effectively due to the differences in the legal frameworks of the two countries. The legal solution was found with the support received from a private consultancy. It was necessary to use such private support services, as no public support was available to assist transnational operations / legal matters. There remains a need for assistance to facilitate the cross-border activities of Basque organisations, including those that operate under the terms of social economy. Such assistance would be most suitable at the regional level so to ensure it is tailored to the Basque reality.

Role of technology

EHI and the ikastolas are not technology-based entities, and technology is not core to their main activities. Nevertheless, digital tools have played a key role in the coordination of ikastolas and in ensuring they have effective and efficient cooperation. In particular, EHI and its members use the same digital document library accessible from the cloud which helps to optimise their cooperation.

2.13.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

EHI´s aim for the future is to maintain and solidify its cross-border activities in support to the operation of the ikastolas. In addition to the need for increased regional support for cross-border activities and transnational cooperation within the Basque community, EHI also recommends and works to better signpost available support structures and options that exist (at all levels – EU, national, local) for the internationalisation of European entities. Increased visibility of such supporting measures would allow more complete and timely knowledge (for the European entities) of what possibilities they have to go international and the assistance they can seek for these processes.

2.14. Eyes for the world

Eyes For The World®

Name of company / entity	Eyes for The World
Website	http://eyesfortheworld.be/en/index.html
Country	Belgium
Legal status	VZW Vereniging Zonder Winstoogmerk (translated in English on the website into: "Non-profit foundation")
Main sector(s) of operations	health (Glasses)
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2014
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Including: Brazil Uganda, Colombia Myanmar South Afrika

2.14.1. Overview

On the website the following overview statements are provided: *"Eyes for The World® is a recognised non-profit foundation. We believe that everyone, all over the world, has the right to good sight. And this is why we distribute Adspec-glasses all over the world to those who need it the most. Your support makes them see the world a little better! Eyes For The World® is an important non-profit foundation and believes that everyone, all over the world, has the right to see well. World health organisations do not always have solutions for this kind of problems.*

Our challenge consists of helping these people in all corners of the world with self-adjustable glasses. In collaboration with Center For Vision, who are responsible for the development of these glasses, we have committed ourselves to initiating projects worldwide together with ophthalmologists in order to help these people and especially children who suffer from poor vision".

Koen Van Pottelbergh from Flanders in Belgium founded Eyes for the World. After the life-changing event of a car accident he decided to use his second chance. He combined his knowledge as an optician with the passion to aim for a better world. The invention of Professor Silver was adopted and applied. The glasses were presented in Antwerpen: showing that with your fingers you could adjust the lenses ranging from minus 5 to plus 5 in strength. The first project involved Myanmar. The idea is to use donations for buying glasses and bring them to people that need them. From this first experience Koen Van Pottelbergh learned many things, just by doing it for the first time.

A major boost was the social project developed around the participation of the Belgium soccer team to the world championship in Brazil. For 20 Euro one pair of glasses can help a child. A donor could join in delivering the glasses. Also, in relation to the Olympic games in Brazil projects were set-up. Bringing a pair of glasses is a very concrete solution. It is simple to tell and to understand for potential donors where their money goes to, what is done with it and who benefits. These projects, the donors and people that had a supporting, ambassador kind of role, have 'opened doors'.

The self-adjustable glasses allow users to alter the power of the lenses in order to correct their own eyesight. Feedback from the users had made them realise that it is also important that the glasses look modern and are easy to wear. A study in 2018 showed that only 20% still used the original glasses. One reason was that they were not considered pretty. Fashionable and lighter glasses have been made available for young people between the age of 8 and 18.

Over the years the adjustable glasses have changed. New principles have been followed, e.g., based on liquid in the lenses. In some ways they were superior, but the challenge was to make them stronger and more sustainable. Another approach was the Alvarez principle of making the adjustable lenses by shifting lenses over each-other.

Concerning the kind of international activities of Eyes For The World: they want to **distribute** as many glasses as possible all over the world. This is done with the help of local ophthalmologists and School Based Projects, and in collaboration with other partners such as Child Vision.

2.14.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Challenges differ from project to project, and country by country. They found out that the best partners to collaborate with locally are medical optometrists, as they have no commercial interest.

Getting permission involved working with ministries. In Morocco it was at first not allowed for us to enter and deliver the glasses. Sometimes we also had to act as smugglers to get the glasses across the border and avoid additional tariffs, e.g., in Madagascar.

They deliberately chose the Belgium statute of VZW (vereninging zonder winstoogmerk) since it had to be clear that no commercial intentions existed and that it would be a contribution without compensation. Koen van Pottelbergh explained: "As a VZW one cannot get public subsidies, NGO's can, but then I would need to hire somebody and then it would already get commercial. It needed to be a foundation in order to do something for humanity."

Our aim is to follow up our projects in order to guarantee that the relevant needs are perfectly fulfilled, and moreover we want to assure the donor that his/her money is well spent! This implies keeping in touch and evaluating. From optometrists in Peru and Afrika they got complains, and were even threatened, since the optometrists were afraid of being left-out when their expertise of 'measuring the strength needed' would not be needed anymore. It took quite some effort, but in the end, they were kept on board.

International collaboration and working with partners are also used to address the challenges with developing new glasses. Partners also include Dutch partners, for example those that collaborate in developing new glasses at the University of Utrecht and those involved in production in Eindhoven.

Projects in Belgium (Eyes for Belgium) has also helped to test and develop with new kinds of glasses, new shapes and new techniques to adjust. These projects supported by local Lions clubs that donated money to provide glasses to homeless people in Antwerpen. Italian equipment for eye-measurement was used. As a result, you could combine a strength of minus 1 on the left and minus two on the right. The new glasses where you can easily snap out the individual lenses and change them with others of a different strength, were shown by Koen Van Pottelbergh.

To continue in Ruwanda and Rio de Janeiro, additional recognition from the government was needed. He collaborated with partners around the world, e.g., with 'Dokters van de wereld' and for instance also presented at a TED-X event in Padua. Public support is not an option as VZW. His donors are mostly Lions clubs and Rotary clubs in Belgium.

2.14.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

The future prospects include new projects concern solutions to eye-damage from too much sunlight. The cost to help somebody is 30-40 dollar per person.

Koen Van Pottelbergh recommends policymakers: 1) to make a more simplified legal statute for non-profit entities, and 2) every entity should have the same chances to get public subsidies.

2.15. FairBnB

Name of company / entity	Fairbnb.coop
Website	fairbnb.coop
Country	Italy
Legal status	Cooperative
Main sector(s) of operations	Tourism
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2018
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Germany, France, Belgium, Poland, Turkey and Slovenia

2.15.1. Overview

Fairbnb.coop is a social booking and crowdfunding platform that aims to limit the negative effects of tourism, amplifying its positive impact on the host community via cooperativism, involvement of local communities and promotion of sustainable tourism. FairBnB started its journey in 2016 as a movement seeking to create a just alternative to existing home-sharing platforms. Initially the movement emerged in Venice, Amsterdam and Bologna but soon other groups from all over Europe joined the debate and helped in shaping the final business model.

The idea of FairBnB spurred from the conceptualisation that the social impact of traveling was rarely taken into consideration, because at first with vacation apartments, people didn't feel it. However, at some point people started realising the negative impact of tourism on communities and the environment, not only as an outcome of the industry's growth, but also because of its huge expansion into residential areas. Overall, FairBnB aims to be the counter to Airbnb and its current procedures that seem to do little to prevent abuse. Hence, the mission and vision of FairBnB is to support solidarity and participatory economy through sustainable tourism as well as the proper use of apartments. The coop ensures that they list only legal apartments, and in places where laws are lax, they check the potential impact of a listing. In places with no regulation, they act as experts and suggest some rules together with local citizens groups, as for example happened during the consultation phase in Venice, where the FairBnB policy is stricter than the municipality requires.
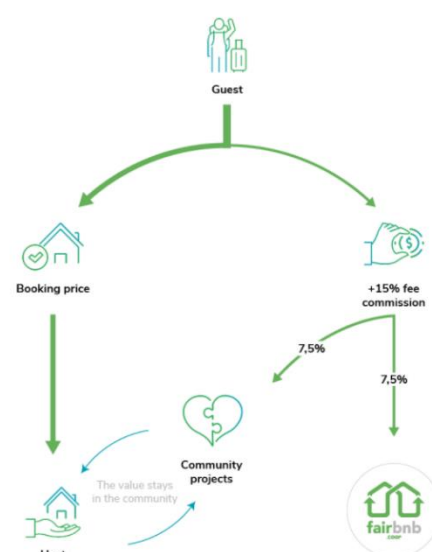
Source: fairbnb.coop

Concerning the business model, FairBnB levies a commission on bookings similar to that of Airbnb, while half of it is provided back into the local community where a listing is situated. The commissions are provided for funding projects chosen by and in consultation with the local community. FairBnB guests are also able to choose the community project that would benefit from their stay. Local nodes and the Fairbnb.coop partners act as facilitators and bring in different actors and stakeholders to help reach goals in terms of the number of hosts and projects in a community. The local nodes propose some projects that can generate a local economy, like a local co-op supermarket or a local restaurant.

Regarding key milestones in FairBnB's history, the initiative went through 4 phases: the first one - in 2016 - concerned the design of the manifesto by the founding partners that declares the values and the business model of the co-op as well as set the ethical regime within local policies. This manifesto consists of the backbone of FairBnB's activities. The co-op was established in Bologna to serve as the legal entity behind the project, an open entity where, in the near future, FairBnB plans to welcome all their stakeholders as members. The second phase which started at the end of 2018 involved the establishment of FairBnB as a workers' co-op in Italy. And the third phase involved the design and delivery of the online platform, with the first MVP launched in November 2019 – but unfortunately coincided with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the current fourth phase, FairBnB has released its second MVP version of the platform that includes new features for hosts and guests as well as working towards converting FairBnB from a worker's co-op into a multi-stakeholder co-op.

Concerning FairBnB's impact model, the primary target group is local communities - as they aim to alleviate the negative effects of tourism on local level, to improve cities quality of life through solidarity and adaptation of circular economy principles and serving SDG goals, and engaging local communities to decide the kind of support they wish to give to their area (funded through the revenues produced via the commissions charged for the listings rented) as well as for employing people to be overlooking the use of Airbnb at local level (acting as local nodes).

The cross-border activities started in 2018, when the platform was first launched. The countries in which FairBnB offers currently booking solutions include Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Germany, France, Belgium, Poland, Turkey and Slovenia. Their business model is replicable and replicated in other countries.

The initiative was launched with financial support from Banca Etica supplemented by funds put by the founding partners themselves.

Role of technology

Technology is key to this initiative's cross-border activities. The first MVP was built internally, by people with the relevant technical and professional skills supported by contracted professionals, primarily because they could not find a ready-made solution to fit their needs. The initial platform has been further improved in 2021 to make it speedier and better.

2.15.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Regarding barriers and challenges, they face in relation to their cross-border activities, during the interview with FairBnB it was stated that available legal context regarding forms, right of establishment, taxation, etc. although it is calibrated towards cooperatives it is not always relevant or appropriately fitting the concept of the sharing economy. Also, another challenge they face concerns the identification of relevant partners in other countries with which they could replicate their business model while taking into consideration the local regulatory, financial and socio-political context.

Last but not least, the disruption of the pandemic upon the tourism industry has had an impact upon FairBnB as it caused to stall their expansion and replication. Nevertheless, the team used the time to improve the online platform and add more features, e.g. have a map view of all the destinations already active (green flag) and the ones in activation (white flag), each node has its own webpage, accessible through the map in the Community minisite, where Local Ambassador's contact information, the sustainability rules that apply, and the community projects that are funded are listed, etc.

They have achieved to disrupt the tourism industry in several places across Europe and receive political support and visibility.
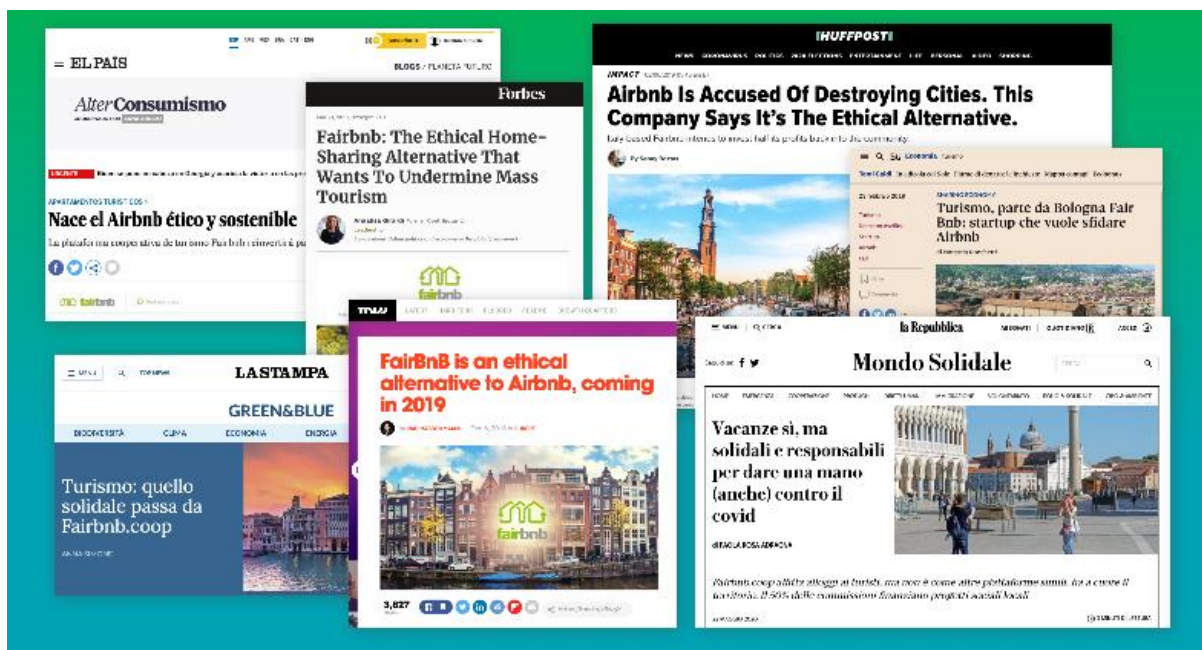
FairBnB is considered an important actor and enabler towards addressing the challenges caused by gentrification and touristification, phenomena by which an area begins to lose the social fabric of local inhabitants, whether they are owners or tenants, to leave these homes for vacation exploitation. The cultural damage that occurs even tends to be contrary to what the tourist seeks in the first instance, which is to know the place that is visited.

Another challenge they face concern the identification and retainment of people with digital technical skills: it's not only difficult to find people with the right set of skills but it is also difficult to retain them, as the salaries that can be given by co-ops and social economy entities in general cannot (always) be equally high as those offered by private companies. Moreover, they are a social co-op, meaning that the people hired need to abide to the ethical principles of FairBnB.

2.15.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Regarding next steps they hope that the revenues to be generated during the Summer period of 2021 will suffice to sustain themselves, while from a technological perspective they aim to launch a platform for mid-to-long term rentals.

In terms of countries, they plan to expand their listings in Switzerland, Austria and Croatia.

During the covid period FairBnB accomplished to raise another 1 million € in equity and funds to improve their platform and services, which include an experience platform alongside the Short-Term Rental one and a blockchain based solution to increase lawfulness and cooperation and exchange of data in an ethical way with other coop platforms.

FairBnB has also been working with others in trying to understand how to raise capital – by making platform co-ops attractive to investors. A system is envisaged of buy-back shares which will guarantee a 3% or 5% return – depending on the investors' appetite for risk. This could be as a potential way to create incentives for early workers and developers of platform co-ops.

With respect to the identification, employment and retainment of people with technical skills, FairBnB is starting to explore with FairCoin the possibility of offering co-op shares that are easier to distribute – as tokens.

Overall, what they mentioned is that it is important to see how to strengthen the different parts of economies, develop a common narrative and explain why it's important to take back control of the technologies used.

Finally, they are working towards exploring whether the Emilia-Romagna paradigm - where all co-ops give 3% of their revenue to a mutual fund which is used to fund and develop more cooperatives – can be replicated to other areas. The fund is generally used to match funds and multiply investments by 3 or 4 times, but they also provide guaranteed loans. This model is not yet designed for cooperative start-ups, but FairBnB is working on adapting these tools to the financial needs of emerging platform cooperatives.

2.16. Fairphone

FAIRPHONE

Name of company / entity	Fairphone
Website	https://www.fairphone.com/en/
Country	Netherlands
Legal status	B.V. (Company)
Main sector(s) of operations	Mobile Phones
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2010
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Manufacturing, assembly in China; Kongo, Peru: activities at mining locations; Office in the Netherlands; Sales mostly EU; Suppliers: global

2.16.1. Overview

Monique Lempers (Impact Innovation Director) explains in the interview that "Everything we do is cross-border, there is very little that is limited to the Netherlands".

Regarding the legal status: "we see ourselves as a social enterprise". In the Netherlands it is quite common for social enterprises to have the legal status of company, in Dutch that is: B.V.

The formal mission of Fairphone is: "By establishing a market for ethical electronics, we motivate the industry to act more responsibly". As expressed on the website: *"From the earth to your pocket, a smartphone's journey is filled with unfair practices. We believe a fairer electronics industry is possible. By making change from the inside, we're giving a voice to people who care."*

The company was established as a spin-off from Waag society where an awareness campaign was started about mineral ore from mines in conflict area's/countries. After the start in 2010 there was a shift in 2013 when it was decided to generate more impact by developing a smartphone. This was when Fairphone moved from an awareness campaign to a company and started to invest and innovate themselves. Lempers explained that it is not possible to control everything in the value-chain: every step and every sub-component and sub-value chains. The approach was always an impact approach: accepting that you don't control everything, but make improvements step by step, through influence on partners in the value chain. This involves working with preferred suppliers, making agreements on where they source the material and components, screen vendor lists, discuss workers' welfare, etc.

For some mission statements we turn to the website[6]:

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[6] https://www.fairphone.com/en/story/?ref=header

"Fairphone builds a deeper understanding between people and their products, driving conversations about what "fair" really means. By creating a more sustainable smartphone, we're demonstrating the endless possibilities for a fairer future – for everyone. With every phone we make, we're getting closer to a fairer and more sustainable electronics industry.

From responsible material sourcing to advocating for workers' welfare, we share all our results freely and set new standards for the entire industry.

Changing the electronics industry from the inside. We believe that care for the environment and people should be a natural part of doing business throughout our industry. With suppliers, local communities and the wider industry, we work for fairer materials and more responsible practices – one step at a time. Together we're disrupting a short-term way of thinking that the world can no longer afford".

The transnational activities include everything the company does, and thus in many ways they are performing transnational activities, namely: Sales, after-sales, recycling, suppliers, assembly, mining, production.

"Currently, we only sell and ship Fairphone products to countries within the EEA and Switzerland. As an entity based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, we currently focus our sales efforts on Europe. At the same time, we are researching the market and logistic possibilities to sell outside of Europe". Not serving outside Europe relates to complicated logistics, high costs and different VAT regulations. "One of the barriers for transnational activities for Fairphone is the fact that old, un-used phones are treated at the borders as waste, and not as material for new phones".

On the website there is a lot of information on markets and supply chain. A full list of countries where we sell and ship to" is available at: https://support.fairphone.com/hc/en-us/articles/202005103

"There is not a single supply chain, but with all the components there are hundreds of supply chains".

Information on the supply chain is made publicly available, such as a map of the international supply chain:

Source: https://open.sourcemap.com/maps/embed/5d555c199562d4f479e529e6
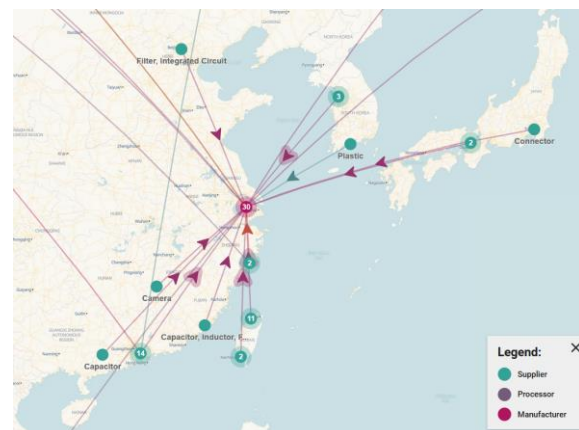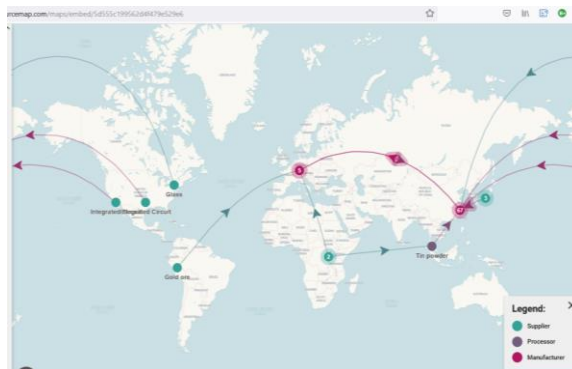
2.16.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Not serving outside Europe relates to complicated logistics, high costs and different VAT regulations. Since service, repair and re-cycling are important for the sustainability ambitions, the international interaction with customers is more demanding than for other mobile phone companies. Because one of the basic principles is to extend the life of each phone, if possible, some crucial parts can be replaced and repaired, software up-dated, parts are upgraded (only camera & speaker of FP3 so far), long warranty is provided, and old phones are taken back and in order for them to be refurbished they go to the manufacturer in China. Also, when the phones or parts cannot be used anymore, the material is taken back and collected as E-waste.

"One of the barriers for transnational activities for Fairphone is the fact that old, un-used phones are treated at the borders as waste, and not as material for new phones". At a meeting in Brussels this problem has already been explained to the concerning internal market experts of the European Commission. Cost of import tariffs, administration costs and transport costs are a barrier for the efficiency of return streams in a circular economy. Fairphone recommended to better facilitate such return streams across borders.

Performing all necessary works under full control and ownership is impossible. One cannot even control 2% of the value chain of a mobile phone. This lack of control is the main transnational barrier. In order to influence behaviour Fairphone must work with existing partners and try to take them on the route towards more fair and more sustainable practices. Challenges concern making agreements with the Chinese assembly plant, with their suppliers e.g., of batteries and (Printed-Circuit Boards) PCB's. Screening vendor lists, asking for material declarations and run impact and improvement programmes.

Mitigating the problem of limited control on international value chains, consists of influencing the behaviour of actors in the existing value chain. On a voluntary basis, and by showing/proofing the business case of fairer production, they try to persuade others to adopt more fair and sustainable practices, through partnerships and collaboration.

Since aiming for full control, and a closed own value chain is impossible, working with partners is not only the cross-border challenge and barrier, but also the solution. The range of different partners is large. It also includes consultants in China and Taiwan that for instance do worker-surveys for us. Increasing awareness and work towards improvements is best done by working with all these partners. Working towards Fair Cobalt implies working with Tesla and Glencore. This approach is in line with one of their mission statements: 'Changing the electronics industry from the inside'.

There is a small but growing market for fair materials and fair products. On a voluntary basis they try to persuade companies outside the Social Economy to work towards more fair and sustainable practices.

When asked if there is a need for international standards on what Fair means: "there are enough international standards on what Fair is, or what is sustainable, but 90% does not meet these standards".

The remedy to not meeting Fair standards is continuous improvement. Programmes of Fairphone are oriented to improve the social performance and meeting existing laws. Next to that they are working within international platforms to improve the performance on the standards.

2.16.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Fairphone recommended to better facilitate recollection of unused waste material, such return streams across borders that should be promoted in a circular economy.

A 100% level of recycling is not possible. In an optimal recycling process, at the moment only 30% of the materials in a phone can be recycled. The rest is burned/ shredded.

Recycling streams of material should be free from tax and tariffs. Taxation reform could promote and not work as a barrier for an international circular economy.

2.17. Fédération Nationale de la Mutualité Française (FNMF)

Name of company / entity	Fédération Nationale de la Mutualité Français (FNMF)
Website	La Fédération nationale de la Mutualité Française : mutualite.fr
Country	France
Legal status	Federation of French Mutual Societies
Main sector(s) of operations	Healthcare
Starting date of Cross-border activities	1920
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Montepio (Portugal), Belgian Mutuals (unspecified), Italian Mutuals

2.17.1. Overview

The FNMF was established as a development of historical movements in France to concentrate efforts of local mutuals and ensure wider access to healthcare for the population. It represents mutual societies, at national, regional, or local level. The FNMF is present in metropolitan France and overseas via 17 regional unions that promote and implement its positions with local decision-makers. It works to influence policy, leveraging its privileged access to public authorities, parliamentarians, trade unions, representatives of the health professions and users. the FNMF is an important historical entity and the main actor and employer of the social and solidarity economy in France. Making it a crucial actor invested in governance and the strengthening of the social and solidarity economy. The backbone of its impact model is based on promoting the activities, ideas, and values of its member entities to public authorities, institutions and all actors in health and social protection.

Established in 1902, the FNMF represents 488 mutual societies in France and its overseas departments. The entity represents 85,000 staff, of which 15,000 are health professionals. This scale allows them to contribute well to the public healthcare debate, gilded by open debates, publishing studies, and setting up think-tanks. They further contribute to the debate by organising events that bring different key stakeholders together to focus on health and social protection issues. They also run national communication campaigns to educate the public about the role of mutuals and raise awareness of solidarity and mutual aid.

FNMF have had cross-border links for over 100 years, even before the EU, yet these links have been in the main part political in nature. Namely, the main motivation behind their cross-border activities has been protecting the mutual model as a specific form of organisational governance in Europe. In modern times, this is embodied by general efforts to avoid what is termed as 'de-mutualisation'. This refers to a legal process generated by

regulations allowing a mutual, to start selling memberships and generating profit for external shareholders or to be de-mutualised via LBO as has happened in the UK and Canada.

Their main cross-border activity is collective impact, which follows two main lines. The first is the historical one, mentioned above, which is now embodied by lobbying and awareness raising at an EU-level of the needs of mutual societies and especially the needs for a specifically defined European mutual legal form. Because, as shared by our interviewee, having different legislation in every member state is not effective. The other line is to support the continued existence of mutual societies as separate legal forms, with their own structures and guiding values. Because, unless collective action is taken to protect the mutual form in Europe, there is a risk that slowly private limited company law will take primacy and 'eat away' at the number of" true" mutuals in European countries (*democratic governance/not for profit/ surpluses invested only for better social services to the members)*

Moreover, FNMF's cross-border activities are motivated by their mission, which is mainly to ensure that affordable healthcare services reach citizens. This was in fact highlighted as one of their main motivations to collaborate. This motivation is perfectly highlighted by a cross-border activity that FNMF coordinated involving their members and a number of small Italian mutuals. Whereby the FNMF members collaborated with their Italian partners in order to provide healthcare insurance to students in Italy, a group which traditionally experiences difficulty in accessing healthcare. In France, mutuals can provide health insurance, while in Italy they can only manage healthcare facilities. Therefore, by collaborating the FNMF members offered health insurance to Italian students, which they could reimburse at facilities managed by the Italian mutuals. An interesting initiative that shows their commitment to their social mission and represents a bridge between the distribution and collective impact pathways.

Outside of the EU space, FNMF in cooperation with several Belgian mutuals engages in co-creation and knowledge exchange activities in the francophone countries of West Africa. Mainly in the form of training programmes, sharing of best practice and distribution of necessary medical equipment. Interestingly, the West African countries are in fact further ahead in the recognition of mutuals, with a standardised legal form common amongst the West-African states.

For FNMF, the main business-related disadvantage of transnational activities is the great cost that is involved in setting up different legal forms and contracting legal advice. However, in the view of FNMF, transnational activities are overwhelmingly positive. Because they are crucial to the continued existence of mutuals in Europe as well the rest of the world, as without inter-organisational support and solidarity, there is a large risk that this legal form will slowly begin dying out.

2.17.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

One of the main challenges faced by FNMF members is difficulties in complying with a plethora of EU regulations which are typically implemented with traditional commercial companies in mind. A mutual, as a not-for-profit organisation cannot raise or transfer capital across borders. All EU regulations, e.g., complying with solvency 2 regulations, are a burden and barrier for mutuals. Moreover, they must comply with all financial directives and regulations, which are aimed at preventing a multitude of crimes such as money laundering or terrorist financing, however, have been historically risks in other sectors, not the social economy. Therefore, they find themselves in a lose-lose situation, whereby the regulations are only hinderances for them, and do not protect or recognise them. A mitigation strategy for this problem would be more proportionality in insurance and prudential regulations, the recognition of mutuals as a common, separate legal form guided by a specific value set. This would be a step towards a potential loosening of certain regulations so as to ease their operation.

A further legal barrier is that every EU member state has its own legal definition of the mutual form (or lack of such). Therefore, cross-border operation can sometimes be very challenging depending on the countries. This creates several problems, like for example the risk that operations may be hindered due to their specific features not being recognised in a destination country. Or further operational difficulties caused by local partners requiring FNMF members to comply to national legislation. Finally, even though it is illegal under EU law, FNMF members have faced situations where they have been asked to have a legal representative in a destination country, thus causing administrative difficulties. Generally, creating a new legal form to operate cross-border is both too complex, and too expensive for many mutuals that make up the FNMF. Similarly, to the above, the most effective mitigation measure would be the establishment of a common European Mutual Form.

Finally, a large challenge faced by FNMF mutuals is accessing and generating capital. They can't raise capital on the market as is done by traditional commercial companies or certain other social economy entities. A problem compounded by an apparent difficulty they face in accessing EU funds, which the compliance with destination of funds and reporting requirements can prove too burdensome. As is the case with the other challenges, an official common recognition of their legal form, which can then be used to adjust EU financing processes is a suggested mitigation measure. It is very hard for mutuals to get into EU support programmes, "mutuals have to hire expensive experts to get into EU programmes".

2.17.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Therefore, our contact at FNMF recommends to balance legislation, e.g. legislation that prohibits or restricts allocation of state aid toward mutuals that are performing necessary social services such as healthcare for disadvantaged groups. Moreover, **they believe that there needs to be proportionality and a proper impact assessment** in legislation and regulations in regard to mutual societies, especially when they are doing socially positive work. Both because they are providing important services, but also because in their view, the risk they represent is lower.

The main prospects are linked to sustainable finance and greening of assets, which is currently at a very nascent stage for FNMF. They plan to collaborate with asset managers in order to both comply with new regulations and have a more sustainable portfolio. This prospect is necessarily cross-border and transnational because the task of becoming greener and more sustainable is complex both from an operational and legal perspective. Therefore, cooperation with other entities is necessary in order to collaboratively tackle this challenge.

2.18. FLOOW2

Name of company / entity	FLOOW2
Website	https://www.floow2.com/
Country	Netherlands
Legal status	BV
Main sector(s) of operations	IT platform and multi-sectoral services
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2012 (from Luxemburg)
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Canada (Canadian Coalition for Green Healthcare), Resellers in the UK, Ireland, Belgium, Denmark, and in Scandinavia

2.18.1. Overview

From the very beginning, FLOOW2 is established in Luxembourg as an information technology (IT) platform for sharing assets among entities with a global view as part of its business development strategy. As a Sharing Marketplace solution for businesses, entities and networks in 2012, floow2.com operated as a sharing marketplace for health and various different sectors. In 2015, it extended its services to provide white label for marketplaces for other entities, networks and countries. By the year 2019, FLOOW2 as one brand, engaged in further branding activities as owner and provider of white labels for different brands' marketplaces through collaborations. In 2020, Covid-19 pandemic introduced a positive impact on transparency in health care sector and this speeded up the developments around sharing activities.

FLOOW2 is active in developing marketplaces for networks, large companies, municipalities, healthcare organisations with an impact on the target group that relates to economic returns due to sharing, as well as environmental and social returns in terms of developing local collaborations among entities via sharing. Its business model involves several types of revenue as one-time fee to design and implement the marketplace and to develop it, license fees via reseller model and transaction fees, although the latter is very rare. Co-creation takes place during marketplace development e.g., for pharmaceutical sector companies, and distribution activities take place via sales and marketing individuals using reseller model.

2.18.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Valuing ownership rather than sharing by entities is the main challenge to FLOOW2 in the market. Mindset of companies and networks can be very attached to ownership which leads to buying, using and disposing. These are barriers to introduce sharing. Legislations against sharing equipment e.g., via strict contracts are main barriers. Insurances which cover renting out, standardised rental contract are positive development. For allowance for inter market transactions (in pharma), EU Law poses a challenge and requires a wholesale permit.

As available legal form created a barrier so FLOOW2 preferred to operate in Luxembourg before moving back to the Netherlands. Tax regulations for internet companies, especially for purpose driven enterprises such as FLOOW2, are the main source of the issue. A further reduction of 10% could enhance the position of purpose-driven digital social enterprises. Financial regulations and rules, especially tax services are also found to be time consuming in the operational domain.

Understanding of how the sector works in other countries is mitigated by working with actors active in the local context. FLOOW2 benefitted financial support from Flanders Government, in particular to create a platform for Belgian construction companies. Networking support is received from Holland Circular Hotspot. While legal issues are dealt internally, FLOOW2 also benefitted from international/EU projects of H2020 which showcased it as a best practice, and this supported its growing visibility.

2.18.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

FLOOW2 subscribes to the idea of platform economy, sharing economy as its main motivation to help transform businesses, and networks into social and sustainable entities with environmental and social purposes via sharing assets and developing collaborations. In this respect, it also contributes to circular economy and digital economy. As future prospects, FLOOW2 aim at concentrating at financial health and introducing sharing as many firms as possible and extending to developing countries. Support for creating more awareness about benefits of sharing among companies and showcasing best sharing practices in and outside of Europe for the attainment of further environmental and social benefits are recommended. Digital platform technology being its core element, in future plans FLOOW2 aims at extending to blockchain technologies, smart coding systems, and augmented reality. Thus, FLOOW2 is the unique case of how platform economy and social economy interacts, also with other types of new economy activities, such as sharing economy, circular economy and digital economy activities. Professional support from intermediaries (business agencies, SEE intermediaries) is deemed necessary for local demand articulation and cross-border partnering activities for planned replication activities.

2.19. Fundatia Alaturi de Voi

Name of company / entity	Fundatia Alaturi de Voi
Website	www.alaturidevoi.ro
Country	Romania
Legal status	Foundation
Main sector(s) of operations	Labour market integration
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2002
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Ukraine, Moldova

2.19.1. Overview

The „Alaturi de Voi" Romania Foundation (ADV) is a non-governmental organisation and a work integration social enterprise, established in February 2002 by Holt International Children's Services U.S.A. Its mission is the integration of people with disabilities and from other groups at risk. The foundation has created over 100 workplaces, of which at least 40% for people with disabilities. In time, ADV Romania created 7 products for an integrated approach in the field of social economy. So far, they reached 2.761 people, that are living under extreme poor socioeconomic conditions. 142.524 people showed improved health and well-being because of ADV's work. Also, they were able to provide quality education to 156 children and work for 4.604 young professionals in the region. Finally, they are the founding member of four federations, establishing non-financial institutions for social entrepreneurs.

Working closely with the ministry of economics, they pass on important knowledge to social entrepreneurs, providing them with social services, funding, coaching, advocacy trainings and know-how on capacity development. They carried out their approach to 5 places in the Republic of Moldova and 3 locations in Ukraine, expanding their community and showcasing good ideas. ADV is distributing their expertise, in the sense of research or field visits and replicating their social services, supporting the development of social enterprises. Their motive in order to transfer their program to other countries, is to expand their network, transform practical experience in to systemised policies and frameworks, build up a sector strategy, gather new data for social enterprises and exchange best practice methods.

2.19.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

One of the main barriers, is that ADV has no local or regional support concerning funding and networking. The social sector is too small to promote their services. Most of the recruitment is done individually without any partnership agreements, since they don't have enough marketing capacity to promote their services, i.e., on social media. They are constantly in competition with bigger companies, who have a greater marketing capacity.

They are hoping to solve this problem with their new website, which will be launched end of the year. ADV especially wants to target clients which see the value in the social impact of the foundation. In order to gain more profit, they are now also selling luxury travel services, that generate a higher donation rate. COVID especially hit the travel market, which meant that ADV had to deal with a lot of modifications. Also, the individualised travel setups and travel packages, provided by ADV didn't bring as much commission as they were hoping for.

The Foundation gets no funding or legal support. They hired people with travel experience and know-how on a full-time basis, in order to fully understand the processes within the market.

Role of technology

WISE (www.wise.travel) is their online platform for travels for individuals and businesses, providing services regarding accommodation, flights and activities

2.19.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

ADV benefitted from their transnational activity, because they were able to create bigger networks and tools, that disseminate their information. Due to their work on different projects, they had the chance to apply their know-how and be part of co-learning processes with partners. They are gaining more and more recognition in the whole area, which leads to low fluctuation, higher employee loyalty and motivation. In the future they are planning to disseminate their product for free. They are hoping to attract clients from different markets and therefore being able to promote their services further.

Their recommendations for measures to foster social economy transnational activities, is to include procurement and funding guidelines into the framework of the commission, in order to buy services from social enterprises. Also, it is important to identify models of good practice on a local level and to replicate them without the application to the European commission, since it takes a lot of effort. Instead, projects that already work well should be targeted and agreements with them should be contracted to scale.

2.20. Geleckdaha.NET

Name of company / entity	Gelecekdaha.NET
Website	https://gelecekdaha.net/
Country	Turkey
Legal status	Association
Main sector(s) of operations	Education and Training of Youth and Migrants/Refugees for Labour Market
Starting date of Cross-border activities	In 2013 (with Ashoka Fellowship)
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Global Action Plan (UK), GIZ (Germany), Unilever (NL), EBRD (EU), Ashoka Fellowship (USA), Eisenhower Fellowship (USA), BMW Responsible Leader Award (Germany), Paris Peace Forum Award (France)

2.20.1. Overview

Gelecekdaha.net helps children, youth and refugees in finding right education and job in the marketplace via providing a digital and physical platform for educational and vocational orientation activities, internships, webinars, online mentoring by real experts from the field. For such social empowerment and integration activities, its volunteer base reaches to 2000 volunteers from various sources. In 2013, gelecekdaha.net started its Ashoka fellowship (Global USA). It also has Eisenhower fellowship (USA) and is receiver of BMW Responsible Leader Award, a best practice award that amounts 20k Euros in 2014. International cooperation takes place with GIZ (Germany), Unilever (NL), EBRD (EU). Gelecekdaha.net also develops projects, such as EMBARK, which may become another social enterprise itself, for refugees providing reverse mentoring to companies. This approach is awarded in Paris Peace Forum. Activities of Gelecekdaha.net consist of empowerment for education and employability, especially youth empowerment which leads to better and more informed decisions by young population. Empowerment for social cohesion applies to refugees and companies, which are given mutual access to each other for better and more informed decisions for social acceptance/integration, and access to business world. Reverse mentoring for companies by refugees and employee volunteering increases companies' access to youth and refugees as well which lead to mutual understanding, increased social awareness and several corporate social responsibility activities.

2.20.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Main challenges of gelecekdaha.net relates to available legal forms for social enterprises, and related tax obligations. Technology outsourcing for platform maintenance is also a challenge. Main barrier for replication in other countries are due to lack of human resources and financial capital, funds. Gelecekdaha.net operates on constrained, limited project-based, fee-based (from companies) and grants-based revenue types.

Mitigation strategy of Gelecekdaha.net is based on hybridisation among gelecekdaha.net digital platform, Mikado Ltd., and association Gelecekdaha.net. It also benefitted from Ashoka Globalizer Programme, for learning about replication, scaling, via mentoring support, and received travel funds for visiting Greece and Italy. In these countries the business model of gelecekdaha.net is appreciated and acknowledged yet due to lack of human resources and financial budgets, cross-border local replication could not be realised.

2.20.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

EMBARK project of gelecekdaha.net is deemed applicable in many more countries, such as the Netherlands and Germany. EMBARK project provides refugee reverse mentorship via structured (4-5) meetings with companies, where participants can ask mutual questions, which contributes to cultural learning, learning about business world, familiarisation of youth with business world, and for companies it helps gaining knowledge about younger generations. Contributing to meaningful work life balance, personal and professional satisfaction, social value creation, and human development are prospects of Gelecekdaha.net.

More internationalisation via partnership with funds, localisation with expertise, co-creating common goals are deemed necessary for further cross-border activities. In this respect, the important role of intermediaries is emphasised via Global Action Plan UK support for WaterExplorer project, a replication yet its localisation is performed via local teachers for increasing water awareness of youth and kids via multi-year independent funds.

Sharing best practices, private sector and public institution partnerships, incentives for creation and delivery of mutual benefits via these partnerships to solve societal and ecological issues, publishing impact reports of social economy with indicators (e.g. share of employment, tax in total economy) and progressive discourse on the need for a social economy and social enterprises help increase acceptance and recognition of social economy and enterprises.

2.21. Helsinki Foundation

Name of company / entity	Helsinki Foundation
Website	https://www.helsinkifoundation.org/
Country	Finland
Legal status	Non-profit foundation
Main sector(s) of operations	Land conservation
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2016
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Estonia, Australia

2.21.1. Overview

The Helsinki Foundation was established in 2015 in Finland for the purpose of promoting long-term land conservation. Its mission is to acquire lands and leave them in their natural state in order to preserve them for future generations. The Helsinki Foundation pursues its mission across borders and operationalises it through its Greenspace Guardian programme that allows any citizen to take action and contribute to this environmental project.

In practice, the Foundation purchases ecologically relevant lands using the donations provided by individuals and corporations. The lands are then split up into virtual green spaces with exact GPS coordinates, land size and greenspace codes. Permanent and exclusive guardianship over the virtual green spaces can then be bought by anyone through the website of the Foundation. The actual ownership over the entire lands remains with the Helsinki Foundation and the guardians who own the virtual green spaces (inheritable digital assets), acquire voting rights within the Foundation. Land can only be sold / its use changed through the agreement of all the involved parties (the Helsinki Foundation and the guardians with virtual green areas composing the specific land). This system safeguards decision-making rights for all the parties over the lands owned by the Foundation, creating barriers to any future attempts to use these lands for purposes other than land conservation.

Transnational activities for the Helsinki Foundation are essential to enable land conservation with the highest possible impact. The more land is acquired in the most possible countries, the more natural areas will be preserved worldwide.

In this sense, the Foundation has purchased lands around the world, including in Finland, Estonia and Australia. It started off with these activities in 2015 first locally in Finland, to test the entire concept and identify any bottlenecks that could affect its replication in foreign countries. After the proof of concept, land purchasing activities were also initiated in Australia in 2016. This country was chosen due to its unique wildlife and the personal motivations of the founders.

Soon after, in 2018, an opportunity for purchasing a nature area arose in Estonia when the Helsinki Foundation was approached by the landowner situated in this country. The land was important from an ecological perspective as it served as a bird nesting place. The Foundation managed to buy it.

In addition to accessing lands in different countries, the transnational element is also strongly present in the Greenspace Guardian programme. Guardians are sourced from a range of countries to purchase guardianship over the lands, including places, such as the United States, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Canada, Hungary, Poland, Australia, and many others.

2.21.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

The main challenges related to the Helsinki Foundation´s transnational activities were legal issues connected with land purchase in foreign countries. In Australia, for instance, it is more difficult for foreigners to own properties and, therefore, there are some legal restrictions and bureaucracy involved. In Australia, some other challenges were also found. The first land the Foundation was about to purchase had mining exploration rights on it. This was only possible to identify through a legal due diligence procedure implemented to this property before signing the sales agreement. Such mining rights would have prevented the Foundation from accomplishing its main goal through this purchase, the preservation of this land in its natural state.

In Estonia, the process of buying land was also difficult since the legal system here is also very different from the Finnish legal system, despite the geographical proximity of the two countries and their membership to the European Union (EU). Often such differences start at very fundamental levels, such as legal terminologies, including what ownership means in legal terms in the specific country.

In both cases, the same mitigation strategy was used. This was to hire local legal services to be able to identify and navigate through the applicable laws and meet the necessary requirements to purchase lands.

Although the legal form of the Helsinki Foundation did not represent a problem when buying properties outside Finland, the entity came across legal difficulties in the foreign markets due to the specific rules for the ownership by foreigners or simply due to the lack of knowledge of the local legal environments. For any kind of entity, it can be very challenging to purchase lands in other countries without having local support. For a foundation, it is even more challenging since it has a limited or no budget to spend on such local service costs. The Helsinki Foundation invests all the income it generates through the Greenspace Guardian programme into new properties for nature conservation and, thus, does not have funds available for this purpose. Finally, the Foundation managed to get pro bono support via a Finnish law firm that connected it to local solicitors.

Other support was also received from [The Good Lobby](#), a start-up located in Belgium that aims to equalise access to power for a more plural, inclusive and democratic society. When reaching out for support to Brussels, the Foundation was put in contact with The Good Lobby. The start-up provided assistance in regard to digital marketing aspects, allowing to publicise the Greenspace Guardian programme on the internet and engage interested guardians.

The Foundation also made an attempt to access EU level funding opportunities via the Finnish Innovation Fund (SITRA) however, SITRA advised that whilst the Foundation could apply for funding, in practice, funding was not available to Foundations.

The Foundation did not have information about further European support possibilities for which it did not look for additional European support.

At the local level, the Foundation approached the Finnish Enterprise Agencies, a nation-wide business support network that provides free services to promote entrepreneurship. The Helsinki Foundation, however, did not manage to receive business support from this network by not being a company.

Role of technology

Technology is indispensable for the core activities of the Helsinki Foundation. The concept behind the Greenspace Guardian programme lies in dividing lands into small digital spaces over which guardianship can be acquired by individuals. For this, a specific mapping software was necessary to develop to enable the creation of these virtual assets. Besides, the Greenspace Guardian programme is fully operated through the website of the Foundation, where the lands and the virtual green spaces are presented to interested parties and where the green spaces are purchased. The programme is also publicised via the internet, using Google ads, allowing the outreach to wide audiences.

2.21.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

The Helsinki Foundation plans to continue the purchase of lands in different parts of the world to be able to preserve nature areas for the future generations. Its target in the near future is primarily the developed countries (e.g. Canada) due to their more developed legal systems that pose less administrative burdens and costs for investors and owners of lands.

2.22. IES-Social Business School

Name of company / entity	IES-Social Business School (IES)
Website	https://www.ies-sbs.org/en/
Country	Portugal
Legal status	Non-profit association
Main sector(s) of operations	Other education
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2012
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Mozambique, Lebanon, Mongolia, Denmark, Slovenia, Ireland

2.22.1. Overview

IES-Social Business School is a business school focused on social entrepreneurship and social innovation, with the aim to promote new models of leadership and management oriented towards impact creation. IES offers capacity building to entrepreneurs, career shifters, leaders and managers, as well as the staff of local municipalities.

The school was established in 2008 in Cascais, Portugal and currently has campuses in Lisbon and in Porto. While at the beginning IES´s capacity building activities were conducted in Portugal and focused on building an impact ecosystem in this country, it then initiated its expansion to other countries. The expansion to other countries was mainly motivated by the possibility to create impact in other regions through capacity building initiatives.

IES´ international presence was initially driven by foreign participants in IES courses in Portugal, and who then became **IES ambassadors in their own countries**. In particular, an opportunity to launch a capacity building offer for women in **Mozambique, Africa** emerged in 2012 through IES ambassadors. This leadership academy for women was organised in a partnership with the local entity Girl Move. The local partner helped recruitment and the organisation of the programme locally. After the successful implementation of this capacity building in Mozambique, IES established itself in the country through a more formal branch entity. IES received funding for the delivery of capacity building in Mozambique by Odebrecht, a major Brazilian construction company that started its operations in the country at the time. Although IES´ operations in Mozambique were successful, sustaining a physical presence and infrastructure locally turned out to be burdensome for IES. For this reason, IES discontinued its branch in Mozambique in 2015.

Learning from this experience, IES chose a different path for entering other foreign markets. In particular, it initiated **strategic partnerships with local key entities** that allowed for international expansion without relying on a physical presence in the specific markets. This strategy has been successful in Africa and Asia.

The first experience driven by this strategy was in **North Africa** in 2015. IES was approached by MEDAFCO développement, after IES had implemented three successful impact bootcamps in Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria in the framework of a European Union project (2015) in collaboration with the EUCLID network, the European Network for Social Enterprises and Impact Driven Leaders. IES was asked by MEDAFCO to replicate the bootcamps in other locations in the region. MEDAFCO took over the fundraising, recruitment and other organisational tasks, leaving to IES to focus on the conception and implementation of capacity building. This partnership has been in place since then, resulting in an increased outreach and presence in the region. The same process was also applied in Asia in 2018 through the collaboration with Asia Business Alliance. This resulted in the organisation of IES impact bootcamps in **Mongolia** and **Lebanon**.

While this strategy has been effective in developing countries, IES opted for a different method in **Europe**, where there was already an increased number of social entrepreneurship training courses and other support schemes. It was more challenging to enter into such a full market and offer complete capacity building packages was as had been done in Africa and Asia where such impact creation and capacity building was rather new. Having this in mind, IES´ strategy in Europe was to offer its expertise as part of existing programmes instead of creating an offer from scratch. In Europe IES managed to establish a strategic partnership with the European Investment Bank Institute and collaborate in its annual programme, the Social Innovation Tournament. This programme is designed to fund start-ups through awards. IES is involved in the Tournament as a contracted organisation to build the capacity of start-ups from different European countries and so help them prepare for the award. By working with start-ups from diverse countries, IES can deliver its capacity building in these markets.

2.22.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

IES was faced with a range of difficulties and barriers during its internationalisation. In specific, after establishing itself in Mozambique and generating income in the country, IES was then **subject to significant taxation** in Portugal. IES managed to develop a solution by applying for an NGO status to the Portuguese government, through which it became exempt from taxes. Obtaining the NGO status of public utility was possible due to operating a branch in a developing country (Mozambique in this case).

As referred beforehand, the initial strategy to approach a foreign market was implemented through creating a physical presence (a branch). It turned out, however, to be **difficult to operate a branch at a distance** and it required a significant effort to develop local activities. All the work related to the setting up and implementation of capacity-building offers had to be done by the local branch´s staff, including fundraising, recruitment and other preparational work. This was difficult to manage as it also required inputs from staff in the main office in Portugal. This challenge was mitigated by the change of market approach, switching from a branch-based method to one based on local partnerships, in which local partners could take over part of the work.

More recently IES also initiated a project for launching its courses in an online format. This is crucial during the COVID19 pandemic and also helps further increase IES´ international outreach. This, however, requires a significant investment from IES to build its own centralised online platform that matches IES´ needs for operating its offers virtually. Being an association means that IES **has difficulty to access to private investors due to this legal form** (associations have a democratic governance system that represent a risk to private investors). IES is, therefore, considering becoming a company in order to increase its access to funding to finance strategic growth.

The legal environment was not a critical factor during IES´ cross-border operations since most of its presence in foreign markets did not need any local legal establishment (except for the first approach when creating a branch in Mozambique). The partnerships with local entities allowed IES to avoid legal barriers. The difficulty IES faced related to its branch in Mozambique and taxation requirement in Portugal is described above.

IES did not apply for /use any specific support to its international activities since it was not aware of any existing support mechanisms for this.

Role of technology

Recently technology has gained an important role in IES´ internationalisation strategy as such technology can enable IES to launch online courses. Through this, IES expects to gain access to course participants from further foreign markets. IES plans to collaborate with local partners/tech providers for this.

2.22.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

It would be important to make available (or more visible in case this already exists) support mechanisms at an EU level that could facilitate the entry of social economy entities in foreign markets (especially what concerns legal and tax related support/advice). It would also be beneficial to incentivise, at an EU level, the impact investment market so that social economy entities have increased chances to investment opportunities.

2.23. IPOP

Name of company / entity	IPOP
Website	https://ipop.si/
Country	Slovenia
Legal status	Non-profit, non-governmental, consulting and research organisation
Main sector(s) of operations	Environmental protection and Spatial planning
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2006
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Italy, Greece, Germany

2.23.1. Overview

The Institute for Policies of Space is an independent research institution and a think tank. The institute was registered as a research organisation at the Slovenian Research Agency in 2008. Its purpose is to achieve synergies across a range of disciplines and practises dealing with space and place, because issues of space and place are often examined by various theories and practices, but the spatial dimension is often of secondary importance. In this context, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning granted IPOP the status of a non-governmental organisation working in the public interest in the field of environmental protection in 2014, and in the field of spatial planning in 2019.

The Institute also takes as its starting point the role of space and builds on linking the individual theories and practices through the concept of space, developing an awareness of the spatial dimension and testing the possibilities to guide policies of space. Policies of space include the spatial effects of interactions between individuals, groups and institutions in a space and the effects of space on these interactions. Interactions can be physical, economic, cultural and social. In their nature they are dynamic, permanently in negotiation and thus political. They involve a physical articulation of space on the one hand and an articulation of practices, cultures and identities through space on the other.

2.23.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

One of the challenges addressed by IPOP include the study of cross-border public services (CPS) which have not yet been comprehensively analysed at the EU level, and there is no established methodological framework in this regard. CPS can address local development needs in many ways that do not make CPS provision more likely for certain types of territories. For example, CPS contributes to reducing negative border effects, supports the cross-border flows of people or contributes to raising awareness about cross-border possibilities.

Another challenge that IPOP had to deal with was addressed together with GREENPEACE and other NGOs, which was related to the reaction against new prepositions by the government for lowering the environmental standards in Slovenia and for the silence of NGOs. The NGOs possibility for cooperation in these procedures ensures the confrontation of different opinions and resolves issues when that is sensible and possible[7].

The institute tries to create conditions for a common understanding of challenges, goals and solutions, leading to effective spatial and urban planning. In this way, it aims to integrate knowledge and experience of different sciences and practices dealing with space and place. IPoP has prepared several strategic documents for municipalities, for example, SUMP for the Municipality of Tržič or the Strategy for Managing Public Green Areas in the Municipality of Ankaran. They participate in the process of preparing sustainable urban strategies in city municipalities and in analysing their performance at the EU level. They also organise study visits for municipalities in Slovenia and abroad and offer guided visits in Slovenian towns and cities by organising international and national conferences[8].

2.23.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

IPOP aims to increase public involvement in decision-making on public property management and sustainable urban development and to find concrete solutions for a better use of public properties. In this way, it contributes to the development of common guidelines on how to better use public property through public participation.

For years, IPoP has been encouraging walking in different ways as a traffic practice and a form of sustainable mobility. In this respect, IPOP organises active school travel, drafts mobility plans for schools and other institutions, conducts analyses of walking conditions, and develops proposals for measures to improve the conditions for walking. In the future, IPO aims to launch campaigns to promote changes in travel habits to encourage walking on short distances. The key objectives of parking policies are to improve the accessibility of urban centres, to balance transport modes, to contribute to a higher quality of living and to support the local economy.

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[7] https://cee.press.greenpeace.org/slovenian-government-attack-environmental-standards/

[8] https://ipop.si/en/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/IPOP-zvezek-web-veliki.pdf

2.24. Irrsinnig Menschlich

Name of company / entity	Irrsinnig Menschlich e.V. (Madly Human)
Website	https://www.irrsinnig-menschlich.de/
Country	Germany
Legal status	Association, Non-profit organisation
Main sector(s) of operations	Prevention of mental health issues
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2005
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia

2.24.1. Overview

The international non-profit organisation "Irrsinnig Menschlich" (Madly Human), based in Germany, is committed to cross-sectoral work in the areas of education (school, higher education, vocational training) and mental health (prevention, provision):

School setting: "Mental Well-being at School"—since 2001

- For students aged 14 and over and their class teachers: "Mental? So what! Good Mental Health at School". For younger school children between the ages of 8 and 12 (under development).

Higher education setting: "Mental Well-being on Campus"—since 2016

- For students in higher education, PhD students and members of staff engaged in teaching, research and administration.

Company setting: "Mental Well-being at Work"—since 2017

- For trainees and professional trainers in companies.

Their core competence lies in developing and testing as well as implementing and scaling universal prevention programs for young people, working alongside with partners to achieve this aim. The combination of information, education and contact with members of the stigmatised group (in their case individuals with experience of mental illness) proved to be a promising anti-stigma strategy. They develop and offer prevention programs for students, teachers and school management staff, for stakeholders from the areas of health, care, youth welfare and education, for students and staff in higher education institutions, and also for trainees and professional trainers. They verbalise taboo topics, open doors and encourage participants and institutions to continue to create a needs-oriented environment. In accordance with the participatory approach, Irrsinnig Menschlich always works with teams consisting of both a professionally and a personally qualified expert. The professional experts come from the area of prevention, health promotion and psychosocial care. The personal experts recovered from mental crises and are trained to share their experiences. In 2019, in collaboration with 100 partners, they reached more than 40.000 young people in schools, vocational training and higher education.

Since 2005 they have transferred their programs to Austria, Czech Republic and Slovak Republic. They also want to establish their program in the United Kingdom and Poland, where they are already looking for partners. As an independent strategy, they plan and host workshops at universities such as the Gabelli Business School at Fordham in New York.

2.24.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

One challenge so far has been to find new funders and stakeholders in new countries, who are interested in their product. They learned to take their time with finding the right partners and to not give up, even though this process can be frustrating sometimes. Since Irrsinnig Menschlich is a German association, their program had to be translated, in order to be implemented in English speaking countries. Therefore, they had a lot of discussion rounds, agreeing on the mutual understanding of key terms and meanings. Until now, there are no European or international universal strategies for Irrsinig Menschlich's approach. Bottom-up processes work fine, top-down strategies on the other hand, have not been implemented yet. By finding more cooperation partners, they are hoping to gain a greater recognition in the European and international market.

The EU approves of and supports the "Mental? So What!" programme. As part of an Erasmus+ project, their partners in Germany, Austria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic will develop a common framework for quality management, among other things, and will set up a transnational steering group for scaling at a European level.

The creation of new cooperative partnerships is focusing on countries in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe and countries with English as an official language. New scaling partnerships should also offer support in financing during the implementation phase. Countries that prioritise mental health issues, have better options regarding legal forms and frameworks within that topic and allow better options to establish such cooperation. Only if cooperation partners are able to fulfil the necessary criteria on a legal level, a cooperation agreement can be signed. One of Irrsinnig Menschlich's main partners in Austria is the "Dachverband der sozialpsychiatrischen Vereine und Gesellschaften Steiermarks ", which is an Umbrella organisation that supports them in distributing their "Verrückt? Na und!" (Mental? So what!) program. The Gesundheitsförderungsfond Steiermark is offering them financial support. Finally, Ashoka is helping them to scale their workshops and attract international partners and investors through their network.

Role of technology

Irrsinnig Menschlich is convinced that digital technologies accelerate, support and facilitate scaling and eventually are beneficiary to develop new scaling strategies. They use a database with multilingual data for reporting reasons. Nevertheless, not every language is available, which means that some countries need to translate the material themselves. Due to COVID, they switched more to online communication, increasingly using ZOOM for online training, but also day to day contact with target groups. In the future, they want to start providing services on Moodle, which has not been implemented yet.

2.24.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Irrsinnig Menschlich is hoping for the development of EU strategies for accelerated scaling of evidence-based best practice approaches, as well as provision of seed-capital and seed funding for pilot projects and later provision of subsidies for implementation phases. This would foster a culture, that promotes the exchange of social innovations and innovators. The EU could distinguish itself and promote social innovation, which would be a necessary counterbalance to the focus on finance capital.

In the future, they are planning a systematic approach in further international scaling, making sure that there is substantial financing available. Their goal is it to adapt the concept to the English-speaking market and establish long-term cooperative partnerships with international higher education institutions such as the Gabelli School of Business at Fordham University, New York City. With these partnerships they are hoping to enhance the international visibility of Madly Human. In the European market they are trying to convince existing "Mental? So What!" partners to adopt "Mental Well-being in Higher Education", with the aim of forming prevention chains for promoting the mental health of young people (school, higher education).

2.25. JUMP Math

Name of company / entity	JUMP Math
Website	https://jumpmath.org/ca/
Country	Spain/Canada & USA
Legal status	NGO
Main sector(s) of operations	Education
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2014
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Canada, US, Spain, Chile, Colombia, Bulgaria

2.25.1. Overview

JUMP Math is a Canadian charitable organisation that believes all children are capable of rising to their full potential through an understanding and appreciation of math. They empower teachers and educators to maximise the abilities of every student, in every classroom. They offer an evidence-based, comprehensive math learning program for students and professional teaching tools and support for educators and are beginning to develop resources for parents to help children learn at home. JUMP Math was founded in 2002 in Canada and has been offered in the USA, Chile, Colombia, Spain (2014) and Bulgaria (2015). The JUMP Math program is offered in Spain (in Spanish and Catalan) is led by a for profit social enterprise Innovaciones Educativas Upsocial, S.L. (licensee) based in Barcelona, Spain (InnEdu UpSocial).

JUMP Math already reaches approximately 250.000 students globally, including 11.000 Indigenous students in Canada and 11.500 teachers in total. JUMP Math has a unique approach towards learning and is especially useful for children, who struggle with math specifically. By carefully scaffolding lessons, they help children overcome their math anxiety, build their confidence and resilience, and therefore have a sustainable impact on their self-esteem and learning motivation. At the same time, they are empowering teachers and parents, giving them different techniques and quality resources to make math more graspable for the students.

The JUMP Math program is a new and inclusive approach, is very affordable, easy to access and creates a supportive network of educators. Even though JUMP Math didn't originally plan to transfer and distribute their programs in countries outside Canada and the US, some entities from specific countries, for example from Spain, approached them because of the growing problems of low numeracy and math results within their educational system.

2.25.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

JUMP Math sells their math resources (print and digital) programs online (distributed by the University of Toronto Press).. JUMP Math also sells professional learning for educators (in person and virtual webinars). Additionally, they are offering a Resource Centre via their website for teachers and parents with specific digital resources (PDFs, lesson plans, quizzes and test, etc.) and information about the program. JUMP Math's approach has been proven through research studies (randomised control trials) through partnerships with faculties of education at several universities including the University of Calgary and Ontario Institute of Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. As a small charity, JUMP Math has struggled to secure funding to grow and expand to bigger markets, which is why they have a fundraising team to secure philanthropic support. Even though JUMP Math is a research and evidence-based program with proven results, it still gets little recognition within education systems as many schools and other educational institutions are dominated by large corporate math publishers with consultants imbedded within school districts that recommend their own programs. Additionally, there is a conflict within the math education world with opposing views or pedagogical philosophies as to the best approach for math education that has been a barrier for the growth of the JUMP Math program. School systems are dominated by the large publishers mostly following the "inquiry-based method" that requires students to facilitate their own learning rather than having a teacher facilitated approach (traditional math or rote learning).

JUMP Math's program is a hybrid of the two pedagogical philosophies and is called "Structured Inquiry" which promotes the role of the teacher as facilitator and encourages deliberate practice among children and is based on Cognitive Science research on how children learn. JUMP Math frequently runs "pilots" in schools to demonstrate significant results to convince schools to use their program and give teachers and educators a better insight on their approach and its benefits. JUMP Math provides a significant program of professional learning for educators to implement the program to achieve results.

JUMP Math is dealing with compliance issues in the US, since it must comply with both federal and state regulations, with tax systems varying across 50 states. Because of this, JUMP Math focuses on efforts in the US to states where the entry to the market is easiest or where JUMP Math has successfully been designated as a top tier resource for K-8 schools. In Spain, the situation looks a bit different, since JUMP Math has licensed its US Common Core Edition to InnEdu UpSocial who are responsible for compliance, legal and tax related matters. In 2020, JUMP Math formed a Joint Task Force with its Spanish partner to innovate the program and work collaboratively to create a digital version of JUMP Math that can launched in late 2023 to be used in markets around the world that aligns with curriculum in multiple jurisdictions, i.e., a universal math curriculum. They have recently renegotiated their license agreement with InnEdu UpSocial, to support InnEdu UpSocial's growth in other Latin American and European countries.

Financially, JUMP Math is supported by philanthropy, sales of its program, licensing, and some minor government support. Dr. John Mighton, JUMP Math Founder is an Ashoka Fellow and Ashoka has been a helpful supporter concerning networks and cooperation. JUMP Math has also benefited from pro bono or low-cost legal support, to address legal questions and contracts, such as the license agreements. Finally, 20% of the revenues come from licensing and philanthropic support from individuals, foundations and corporations. Their key partners are academic institutions like the University of Calgary's Werklund School of Education "Math Minds" program in Canada, ASSISTments, a free public service operated jointly by Worcester Polytechnic Institute and the ASSISTments Foundation and others help JUMP Math to innovate and assess the impact of the JUMP Math program.

Role of technology

JUMP Math recently developed a three-year strategy to focus on four key priorities: Program Innovation/Digitisation, Diversifying Revenues, Customers and Marketing and Impact and Outcomes. The first priority to digitise and innovate the program includes digitising the core program, creating digital interactive e-learning assets, assessment tools, and other digital platforms and tools for educators. The goal is to create a hybrid model for JUMP Math that includes print and digital solutions for classrooms. The newly launched website in 2021 offers an e-commerce function to sell directly to the consumer, and a Resource Centre for educators, parents, tutors, and volunteers. JUMP Math is also collaborating with InnEdu UpSocial to create an app for teachers (piloting in schools in Spain in 2021) and a teacher/student digital platform to launch in 2023. JUMP Math is also collaborating with InnEdu on raising capital to invest in program innovation and digitisation.

2.25.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

JUMP Math is hoping for more impact and distribution of their approach and, on the long term, a structural or systemic change within the education sector. Through their transnational activity, especially their cooperation with InnEdu UpSocial in Spain, JUMP Math has been constantly improving its program and teacher training/professional learning. They have been drawing more attention to the new strategy and product development/innovation. JUMP Math is also working on developing new products such as tutoring and early childhood math education (Years 1.6 to 3.8 Pre-Kindergarten) which can be offered in international markets. Through licensing contracts, as well as online platforms, they were able to increase their impact and get more recognition. By 2023 they want to release a new digital platform, as part of the Joint Task Force with InnEdu UpSocial in Spain, which is designed to also approach secondary customer and user groups, such as parents, volunteers, and new stakeholders.

An important lesson learned, after some years of experience, is to stay flexible in the planning of projects and products. Contexts and frameworks can change quickly, especially when implementing a foreign context. Therefore, it is important to keep close contact with supporters, funders, and experts on site. Only through holding up good relationships, sustainable development can be secured.

2.26. KLABU

Name of company / entity	KLABU
Website	https://klabu.org/
Country	Netherlands
Legal status	Foundation and B.V. (two entities)
Main sector(s) of operations	Sports for Development (Foundation) and Sports Retail (B.V.)
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2019
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Kenya, Bangladesh, Lesbos/Greece | UNHCR (Global); Avery Dennison (USA); Wieden & Kennedy AMS (Netherlands); Football club Paris Saint-Germain (France) | Suppliers are based in Italy, UK, Bulgaria

2.26.1. Overview

KLABU means 'club' in Swahili, a place where people come together to meet and play sports. The motivation is to support the "unbeatable spirit" of refugees by unlocking access to sport in refugee camps and sparking **hope and joy**. Through the Foundation, KLABU builds **sports clubs** in refugee camps - libraries for sports equipment which double as community spaces. Through the social enterprise, KLABU creates **sportswear** for the world to join our club of supporters. KLABU's ambition is to build the **world's biggest and most impactful club**!

The first project of KLABU started in 2019 in the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement in Kenya. It is a home to 40,000 refugees from 13 different African countries and provides more than 10,000 athletes with access to sports every day. It is also a community space in which club members can watch solar powered broadcasted sports matches together, listen to music, dance, enjoy Wi-Fi access and simply have a good time. The club is community-led and highly self-sustaining and makes people feel at home. KLABU sports clubs in refugee camps in Bangladesh and Greece are now being setup.

Every KLABU sports club has its own identity and with that a unique collection of sportswear co-designed with the local community. The sportswear is made available through the clubs to play sports and sold to the rest of the world to raise awareness and funds.

By doing so, KLABU supports the unbeatable spirit of refugees whilst involving the rest of the world!

2.26.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Challenges of KLABU mainly relate to limited capital at the host country which is overcome by partnering with other entities. However, these funds can be limited. Seed funding, B2C business models, finding right local partnerships take time and personal effort in the field. Refugee camps are geographically far away and starting with the year 2020 Covid-19 pandemic posed challenges, e.g., not being in the field. For communication, KLABU invested in digital transition, app development took place. Connectivity, update calls and meetings are active among continents and teams. Legal barriers and tax regulations are overcome by professional advice

Lack of seed funding for starting transnational activities was at the start and still is a challenge for KLABU while extending its international coverage for it takes time to convince the investors, about a year. KLABU invests in relationships and nurture them and provide good quality products, services and content.

KLABU received financial support from Avery Dennison (USA) and great PR including through the feature of KLABU jerseys in the football game FIFA 21 (powered by EA Sports). Access to refugee camps is made possible with the support of UNHCR. Creative support is provided by Wieden & Kennedy AMS, the Netherlands and the legal support by De Brauw, the Netherlands.

2.26.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

KLABU's social enterprise aims at creating great quality sportswear as it envisions that one day, people will choose KLABU for sportswear instead of other labels for they also have a connection with the purpose, as well as they have with quality.

KLABU is a unique case where international humanitarian aid and human development effort merge in international activities of a social enterprise. Thus, design of policy support instruments can extend to international humanitarian aid and human development domains to support such social enterprises with international humanitarian goals and ambitions.

2.27. Libre Space Foundation

Name of company / entity	Libre Space Foundation
Website	https://libre.space/
Country	Greece
Legal status	Non-profit foundation
Main sector(s) of operations	IT/ICT
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2015
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	EU

2.27.1. Overview

Libre Space Foundation (LSF) is a non-profit foundation established in Athens, Greece that develops and supports open-source (OS) technologies for Space. It is unique on a global level, as it is the only legal entity that provides OS technologies and data for Space.

LSF has been founded by members of the Athenian hacker makerspace, which is dedicated to the promotion of open-source technologies overall, and through this experience and collaboration with the hackers' makerspace the founding members were able to develop hardware as well as software applications for space. They started working on their first space project SatNOGS (https://satnogs.org) during the 2014 NASA Space Challenge. The capital to kickstart LSF came from their participation in the 1st Hackaday Prize contest where they won the 1st prize (~200kUSD or a trip to space - when available – in which case they chose the money to build the Libre Space Foundation non-profit organisation. Through the prize money (~200,000€) they got as well as the fact that they managed to successfully implement a 3-D printed satellite ground-station, the team decided to proceed with the establishment of the foundation.

LSF is devoted to promoting knowledge and research around space, as well as making Space exploration accessible to everyone. It does so through a number of projects it runs that encourage knowledge, scientific research and innovative ideas about Space tech. The projects are all OS, strictly adhering to open development methodologies, and governed by openness and transparency among all members and people involved. The projects range from the creation of the first-ever open-source Cubesat (together with the University of Patras) to Machine Learning for satellites and even the creation of a worldwide network of satellite ground stations, the SatNOGS project which is the largest network of ground stations across the globe. LSF is also active in upstream space projects like deployers (PICOBUS), satellite missions (UPSAT, QUBIKs) and satellite components (SatNOGS COMMS). LSF shares its vision with a diverse community of contributors and supporters from around the world.

LSF collaborates on international level with international entities (e.g., European Space Agency), renowned space research institutes (e.g., Harvard and the Smithsonian Centre for Astrophysics), companies (e.g., Google) and dozens of independent researchers, engineers and volunteers interested in open-source technologies. Collectively and jointly, they work together to develop OS solutions for space tech while simultaneously promoting the concept of open collaboration and innovation.

Libre Space's mission is to disrupt the long-established industry of space tech through the introduction of open-source technology, data and practices. According to the founding members' view, they chose the legal form of the foundation rather than that of social enterprise because their intention and strategic objective is to promote OS as well as allow all people involved in the development of the technologies to have a say about how they are used and by whom. Also, they wanted to ensure that LSF's strategic objective – the promotion of OS concept in the space tech industry – will remain as such in the future, and to this end the legal form they chose facilitates this. From a financial perspective, LSF is ensuring it sustainability via its participation in space related national, European and international projects – such as SatNOGS, SDR Maker Space, and OpenSatCOM – that allow them to promote the concept of OS technologies in the space industry and also to showcase the fact that through their SSE legal form they are much more flexible – and able to meet tight deadlines – than academic, research or even NGO entities. Hence, LSF achieves to disrupt the space industry not only in terms of technologies but also in terms of operating forms. The profits of LSF are reinvested in the initiative.

Concerning their type of cross-border activities, their business model is replicable to other countries while through networking and knowledge exchange with other entities across the globe they aim to achieve greater impact and disruption in the industry.

2.27.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

A major challenge that LSF confronts concerns the cultural scepticism towards their area of work that is also associated with the fact that they have chosen to take part in this highly traditional industrial sector not as a traditional commercial entity but as a foundation. This is a problem they confront not only in Greece but on an international level.

Also, their legal form has caused them issues in relation to their "acceptance" not only by national authorities in Greece associated with the space industry, but also their eligibility to participate in Greek business support subsidy programmes, which do not foresee financial or other types of support towards non-profit entities – especially for those "exporting" research, or utilise tax incentivisation programmes exactly because of their chosen legal form (tax incentives for SSEs in Greece promote the labour inclusion of disabled people or migrants for example, rather than research and innovation activities).

With respect to the international activities they perform, on intra-EU level they did not identify any issues, problems or challenges that affect their course of work. The barriers they confront have to do with the overall legal framework of the space industry on a global level, and more specifically the US legal framework as they work closely with American colleagues and institutions. In further detail, the US space related entities face difficulties in conceptualising how OS data may be used for the space industry – as in the US the space industry is very much connected to the defence industry as the export control regime of the US includes satellites and satellite subsystems) – and for the benefit of the public good without compromising defence and security. Interestingly this hasn't stopped LSF from establishing space situational awareness agreement with the US Space Command.

Overall, LSF since its establishment has been advocating the need for more OS data, software and hardware in the space area, as space is a commodity that should belong to the overall population. To date, their activities have helped towards the shifting of conceptualisation around this issue, as evidenced by the recent trend in the US legal framework to become more open and accepting towards open data. But more things need to be done and relevant initiatives need to spur across the globe.

On a national level, their continuous collaboration with the national authorities and the advocacy that they perform – primarily through their line of work and their ongoing international collaborations – has been helping towards an improvement of their appreciation and acceptance as an equal player in the Greek space ecosystem, and most importantly on international level.

2.27.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

LSF currently works towards the establishment of an entity / actor (type / form of it not yet determined) in the US that will be assigned to promote and advocate the concept of open source and open use data in and for the space industry.

They are also aiming and working towards becoming involved in global policy discussions related to the topic of use of space for entrepreneurial/business purposes, and who will be assigned to formulate the collaboration framework on a global level. To date, it is primarily the US that is involved in relevant activities, yet the rising power of China and India is an important parameter that needs to be taken into consideration.

2.28. LYGO

LYGO.
GOODIES ÉCOLOS

Name of company / entity	Lygo
Website	www.lygo.fr
Country	France
Legal status	Social Economy Enterprise
Main sector(s) of operations	E-commerce and manufacturing (textile)
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2008
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Senegal

2.28.1. Overview

Established in 2008, Lygo has become one of the pioneers of the French social economy enterprises. Lygo was founded by Nolwenn Buvat after she gained experience of ten years working in Orange/France Telecom with professional work on training and communication. Lygo was created to focus on helping people in poverty and with disabilities by providing them jobs. The company has centred its purposes on humanity and the environment.

Lygo offers the promotion of accessories such as personalised cosmetic pouch, tote bags, and other accessories made of cotton. Located in Paris, France, Lygo has a manufacturing (including sewing and recycling) workshop in Dakar, Senegal where they produce high quality and eco-friendly cotton. Beyond the production, Lygo has the ambition to take its clients much further by showing them the social impact of their order on local populations and the environment.

Earlier, Lygo focused on producing travelling eco-friendly goodie bags that were suitable for tourism companies, as the company also has established cooperation with the tourism companies and union of local textile companies. However, as the pandemic arrived, the clients dropped significantly, moreover knowing that 80% of the clients were from the tourism business. Fortunately, Lygo started cooperation with other companies, one of them is Dior.

Lygo's clients are spread in francophone countries such as Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Senegal. Lygo has also managed to connect, collaborate, and cooperate with associations of social economy entities that work towards humanity's cause.

2.28.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Since Lygo's main manufacturing workshop is in Senegal, it faced many different barriers due to the differences in culture and life. In Senegal, it is difficult to find trained employees. Besides that, the hygienic problem of the employees has been our challenge as well. For example, the access to water can be reached only in the mornings. The difference in the culture of work was also a challenge. Lygo managed to mitigate it by developing different kinds of training for the workers. Additionally, Lygo established literacy training courses with the AVA (*Améliorer la Vie des Autres)* associations.

In France, Social Economy legalisation is being divided into two bodies: association and company. Lygo is legally admitted as a Social Economy company within a business model and officially certified in B-corporation that has been known to legally balance the purpose and profit as Lygo always proposes to obtain equality of employment for men and women and helps people in poverty. This certification has helped Lygo to develop the relation, networking, for business purposes in social enterprises and/or initiatives, as well as in the textile industry.

Role of technology

As Lygo uses a website to commercialise as well as personalise its products, it can be said that technology plays a vital role in the company. Furthermore, as pandemics have become a reality, technology has eventually become the tools to increase communication fluency. As the experience of the founder, Nolwenn, WhatsApp is often used for clients to choose their preferences on the type of cotton/tissue through a video call and chat.

2.28.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Lygo would appreciate the future advance of social economy programmes that unify all enterprises to work together for social economy to balance the market, the demand, and the good cause.

2.29. Mobility Factory

THE MOBILITY FACTORY SCE

Name of company / entity	The Mobility Factory SCE
Website	https://www.themobilityfactory.eu/
Country	Belgium
Legal status	European Cooperative Enterprise
Main sector(s) of operations	Electric Car Sharing
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2018
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Belgium, Spain, The Netherlands, Germany, United Kingdom

2.29.1. Overview
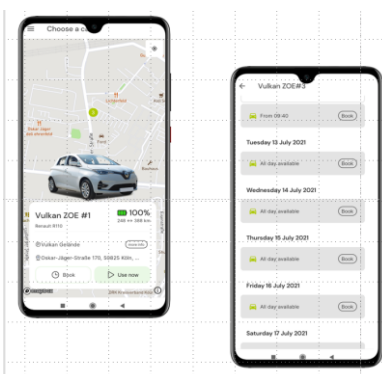
THE MOBILITY FACTORY SCE (TMF) is a second European cooperative entity active in electric car sharing on an IT platform to other cooperatives in different countries. TMF is located in Belgium but operates through local cooperatives in Germany, Spain, Belgium, The Netherlands and UK. The company started to develop in 2016 as a transnational collaboration between two companies Som Mobilitat SCCL and Partago CVBA and later constituted by TMF in 2018. TMF has created a software platform that is shared by all member cooperatives and TMF is responsible for the development, design, and service of the App, Software and interfaces that support the e-car-sharing service in the different local communities.

TMF has a clear and transparent governance structure and decision-making process for the development of the platform. The platform is for exclusive use by its members only. TMF offers an e-car sharing platform to its members consisting of customisable co-owned and co-develop software. This method of cooperatively

owning and developing IT code is called 'Platform Cooperativism'. All TMF member cooperatives are independent, and they decide on their business model. Still, the platform, apart from offering the technology, is a vital space for sharing knowledge and best practices. TMF revenue comes from fees for the services provided charged per car per month. To provide competitive pricing and fees to attract new members and retain current ones, TMF aims to expand transnationally to be able to attain critical mass and remain profitable while still lowering prices.

2.29.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

As for founding members, they are required to get a Belgium registration number. Currently, it is difficult to obtain legal documents in Belgium to register new members outside of the country. Even with the European legal form, the establishment is not easy from a legal perspective. New founding members from other countries may have laws that differ from conventional European laws, making the process complicated. However, as the cooperative has an open capital structure, new members can join without the need to get a Belgium registration number. Being a small organisation, trying to contract individuals from different countries will result in a large administrative load on the legalities of the process. TMF relies on indirect contracting provided by its members and other entities.

Initially, consultations services were hired by TMF for support on financial and internal regulations. Since initially starting as a transnational collaborative, prior knowledge on transnational activities were already present. For future transnational activities, TMF plans to expand its current members from both new and existing countries.

Registration of business entities in certain countries proves to be complicated. Where EU laws don't specify, local laws apply. In Belgium, for example, registration can only be done offline, which means company representatives have to be physically present with notarised documents. Owners, board members as well as natural persons representing cooperatives need to be registered. In TMF's case, the whole registration process was serviced by a local notary contracted by TMF.

Role of technology

Software development is the technological basis of TMF. The service offered by TMF to its members is a customised application (app). In parallel, TMF provides the hardware to be installed in the car and connected to the platform. TMF provides all the necessary support and training to install the devices and set up the e-car sharing service

As stated in the overview, the platform of The Mobility Factory showcases the 'Platform Cooperativism' that advocates co-development and co-ownership, therefore each member[9] is the co-owner. This was decided to have some advantages such as resources sharing for serving local communities, independent data control access, internal critical know-how maintenance, and decision-making.

2.29.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

TMF plans to further expand and optimise its current services, especially in Europe to gain a critical mass. Some other goals include establishing additional online features, increasing the number of members, and expanding beyond Europe. In a broader sense, TMF would like to be involved with citizen's entities to provide its services with its unique cooperative characteristics. Furthermore, TMF aims to provide common car-insurance to its members in the future.

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[9] TMF as a second-degree cooperative has: Cooperative members. And the local cooperatives members of TMG have users

2.30. Montepio

Name of company / entity	Montepio
Website	Associação Mutualista Montepio
Country	Portugal
Legal status	Mutual Society
Main sector(s) of operations	Health services and social security complementary schemes
Starting date of Cross-border activities	N/A
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	FNMF (France), Divina Seguros (Spain), Italians Mutuals and some partners in South America.

2.30.1. Overview

Montepio is the oldest and largest Portuguese mutual, and with over 600,000 members it is one of the largest in Europe. Committed to the typical mutualist values of liberty, responsibility, solidarity, equality, and autonomy. Founded in 1840 as a social security scheme for public sector workers, Montepio has changed and adapted over its near 200-year existence and now constitutes a mother organisation presiding over several other branches providing a range of services. Including complementary (to the state provided scheme) health services and social security complementary schemes. In terms of target groups, while they began by servicing public sector employees, membership of the mutual is now open to all groups in Portugal.

In their history, possibly one of the most significant developments has been their ownership of a savings bank of the same name. The savings bank was an internal service for the mutual until 1930, when the savings bank took its own non-mutualist legal entity, and became legally independent, but the governing bodies remained the same. Nowadays their savings bank is larger than the original mutual, with agencies in France, Switzerland, Germany, USA and Canada. The governing bodies of both branches were the same until 6 years ago, when regulators instigated an official split between the two bodies in governance as well. Thus, the last remaining link between the Bank and Montepio mutual is the latter's ownership over the former.

Moving to cross-border activities, it is worth noting that current European legislation limits Montepio's operations to within Portugal's borders. Therefore, they have no operational transnational activities, being limited to co-creation & knowledge exchange, and collective impact. For example, they leverage their membership of the International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies (AIM) to participate in collective efforts to legally recognise the mutual model as a separate form on an EU-level. At a bi-lateral level, they have collaborated with the Fédération Nationale de la Mutualité Française (FNMF) on a technical support matter. Namely, when the Portuguese government required them to comply with solvency II regulations, FNMF (whose members have been complying with similar regulation for many years) facilitated exchange of expertise and advised Montepio on how to resolve technical issues related to compliance.

Moreover, Montepio have also been involved in cross-border *attempts* of both distribution and replication. The first being a collaboration with Devina Seguros, a Spanish mutual based in Valencia, on how to cross efforts in providing their services and products between the two countries. However, they did not manage to find a sustainable way to distribute cross-border while keeping their mutualist form pure. They experienced a similar situation in France, whereby they discussed entry into the French market which could harbour demand for their solutions. Yet again, there was no clear legal way to facilitate this due to a lack of European-level recognition of the mutualist form.

For Montepio, similar to other mutuals, the risk seems to be much more existential than a lack of capacity to perform cross-border activities. There are fears that if the mutual model is not recognised and supported at a European level, then slowly the model will die out, due to unfair competition on the Internal Market, leading to de-mutualisation as has been witnessed in the UK and Canada, for example. Trends have shown that the number of true mutuals in Europe is falling, and as such, Montepio rightly fears that de-mutualisation trend more, than not being able to expand into new markets. The competition is unfair, since not-for-profit mutuals are not allowed to compete on the internal EU market.

2.30.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

The main challenge faced by Montepio is that due to their legal status as a not-for-profit on a European level they are not allowed to operate cross-border while keeping the same legal form, even if they or their international partners desire it. This in its essence is a legal problem, caused by a lack of a common European legal statute for mutuals, which in turn limits their capacity to operate through the EU's internal market. In the view of our respondent from Montepio, the main issue lies in article 54 of the EU treaty, which avoids defining mutuals separately and leads to a situation wherein they are the only type of social economy entity that is not legally allowed to operate cross-border within the internal market.

Montepio has been a part of collective efforts over the last 20 years to lobby the EU into ratifying a common legal status for mutuals. However, this mitigation measure has consistently been rejected, which in our respondent's view is a result of 3 processes. Firstly, internally there are differences in interests between the mutuals themselves, and therefore mutuals in some member states are against a common legal form that would allow others to compete with them in their national markets. Secondly, on an EU law making level, there is both a lack of understanding of why mutuals require a separate legal form and difficulties in establishing the necessary unanimity between member states when voting on such an amendment. Thirdly, there may also be a lack of appetite due to lobbying by other, traditional commercial interest groups which fear competition from mutuals on an internal market level.

A potential mitigation measure could be through so-called 'soft' measures, which are more in the form of recommendations rather than regulations. However, their non-binding nature can render them useless in some situations. A further option foreseen potentially by Montepio could be through an agreement by a limited number of member states who may apply to the EC to have a binding regulation that applies only for signatories of the agreement. This admittedly could mitigate to an extent Montepio's legal barriers if Portugal were to sign on to such a treaty. However again, it would be limited in scope and not applicable to the entire internal market.

A further challenge faced by Montepio to cross-border activities, even if there were a legal statute that would facilitate transnational operations, is the issue of solvency regulations. Which are designed with traditional commercial entities in mind, who may raise capital on the market in order to comply. However, mutuals such as Montepio do not possess this option, and thus find themselves in a situation where neither are they complying with

measures that account for their specific features, neither do they possess the same capabilities to comply as traditional commercial insurers. Fascinatingly, the lack of an EU legal statute for mutuals also limits further their ability to raise capital, as it encloses them in national borders thus limiting possibilities to expand and raise funds from other markets.

Montepio feel that the SEAP does not go far enough to mitigate their challenges and legal barriers, as it doesn't address the crux of the issue, which is the legal form. A suggested mitigation measure, which is still hypothetical at this stage, would be the introduction of the 'limited profitability concept'. Which could be used to define mutuals as entities who, while they do not raise profits and distribute them to members, are still obliged to raise financial revenue. Officiating this concept can be a useful step to at least adjusting capital regulation on mutuals and affording them greater operational and legal flexibility.

2.30.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Montepio believes in the mutualist values of solidarity being applied to an international level, and thus the main future recommendation is based upon continued and closer transnational cooperation between mutual entities. Cross-border distribution of Montepio's services will allow them to offer a wider range of consumers well-priced and quality products, and thus to fulfil their social mission better.

The recommendation is for a concerted effort to establish a common legal statute for mutuals within the EU, so as to allow them to operate freely at least within the internal market. In the future they hope for an equal legal treatment on par with other SEs.

2.31. Myability

myAbility

Name of company / entity	myAbility Social Enterprise GmbH
Website	https://www.myability.org/
Country	Austria
Legal status	Social Enterprise
Main sector(s) of operations	Disability
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2014
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Germany, Switzerland

2.31.1. Overview

myAbility is a Social Enterprise, which supports companies to embrace and use the potential of employees and clients with disabilities and chronic illnesses. They provide recruiting services, management and accessibility consulting, disability trainings and accompaniment throughout the process. In 2009, Career Moves was established as the first platform in the German speaking area, that supported people with disabilities looking for a job. In 2014, myAbility grew out of Career Moves. In addition to the inclusive job board, myAbility started launching a matching program of students with disabilities and companies (myAbility Talnt® program), the biggest business disAbility network in the German speaking area, as well as digital awareness trainings. MyAbility's motive to transfer their program to countries outside of Austria was to reach more people and increase their social impact. They saw their potential as pioneers and wanted to distribute their idea internationally.

They approached big companies in Germany and Switzerland for scaling the myAbility Talent® program. Due to their low threshold and evidence-based approach, the program has been integrated quickly into the external markets and has now a total of six locations outside of Austria (Munich, Berlin, Frankfurt, Rhein/Ruhr, Stuttgart, Zürich).. The enterprise has 32 employees in the whole DACH region. Their consulting services focus mainly on inclusion processes, diversity management, strategy, innovation, inclusive marketing and communication. The goal of myAbility is to distribute more know-how, awareness and accessibility for people with disabilities.

2.31.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Early in the transfer process, the enterprise realised that there are different parameters in Germany and Switzerland. Through their unique approach and pioneer standing in Austria they initially have been recommended a lot from client to client. Therefore, their client pool grew constantly. In Germany and Switzerland, on the other hand, they didn't have a reputation yet, which made the acquisition of clients more time-consuming. The communication with partners was more formal at the beginning.

The possibility to approach clients through online calls with the start of COVID, on the other hand, has made the acquisition process easier in terms of logistics. Another small barrier are different rules for what qualifies as "severe disability" in every country. This has been tackled through good research and consultations with experts, who were able to answer important questions.

Since myAbility has a market-based approach, 90% of the income comes from their services and products, which are sold to clients and partners. The remaining 10% are obtained through project funding and financing, e.g., from business support agencies in Austria or Switzerland. With this financial support new products and prototypes can be created. Regarding networking support, they benefited from the Ashoka Network, especially in the foundation phase, setting them up with pro Bono consultants.

Role of technology

The enterprise also launched myAbility.jobs Germany, in 2020. myAbility.jobs is a job platform that is tailored to people with disabilities and supports them in their job finding process, as well as providing recruiting advice, CV templates and mentoring. Lately, almost all services, training courses and events have been digitalised and internationalised. Clients such as PwC, Accenture, Generali or Microsoft started co-operating with myAbility, as they bring diverse perspectives to their work content, give them access to a bigger talent pool and improve their employer branding, as well as economic and social impact

Due to COVID, the enterprise has switched some of their services to online formats, such as their consultancy services, as well as webinars and inclusive e-learning offers. They found out that online and hybrid offers (almost) have the same effects on the participants as does face-to-face interaction, which expands their range of future target groups. Especially concerning their future digital e-learning platform, they will be able to reach not only the management level of companies, but also the whole personnel of companies– which helps them to increase their social impact strongly For their digitalisation process they had support from IT experts.

2.31.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

From transnational activities, the myAbility team learned that investing is important and worth the effort, when there are enough partners from the external markets involved. Furthermore, they realised that their approach is also very new and unique in other countries and that there is a big need for their services on the market. Due to the contracts with new partners, as well as the recognition and acceptance of the programs, also in foreign contexts, they feel motivated to expand further within the European Union. In order to improve their strategy process and to understand what parts of their work they should focus on in the future, they want to interview important partners and entities, that work in the same field. Part of this is an increased collaboration with companies and entities with mutual goals and intentions. Through the expansion of the job and e-learning platform, they are planning to implement activities in English, so they can be used internationally, also outside of the DACH region.

The recommendation of myAbility is to build good and reliable networks through continuous contact with partners and important stakeholders. An important part of that is identifying big players and multipliers, sharing know-how within the network and constantly getting feedback for the work they are doing. Finally, the past years have shown them that flexibility is a great value within the replication and implementation process.

2.32. Mymind

Name of company / entity	MyMind
Website	www.mymind.org
Country	Ireland
Legal status	Non-profit organisation (with charitable status)
Main sector(s) of operations	Health
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2018
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	-

2.32.1. Overview

MyMind is the first and largest blended model of mental health care in Ireland. MyMind has created a unique movement for community-based mental health services that work towards giving every person in Ireland equal access to mental health support early, affordably, directly, without stigma or delay. Mental health professionals in MyMind are accredited or pre-accredited with professional bodies and are employed by the entity. The platform offers different professional profiles, languages and online, as well as offline formats, which include individual counselling session.

The vision of MyMind is to significantly contribute to meeting the demand for mental health counselling in Ireland. MyMind estimates that every year 10% of the population (4 Mio) actively seek counselling on mental health. Public and private counselling are estimated to cover 700.000 each, leaving 300.000 people un-serviced. The access to counselling is thus limited by capacity of public/private offers on one hand and affordability on the other hand.

The impact of MyMind in Ireland is significant. In 2020, the entity hosted 35.400 appointments, a 25% growth compared to 2019, and served 5000+ individual clients. They employ 110 mental health professionals who contribute not only with their competences and different professional backgrounds, but also with different languages.

2.32.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

MyMind needed to respond to the COVID pandemic quickly. Their online offering was key to meeting rising demands on mental health counselling during the pandemic. They fully switched to online services. One year into the pandemic, they saw a 95% increase in online services. They also managed to sign a contract with the Irish government (in June 2020) to offer online counselling free of charge. They are currently exploring if public service providers are interested in continuing this offer.

MyMind's standard pricing is 50 EUR for a face-to-face session and can be even lower for persons who receive social support or work part-time/self-employed. Offering below-market prices is part of their vision and mission that prioritises accessibility and affordability over

profits. MyMind offers a "service package" that convinces many health professionals to join MyMind and to accept lower fees. MyMind is covering most administrative tasks for mental health professionals and allows them to fully focus on their counselling. Through the MyMind platform professionals get easy access to clients. Another advantage is that they are not forced to work for MyMind exclusively but are free to offer private counselling. Furthermore, MyMind hosts the professional community and provides opportunities for exchange and learning.

MyMind sources staff from other EU countries in its attempt to provide different cultural backgrounds and languages for mental counselling. In the current setting, however, their staff needs to be based primarily in Ireland and needs to be employed under Irish law. MyMind therefore started to explore if it is legally possible for them to somehow employ/contract mental health professionals based in other countries who could provide online services on their platform to Irish clients. Technically, MyMind would be fully ready to host online sessions with mental health professionals based outside of Ireland - and also sees demand in Ireland for multi-language, multicultural mental health counselling.

MyMind is operating in a sector where private companies, individual mental health professionals and public service providers are active. So far, they were successful in positioning their service well - building partnerships with the government and appealing to individual mental health professionals. It is notable that MyMind found a legal setting and value proposition that allows them to have significant social impact in an existing market.

MyMind's strategic priority is currently to better meet the demand of Irish clients through long-term government contracts that would enable them to keep pricing low for clients while sustaining the entity. MyMind received legal pro bono support from Trustlaw, a global program by Thomson Reuters Foundation that offers legal advice to social enterprises.

Role of technology

MyMind's platform allows clients to identify the right mental health professionals (based on profiles and ratings), to schedule appointments and to have online calls. Mental health professionals on the platform receive support and training by MyMind. The platform increases transparency for clients and gives them better orientation in choosing their mental health professional - not only based on professional background, but also cultural background and language. The pandemic helped MyMind to fully understand the potential of their online offers - in particular related to their internationalisation. Also, there are many benefits to online counselling, and it is an increasingly popular option. The advantages of online counseling are, that it is: affordable, accessible, flexible, confidential, convenient and comfortable.

2.32.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

MyMind wants to meet client demands in Ireland, scale the online component of their offer and expand their service to other countries. MyMind is an entity that would fully benefit from EU regulations, allowing them to contract mental health professionals more easily, as well as regulations, that allow online services to be offered in other countries. The MyMind model is furthermore depending on the possibility of non-profits to offer such services to clients. The Irish regulation for non-profit associations under charitable law could be an interesting example, of how legal forms can support the mission of entities such as MyMind.

2.33. Nasa Kuca

Name of company / entity	Naša Kuća
Website	https://nashakuca.org/
Country	Serbia
Legal status	Non-profit organisation
Main sector(s) of operations	Employment of young people with disabilities
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2007
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	North Macedonia, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Austria, Italy

2.33.1. Overview

Naša Kuća is an entity established in 2007 as an initiative of parents of children with disabilities and response to the existing systematic gap in the provision of support to families and their children with disabilities. Instead of following the medical model, the founders approached work and youngsters' development through a social model. The social framework implies taking care of children and youngsters by respecting their needs, opinions, rights and providing them with a safe and supportive environment. The founders expected the initiative would support the evolution of new skills and a sense of belonging in the local communities.

To succeed in that, the founders formed a social enterprise and made a job offer to young people that suit them and in which they can show their best skills and talents. The job offer consists of: i) a manual production of high-quality paper and paper bags, cardboard boxes and eco-packaging; and ii) the hydroponic gardening that has provided service of catering and 'open kitchen' for the vulnerable groups (temporarily closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation). These approaches to paper production (since 2019) and hydroponic gardening (since 2015) are sourced from Japan and are based on innovative and clean technologies. For the past six years, the team has been building capacities to upscaling their business models for collective impact and by replicating them to neighbouring countries (the e.g Republic of North Macedonia and Montenegro), Italy, Austria, and the Netherlands.

2.33.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

In terms of business model, Naša Kuća is similar to Japanese social enterprises and Italian cooperatives. The ideas, value system, and the approach to work are recognisable values of such business models. Naša Kuća is learning how social enterprises work in other

countries, and how the law and financial mechanisms act, considering it has incomparably less support from the state in comparison to entities from other countries. Through international cooperation, the founders have also learnt about the government's approaches toward the employment of people with disabilities, how the local communities support social economy entities, the offer of training programmes for people providing support to people with disabilities and new methods of working with people with disabilities.

As a non-profit organisation, Naša Kuća shifted its focus to international funding opportunities and the development of international collaborations to avoid national legal and financial barriers. Sustainability has always had a high dependency on the commitment and dedication of founders, staff and volunteers.

For several reasons, it was important for Naša Kuća that production activities ensure economic sustainability. Firstly, people with disabilities find it very difficult to find employment and Naša Kuća wanted to provide secure jobs and economic independence. Secondly, the entity is mostly financed from production because numerous problems in the legislative framework strongly limit support to social businesses. Thirdly, and perhaps the most important reason is the current process of establishment of Naša Kuća to ensure the future of people with disabilities and their right to independent living in the community.

Toward this pathway, Naša Kuća received support from the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway, the Agency for International Cooperation of Switzerland, the US Agency for International Development - USAID, the Unicredit Foundation and the German Agency for International Cooperation – GIZ.

Role of technology

The manual production of high-quality paper involves the utilisation of the packaging of cigarettes. This type of packaging is highly recyclable. The produced paper is used for other types of packaging and/or artistic production. The customer groups are painters, marketing companies with promotional merchandising, packaging, socially responsible companies and civil society organisations. In collaboration with the Faculty of Technology in Belgrade, Serbia, Naša Kuća is proposing the standardisation of paper as a product. The production of micro plants and spices in an urban hydroponic garden is also an innovative technology that provides healthy vegetables with minimal consumption of water, energy and fertilisers. This is a technology that does not devastate the land because it uses water and substrates that do not pollute the environment. Naša Kuća uses solar panels to ensure the operation of LED lamps and water pumps. The customer groups are the 'open kitchen', restaurants, hotels and catering companies and individuals. The application of innovative technology in both examples (paper and hydroponic) allows the revenues from product sales, project funding and donors, which have been reduced due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

2.33.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Naša Kuća continues cooperation with JICA and other foreign partners through honest relationships and clear expectations and roles. In the coming period, the priority is to ensure significant financial support and acquire entrepreneurial knowledge that should help Naša Kuća become self-sustainable.

Naša Kuća stresses that bottom-up entities have had fewer opportunities to participate in the national support initiatives for internationalisation. For example, several times Naša Kuća has witnessed that only intermediary entities travel and exchange knowledge and international cooperation. Consequently, the bottom-up entities that wish and have a capacity for social change have fewer opportunities, making them less heard, visible, and without access to information.

2.34. PRAKSIS

Name of company / entity	PRAKSIS
Website	https://praksis.gr/
Country	GREECE
Legal status	Civil Society Organisation (Non-Profitable Association)
Main sector(s) of operations	Prevention Intervention/Support Lobbying and Advocacy
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2004
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Germany

2.34.1. Overview

PRAKSIS is an independent, non-profit association implementing humanitarian and medical action programs. It was founded in 2004, and since then it targets socially vulnerable groups regardless of gender, colour, nationality, race, political or religious affiliation, or sexual orientation. It aims to render people self-sufficient by providing them with access to medicines and the health system. It plans to implement actions and interventions with an intention to eradicate social and economic exclusion of vulnerable individuals and social groups and enhance social (re)integration and inclusion. Furthermore, it provides free of charge psychosocial and medical services, escort supporting services, legal counselling, job counselling, and labour promotion. Its main humanitarian projects and informative campaigns are built on several issues, such as STD, Hepatitis, HIV/AIDS. Throughout this process, it joins collaboration schemes with local administration agencies and the Prefectures.

PRAKSIS participates in networks on the Greek and European level aiming at lobbying, advocating, informing and advocating vulnerable social groups to relevant Greek and European stakeholders, such as the Hellenic Antipoverty Network, the Network for the Right to Housing, the Racist Violence Recording Network, FEANTSA, and the Hellenic Platform for Development.

One of PRAKSIS's action programs is **PRAKSIS ACCESS** which aims to increase awareness and inform the public about the affordable medicines and the methods that are used by the pharmaceutical companies to control drug policies and prices.

PRAKSIS ACCESS calls all stakeholders to actively engage in price negotiations to guarantee affordable access for the benefit of all patients. It conducts these negotiations in a transparent and publicly accountable manner, and refrains from unilateral actions which undermine the necessary trust between all parties. At the same time, it engages governments based on the argument that they have tools at their disposal, such as compulsory licensing, so as to remedy excessive pricing abuse in defence of public interest.

PRAKSIS ACCESS supports the idea that access to better and affordable medicines for all patients is determined through transparent and publicly accountable processes, rather than through charity-like marketing and corporate business strategies.

2.34.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

One of its prominent challenges is related to the consequences brought by COVID-19 and the imposition of lockdown internationally. In this context, health centres that were established by PRAKSIS could not be accessed due to limitations of movement regulated by the government.

PRAKSIS is a member of the larger European community of NGOs, such as FEANZA (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless) focusing on the fight against homelessness. It also joins campaigns that are run by the toothpaste company 'AIM' for fundraising purposes in the context of providing meals, antiseptic gels, and bags for kids and adolescents. Moreover, PRAKSIS supports the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights as well as the Racist Violence Recording Network (coordinated by UNHR), in order to better strengthen cooperation and ties between fundamental rights actors.

2.34.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

In the future, PRAKSIS aims to enlarge its domain of activities with more fields of public engagement, for example via educational activities, that can promote and guarantee human rights. The current challenge of implementing such activities is the outburst of COVID-19 and the relevant limitations that it brings to the development of public events. Apart, thus, from the inclusion of refugees into the local community, PRAKSIS aims to create job opportunities for the vulnerable citizens via educational trainings or courses.

2.35. PROGETTO QUID
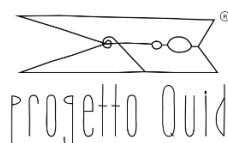
Name of company / entity	Progetto QUID
Website	https://shop.progettoquid.com/?lang=en
Country	Italy
Legal status	Social Cooperative enterprise
Main sector(s) of operations	Fashion industry
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2019
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Progetto QUID currently develops transnational activities of commerce with clothing stores in Spain, in Germany, and in Switzerland.

2.35.1. Overview

The Social Cooperative QUID is a non-profit organisation, set up in 2012, aiming to help vulnerable women enter the labour market. In 2014, it changed its legal form and became a social cooperative enterprise and during the same year QUID won the award for innovation by the European Commission among 1.250 participants. There are now 10 Quid shops which reinvest funds obtained from sales to improve logistics, to expand production, to create new sources of work, to improve product design and seasonal collections with the collaboration of external designers.

Towards that end, QUID works with 16 local and international companies and markets its products both through its own shops and via a network of 100 multi-brand shops. By doing so, it also brings to the large consumption market an ethical and social brand. The majority of products are made with end-of-series fabrics destined to be discarded. It sources fabric from 24 Italian textile and fashion companies, while 250 km of fabric have just been recovered in 2019.

The enterprise is a supplier of some leading Italian fashion brands and in doing so it contributes to making their supply more sustainable and ethical. The company has designed a scalable model and in the next coming years will expand its B2C and B2B business across the country and overseas, setting up a benchmark for ethical fashion and integration for vulnerable people. The working structure of the enterprise is developed in Italy, where the manufacturing process is made.

QUID, in accordance with the UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, implements policies changing the path of fashion, highlights the urgency to reduce the negative environmental and social impact of this industry. Within this context, QUID contributes to turning Fashion into a driver for improving the world's ecosystems and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Moreover, QUID carries out transnational activities via B2C and B2B operations with multiple chain stores. More specifically, it collaborates with international brand stores and retail chains, such as L'Oreal, Unilever, IKEA, and Calzedonia. It develops garments and

accessories collections for Calzedonia Group, Altromercato, Naturasi, and for Only The Brave and Den Stores. While it has so far established partnerships with 15 Italian brands, QUID also produced 100 thousand bags that can be used for fruit and vegetables for the national chain of organic stores 'Naturasi'. This production of QUID is available in all stores of the country.

Additionally, QUID recovers leftover fabrics from 30 fashion Italian companies, turning them into new products. Up to 70% of the staff is made up of people belonging to disadvantaged groups (beyond the legal requirement and the disadvantaged categories for whom social cooperatives in Italy have some tax benefits). The entity also employs persons from refugee and vulnerable groups (with 85% of those being women). Indeed, it employs 150 people of 17 different nationalities, 70 of whom are in situation of social insecurity.

2.35.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Some of the major challenges that this social business faced throughout its selling activities, were related to the fact that most of its employees can only communicate in Italian. The English level of the employees has been quite low, and as a result, the communication with the customers is not always effective. In this context, the branding of the social enterprise is not always welcomed by foreign markets abroad.

In 2015, QUID established its first production Unit and inaugurated its factory base. It is worth mentioning that Calzedonia offered its empty shops to QUID in 2014, making itself the prior donor of QUID's shopping area. Based upon Calzedonia's contribution to the expansion of its brand and the in-house delivery of its products to the customers, QUID also extended its factory base in 2018 and widened its services from outsourcing to B2C distribution.

2.35.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

In the future, QUID would need multi-year investment impact study for starting internationalisation processes via a funding programme that can include pilot-testing activities. This process would help QUID to set an agreement with a multinational corporation.

Furthermore, the Cooperative aims to participate to Horizon programmes and to access European Union funding opportunities. QUID would thus need long-term mentoring services, because as a social enterprise it needs to be trained on how to access funding via specific application procedures. In the same context, these training courses should be offered for free by acknowledging the fact that social enterprises have to recover all relevant expenses for their staff.

In the end, QUID aims to expand its selling profit into Germany as well as into South of Italy, so as to strengthen B2B collaborations and transformation to long-term ethical contracts. The approach of QUID to the international markets can be reproduced in other contexts. It shows that it is possible to create high quality products in the fashion world, as part of the fashion trends that meet the demand of consumers, follow the principles of circular economy, respect the environment, and enhance the opportunities and skills of people otherwise excluded from the labour market.

2.36. Qlu Ltd.

Name of company / entity	Qlu Ltd.
Website	http://www.qlu.fi/
Country	Finland
Legal status	Limited company
Main sector(s) of operations	Assistive listening services for hearing impaired people
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2016
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	United Kingdom, Sweden

2.36.1. Overview

Qlu Ltd. is a Finnish company expert in **assistive listening technologies and services for hearing impaired people**. Driven by its personal motivations, the owner of Qlu started the company in 2013 with the aim to help create equal hearing environments in public venues for all users, allowing the hearing impaired to better access and take full benefit of these venues. The company provides services and technologies to measure the operational quality of induction loops (induction loops get sound into the system of the hearing impaired) in public venues and instruct how to repair the system, when necessary. It also elaborates the induction loop quality maps of these venues. Such maps give an insight into the venues' hearing conditions to the users.

Qlu's owner initiated first the development of a new technology that allows to measure induction loops and map these loops, investing around 2M EUR in this innovation. He was motivated by the fact that in many public places the sound quality was very poor, establishing a clear need for measuring and mapping the hearing conditions. This would let users, for instance, identify what the best seats are for the hearing impaired in public places (e.g., concert halls) and let professionals have a reference point for fixing the quality problem.

Following the development work, **the company started to provide services in 2014**. The end-users of Qlu services are schools, universities, banks, cinemas, theatres, conference centres, meeting hotels, among others, that represent a combination of public and private places. In 2015, a further member with wide experience in supporting companies in their internationalisation was integrated into Qlu´s team who helped **Qlu introduce its technology and provide its services in other markets from 2016 on**. Qlu's desire to internationalise was clearly associated with its mission to help the hearing impaired have equal chances, fulfilling the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities concerning the accessibility of public venues. Internationalisation is also critical for Qlu to increase its income and help grow further.

The internationalisation process of the category of "distribution" started in the **United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland).** Here Qlu tried different strategies, including building links with the association Hearing Link to help its market access, including partnering with entities that can offer Qlu´s services as part of their portfolios.

In 2018 Qlu also entered the **Swedish market**. Sweden proved to be a relatively easy market since the Swedish are very concerned about the treatment of people with disabilities. Here Qlu partnered up with a private company and gained access to the Swedish Association of Hard of Hearing People. This then helped explore other contacts in the market. This was going well up to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.36.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Qlu faced a number of challenges during its transnational activities. In the UK, for instance, it encountered **low-quality induction loop systems in public venues**. Although the legislation sets the quality standard for induction loops, there is no organisation that quality controls these systems. This implied that entities that install these systems in this market and that could be potential partners for Qlu to deploy its services in the UK, started to consider Qlu as a threat. With the technology and techniques that Qlu developed, it would be easy to detect the poor level of quality of the induction systems installed by these companies, revealing that these systems do not meet the legal requirements. It turned out, therefore, that it is problematic to find partners in the UK, even with the support of the Hearing Link association.

Although in Sweden, Qlu's operations were going well until COVID-19, although in general it is not easy to find the right strategy for market penetration. Small companies in this market are usually technically well prepared, however, they **do not have the sufficient manpower to focus on sales**. Since Qlu's technology is new and unique on the market, more efforts should be invested in market awareness.

Although Qlu did not have any legal problems, it faced the **challenge of not knowing the legal environment well enough when entering a new country**. Although the legislation is essentially the same in European countries for people with hearing disabilities, the legislation regarding construction and building differs. It would be helpful to better understand the legal environments so as to be able to adjust the marketing strategy in specific countries.

The most critical issue of all is to find financial support, an investor, that could support the company, allowing it to hire more people so as to be able to expand internationally. Growing further internationally is key for Qlu to maximise its market potential.

As Qlu operates in a niche market, investors have less interest in its business due to the market size. It is important, therefore, to find investors who are also concerned about social impact at the same time.

An important milestone in Qlu's development was when **in 2017 it was awarded the rights to use The Finnish Social Enterprise Mark**. Being a social enterprise allows the company to better communicate its social goals. This is very important, especially when approaching relevant associations in Finland and in other countries.

Qlu also obtained governmental support for consultancy regarding its process of Qlu also obtained governmental support for consultancy regarding its process of internationalisation. This support was channelled as part of a governmental programme through Business Finland although this was not specifically targeted at social enterprises.

2.36.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

After the COVID-19 pandemic has passed, Qlu would like to continue its internationalisation. In the UK, it may potentially need to opt for another strategy to partner up with entities. Companies that implement acoustic measurements and large companies dealing with building maintenance services could potentially be good partners.

In Sweden, it will also possibly calibrate its strategy focusing more on creating partnerships with larger entities that already have a solid client base to whom Qlu's services can be channelled.

On the other hand, entering other mature markets, such as Germany and Switzerland, are also part of Qlu´s internationalisation plans.

Several measures to help the international market expansion of social enterprises would be beneficial. Among them is the **availability of local legal support** to inform about the local legal environment and respective requirements. It would also be useful to create **more networking possibilities with other social enterprises across Europe** for cooperation possibilities and for exchanging experience.

2.37. Rádio Miúdos

Name of company / entity	Rádio Miúdos
Website	https://www.radiomiudos.pt/
Country	Portugal
Legal status	Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)
Main sector(s) of operations	Online radio broadcasting
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2015
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	France, Switzerland, Denmark, Germany as well as Portuguese-speaking African countries

2.37.1. Overview

Rádio Miúdos is the first Portuguese radio station for children that started experimental broadcasts in November 2015. It is an exclusively online radio, broadcasting 24 hours/7 days a week. The project was awarded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, in the last edition of the FAZ-IDEIAS DE ORIGEM PORTUGUESA 2015 competition, a competition for social entrepreneurship in the diaspora, and by the European Commission representation in Portugal. The project aimed at all children, parents and educators, Portuguese, Luso-descendants or Portuguese-speakers living in Portugal, abroad and in the Portuguese-speaking African countries.

Rádio Miúdos' mission is to give a voice to Portuguese speaking children all over the world, whether they are Portuguese or from other countries where Portuguese is the mother tongue, such as Brazil. This includes getting children to think and act as active and conscious citizens from an early age. The founders of Rádio Miúdos consider that a citizen is not only born at 18 years old and therefore if the child is prepared and acts as a citizen from an early age, then he/she will also be able to choose more consciously and be more conscious in his/her actions.

Rádio Miúdos has audiences (listeners) in 176 countries and territories. It thus has around 30 local kids that participate in live broadcasts from 3 to 6 PM (Portuguese time) from Monday to Friday and they also have correspondent kids (that don't live near the studio, either from Portugal or abroad) that actively participate in Radio Miúdos as journalists producing radio programmes, conducting interviews, talking about what's going on in their cities/countries or in the city/country where they are living at that moment.

Besides the radio channel, there is also the Miúdinhos channel, an additional radio channel, but for younger children, from 0-6 years old (radio Miúdos starts at 7 years old). The radio Miúdinhos channel is very recent, it started broadcasting in January 2021 and officially debuted on 15 February.

Radio Míudos has also other projects, it doesn't stop at the studio, it has many projects outside, for example, one of the most active is the *Radio Escolas* (i.e., radio schools). The radio at schools is a potential instrument for several issues such as the development of soft/open skills that are necessary for the future of our children. According to data from the World Bank, 4 out of 5 children who are now at school will have jobs that do not exist now. So, what the school teaches them is how to develop these skills and radio at school can help bring to reality what the children have learnt. Also, teamwork is very important, and children will start to discuss and understand whether the news they read is true or false. This project also tries to promote interaction between children from different cultures and different countries.

Fulfilling its mission of giving a voice to children and following the launch of the project Radio Escolas, a project that has been prepared for three years and that includes the creation of this network since its genesis, Rádio Miúdos opens this RÁDIO-ESCOLAS NETWORK platform, that will include several features and tools and that in this first phase will allow gathering all the radio production of the Rádio Escolas universe of Radio Miúdos, so that it can be available, with access all over the world.

2.37.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Within the RÁDIO-ESCOLAS project, the network of international schools is still very small. For example, with the European schools, there is only occasional contact because there has been some difficulty either because of the distance or because of the different realities, which they only realise exist when they visit one of these European schools. More specifically with some schools in Germany when the founders went there to do a radio workshop for Portuguese teachers in Germany, they did a previous survey to find out the equipment available in the schools and found a very different reality from Portugal - there was a huge lack of basic material in schools which forced them to redirect the workshops.

The main difficulties are on the one hand to understand exactly the reality of the schools in other countries and to know how to adapt the service and how to create an impact on the children and teachers and effectively involve 1 or 2 teachers from each school who can be in charge of the project. The biggest difficulty is to find the time for this person to be available to intervene regularly and to find funding to pay for this person's time. This person should be local (live in the region) and should have a good network. It's important to have an institutional partnership - the institutional structure role would be to connect local schools with Radio Miúdos.

Rádio Miúdos has the legal form of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). In Portugal, NGOs are voluntary associations that contribute in various ways to the development of the most deprived areas. This represents an obstacle to internationalisation as it is still seen as voluntary work and so it is difficult to get funding - investors want returns. National entities that support internalisation, such as AICEP - Agency for Investment and Foreign Trade of Portugal, Cotec - Business Association for Innovation, etc. are still very much focused on supporting companies and not on non-profit associations. There is also a lack of funding programmes for the internationalisation of this type of project.

Role of technology

Rádio Miúdos has a website that features their programme on radio schools, news, interviews, on-air recommendations, and podcasts. They also have the Rádio Miúdos APP that provides both OS: Android and iOS.

2.37.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

They are now starting to create institutional partnerships such as the Portuguese Institute Camões. The other governmental institutions are interested in developing internationalisation programmes to attract more investors and thus be able to approach international markets again. The European Commission itself would be a great partner to liaise with schools and other relevant networks.

2.38. Regionalwert AG

Name of company / entity	Regionalwert AG
Website	https://www.regionalwert-ag.de/
Country	Germany
Legal status	Joint stock company
Main sector(s) of operations	Agriculture and food industry
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2012
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Austria

2.38.1. Overview

As a citizens' stock corporation, Regionalwert AG offers citizens the practical opportunity to take responsibility for a sustainable and resilient agricultural and food economy. By purchasing Regionalwert shares and participation rights, they support small and medium-sized BIO farms in their region. Regionalwert AG invests the citizens' money in shareholder capital, land, buildings and facilities of Regionalwert partner farms along the entire value chain. In this way, the partner association of farms, food traders, restaurants and service providers receive financing, that also measures the return on investment on the basis of ecologically, socially and regionally economically created values. In this way, agriculture and society are linked and entrepreneurs are helped of the anonymous competition. The desirable goal is to establish regional food sovereignty based on a social contract between producer and consumer. Regionalwert AG is based in Germany and in 2020 began replicating their approach in Austria.

They do not proactively seek new partners but receive requests from various countries or companies. This is usually followed by an offer for a contract and a training workshop. If the applicants are qualified to found a Regionalwert AG, a preliminary contract for the trademark license is drawn up and signed (which costs 5,000 Euros and is valid for 3 years). All the accumulated knowledge and experience of all Regionalwert AGs is then incorporated into the new region. When the foundation process is finished, the new Regionalwert AG has to become a shareholder of the umbrella company Regionalwert Impuls GmbH and gets a say over the Regionalwert AG brand.   Partner companies in the local Regionalwert AG can be producers from agriculture and the food industry, as well as traders and businesses from the gastronomy sector.

2.38.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

The legal form of a joint stock company turned out to be problematic in some countries, e.g., in Spain, because it was and still is difficult to find a suitable legal form for the foundation of a Regionalwert AG. The AG and partner companies usually have to be very creative and adaptable to find a solution or an alternative legal form that is suitable. In addition, low-income countries or regions may not be able to pay the pre-contract fees. In addition, the legal form of a corporation is often negatively associated with capitalist structures, while the legal form of a cooperative is often preferred. In response, Regionalwert AG explains that its model differs from the traditional stock market and follows different principles. Finally, RWAG had some difficulties with the English translation of their products. To overcome the language barrier, they hired staff fluent in English and Spanish to handle all negotiations with English- and Spanish-speaking partners.

Role of technology

At the beginning, technology did not play a major role, but RWAG quickly realised that in today's world, online communication has become more important. Thus, it turns out that in the area of start-up activities, many more people can be reached through digital channels than with face-to-face presentations and events.

2.38.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Regionalwert AG has already been supported and recommended by various EU and UN institutions. These recommendations resulted in greater reach and demand for its products. Regionalwert AG therefore recommends investing in the visibility of social economy models. They also emphasise that funding and trusted partnerships are very important to build a sustainable business.

For the future, RWAG would like to see support for internationalisation in other countries in order to implement the idea of regional food independence with the entities operating in the respective countries and regions. In this context, they want to invest more in civil society networks.

2.39. REScoop

REScoop.EU

Name of company / entity	REScoop.eu	European federation of citizen energy cooperatives
Website	https://www.rescoop.eu/
Country	Belgium
Legal status	Non-profit association
Main sector(s) of operations	Energy Transition
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2013
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	All over Europe

2.39.1. Overview

REScoop refers to a business model through which citizens jointly own and participate in renewable energy or energy efficiency projects. We also refer to REScoops as citizen or renewable energy communities. REScoops do not necessarily have the legal form of a cooperative, they rather distinguish themselves by the way they do business. They typically respect 7 principles, which are leading the energy transition to energy democracy. The principles are:

1. Voluntary and Open Membership

2. Democratic Member Control

3. Economic Participation through Direct Ownership

4. Autonomy and Independence

5. Education, Training and Information

6. Cooperation among Cooperatives

7. Concern for Community

All citizens are eligible to join an energy cooperative. REScoop.eu is the European federation of citizen energy cooperatives. It acts as a learning network of 1.900 energy cooperatives operating across Europe and jointly representing over 1,25 million citizens. After purchasing a cooperative share and becoming a member or co-owner of local renewable energy or energy efficiency projects, members share in the profits and are often given the opportunity to buy the electricity at a fair price. In addition, members can actively participate in the cooperative: they can decide where the REScoop should invest and are consulted when setting the energy price. REScoop.eu was legally set up in 2013 as a Belgian not-for-profit association. Their team consists of 13 staff members who are all based in Belgium.

2.39.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Smaller entities and communities face financial barriers to participate in EU projects because of the ongoing cuts in the overheads. The rate for indirect costs used to be 60% in the former Intelligent Energy Europe programme, dropped to 25% in Horizon 2020 and is apparently going to be only 7% in the new Life programme. This forces small-scale initiatives to bail out or not even consider EU projects anymore. REScoop reactions to that is, that there should be exceptions for smaller players including NGO's which give them some kind of special treatment to facilitate their work through EU projects. If not, projects will end up in the hands of big companies. In addition, increased competition on EU calls also makes it harder for small players to win bids. Some members of REScoop.eu indicated that lack of time or dedicated resources to commit to writing project proposals prevents them from considering such programmes in the first place. Dedicated calls for energy communities could overcome this barrier.

REScoop.eu is a sector federation of Cooperatives Europe, the European branch of the International Cooperative Alliance. Cooperatives Europe represents the voice of 160,000 cooperatives in Europe and their 123 million members. REScoop.eu holds a seat in the board of Cooperatives Europe. REScoop.eu is also one of the co-founders of REScoop MECISE and The Mobility Factory, European cooperatives through which they provide services on RES financing and e-car sharing. REScoop.eu also teams up with other like-minded entities through the Community Power Coalition. This coalition features entities like Friends of the Earth Europe, Energy Cities, ICLEI, Greenpeace Europe, etc. and gathers on a monthly basis to discuss policy and plan advocacy actions on community energy.

Role of technology

Technology is the core component of REScoop.eu. Given that the whole purpose of their work is implementing technologies and democratising energy, one of the main enablers of their transnational activities is technology. There are lots of projects and programs from the European Commission that they participate in, to get familiar with and test new technologies. Besides that, digital tools for digital conferencing, shared data and collaborative platforms are crucial for joint projects and setting up new projects in other cities and countries and international collaboration.

2.39.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

This case could unfortunately not elaborate on their future prospects and recommendations.

2.40. Rosia Montana

**MADE IN
ROSIA MONTANA**

Merino Wool Knitwear

Name of company / entity	Rosia Montana
Website	https://madeinrosiamontana.com/
Country	Romania
Legal status	Limited Company
Main sector(s) of operations	Social business with local women workers
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2013 started as company, 2015 started online commerce
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Germany and France

2.40.1. Overview

Rosia Montana is a limited company that operates in the mountain area of Rosia Montana, Romania. The company was built in 2013 by Tica Darie with the intention of preserving the mountain area from a gold mining destructive project. He started many campaigns in different countries to promote the movement in 2012, then started to implement Rosia Montana a year later as his dedication to help the women in the village by giving alternative sources of income to local women.

The production and company operated locally and nationally at first, then in 2015, the e-commerce website (https://madeinrosiamontana.com) was officially launched to scope the international market. The international market reaches customers from different countries mainly in Europe, mostly from Germany and France. However, for the Romanian market, Rosia Montana still has offline stores in Christmas markets.

Rosia Montana's main product is handmade knitwear produced by local women. Nowadays, they have 35 women working directly from their homes. The products are evolving from variety of handmade knitwear specified for man, woman, kids, as well as other products like blanket and merino yarn.

The operation of the company was started with Tica's personal savings. In 2015 Rosia Montana won a contest for social enterprises and signed a donation contract that helped further invest in the company. Until today, Rosia Montana has reinvested 90% of its profit in extending the team, organising capacity-building for women, among others.

2.40.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Made in Rosia is a Romanian company which led to a general idea that in Eastern Europe, the salaries are low, and some companies are interested to work with them aiming to push down the prices. Of course, Made in Rosia Montana provides just salaries to local women

which produced handmade knitwear. Of course, such goods are not comparable with mass production. selling them within average price of other knitwear are not proper to value the handmade craft, not only for the income, but also to pay the workers. Therefore, to help this, Rosia Montana also bought sewing machines to produce other kinds of products that are being offered to other companies. They established a cooperation with other companies based on pre-order demands. Another issue is the limited access to skilled labour. Rosia Montana is a village area and there is no skilled workforce in key areas, such as human resources, marketing, and others. In order to source skilled workers at a distance perhaps from other countries, it requires a higher budget.

In addition, the other issue was that companies from some countries request a certificate of organic product over the wool used by Made in Rosia. This certificate is very difficult to obtain. Since it costs money and the wood suppliers are not interested in paying such costs and they don't see the advantage, this poses a challenge.

Another challenge is the taxation issue. Taxes are too high in general which is a burden. On hand-made products the taxes should be lower because by being handmade the produced quantity is always lower, and the production cost is higher. The high taxes further increase the price of the products.

As the products are knitwear, another challenge of Rosia Montana is the seasonal product. During winter, the demand of the market is high, but not for other seasons. Thus, stocking for the winter season was their solution to provide a frequent income to the company. However, to keep producing income on a continuous basis, Rosia Montana started a cooperation with several companies from Germany, and they are currently discussing a pilot cooperation with companies in Australia and the USA (New York). This helps secure regular income for the company.

Another issue is the financial budget for promotion of the product that is connected to human resources. As Rosia Montana was based in a small mountainous village, it is very difficult to find skilled workers in technology.

Made in Rosia has the legal form of limited company. In Romania, social businesses can get a specific certificate: social limited. This certificate grants certain benefits, for instance obtaining facilities for free of charge. Therefore, Made in Rosia tried to get this certificate some years ago and processed it within three years without any solution and result. It turned out that getting this certificate implies a lot of bureaucracy. In addition, having access to a free office space through the local government also seemed very challenging, as the local mining industry has bought up 80% of the real estates. Since the mining industry is against his social business because their idea is to turn the mountain area into a mono industrial zone, they impeded Made in Rosia from having access to a free space.

Rosia Montana gained support and consultation from Synerb Venture Catalyser (synerb.org) pro bono who willingly provided valuable suggestions. Synergy provided this support via the NESST network (https://www.nesst.org). NESST invests in social enterprises that empower communities to access quality jobs.

Role of technology

Rosia Montana grows significantly through its online e-commerce website. The company sells and ships the products, not only in European areas, but also worldwide. The website now also provides different languages: Romanian, French, German, English as well as filtered price tags in EUR, USD, and LEI to cover wider audiences. The company also sold products on another online platform: FASHION DAYS www.fashiondays.ro

The promotion of the product is also being conducted by TV commercials that cover particular areas.

2.40.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

The support to social businesses in Europe should be intensified. They work for a social cause and operate under a different terminology. It is important that, for instance, the European Union provides more opportunities for promoting social businesses. Dedicated slots on TV channels could be provided to social businesses so that their visibility towards the European consumers is increased.

2.41. SEAL CYPRUS

Name of company / entity	SEAL Cyprus
Website	https://sealcyprus.org/
Country	Cyprus
Legal status	Non-profit organisation
Main sector(s) of operations	Education
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2014
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	EU

2.41.1. Overview

SEAL CYPRUS was established as a legal entity in 2014. During the first-ever general assembly, like-minded people interested in youth work and continuous Education identified the entity's vision. The entity was registered with the Registrar for Associations after having consulted all relevant ministries for their opinion and after receiving their approval.

SEAL Cyprus supports competence development of individuals by offering customised education, training, and career resource solutions. In particular, they assist competence development of youth workers, trainers and youth leaders by offering training in fields such as leadership, project management and dissemination strategies.

Starting from the needs of the learners, SEAL Cyprus provides blended learning solutions based on accurate scientific ground by using a wide range of interactive educational methods of open and distance learning, non- formal education, e-learning, and on-the-job training.

The entity has additional mentoring or other support suitable for young people with social obstacles, educational difficulties, cultural differences or similar. It targets, for instance, people who face financial barriers, disabilities, learning difficulties, health problems or geographical difficulties, especially for migrants and refugees from both communities in Cyprus.

The types of revenues that it receives derive from either international funding (Erasmus+, Europe for Citizens, and EEA & Norway Grants programmes), or from training and consulting to public and private entities via the establishment of training and membership fees for individuals.

2.41.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Although SEAL Cyprus never had legal implications in transnational cooperation activities, mainly via its EU-funded projects, the legal status of its project partners has been challenging in regard to the establishment of an entity, but also, in regard to the verification of the current status of an entity, the roles of the entity's officials, etc. Nowadays, it seems easier to find information in online public registries once directed by project partners who know the language and the places to search.

During 2014, SEAL Cyprus implemented local activities and had to solidify the ties between members, beneficiaries, and stakeholders. In addition, the entity applied for its prospective participation in international projects. The first transnational activity of SEAL CYPRUS was in 2014 when they implemented an international training course on Biodiversity and Green Jobs for 30 youth workers from 10 European countries.

However, SEAL Cyprus achieved to transfer know-how and good practices at the transnational level. In June 2021, it received international visits in its premises from three entities outside Cyprus, in a process of acquiring more in-depth knowledge of its services. In particular, the visits were organised from the countries of Estonia and Poland.

During the same year, SEAL CYPRUS received the Erasmus+ Youth Accreditation based on their contribution to the overall objectives of the EU Youth Strategy and to the European Youth Goals. According to this accreditation, SEAL CYPRUS is applying the principles of inclusion and diversity, of environmental sustainability and responsibility, and of virtual cooperation and mobility.

2.41.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Entities such as SEAL CYPRUS could benefit greatly from partner-finding events and infrastructures like online platforms or portals. The types of events that they would recommend for strengthening transnational cooperation are (a) contact-making events, (b) fairs where existing projects can be presented, and (c) info-days on specific funding opportunities.

Apart from the above, SEAL Cyprus plans to create a VET Centre and to commercialise online tools that it has created in career management, and in designing an interested party's presence in digital and social media.

2.42. Simplon.co

Name of company / entity	Simplon.co
Website	https://simplon.co/
Country	France
Legal status	Social Business
Main sector(s) of operations	Tech
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2014
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Belgium

2.42.1. Overview

Simplon.co was founded in 2013 and is a network of social digital factories that offer free, intensive courses in digital professions in France and abroad. At the heart of Simplon's work are training courses in digital skills for hard-to-fill occupations for people alienated from work and employees in need of reskilling or upskilling. They have a specific focus on male/female parity and support specific target groups such as refugees. Simplon believes that digital transformation is a powerful vehicle for social innovation and that it can enable those who struggle to access training and the job market, to become the talents of tomorrow, by finding a job or becoming an entrepreneur.

There are several ways to deploy the Simplon model abroad, depending on local market needs and situations. Simplon either opens training locations directly in the country or cooperates with existing local entities in the form of a social franchise or knowledge partnership. "Simplon Corp" is the team dedicated to training all employees: those the farthest displaced from digital skills, those who need to acquire new skills, and those whose jobs are changing. Together with companies, Simplon designs and implements innovative training formats to demystify digital technologies through practical workshops, maintain the employability of employees, and support employees in learning a new job.

Another unit, "Simplon Prod", designs and develops customised digital solutions, mainly for social and solidarity projects with high social impact. The agency recruits developers, throughout France, who are looking for work after completing a Simplon training course. They cover all digital needs: consulting missions, tools, websites, web and mobile applications. Measuring the quality and social impact of its actions enables Simplon to continuously improve their training. It is also an instrument for medium- and long-term strategic steering and enables them to stay innovative. So far, 11 476 people have been trained by Simplon all over the world. There are 109 factories in the Simplon Network that started activities in 2014. They achieve a positive outcome rate towards employment and training in France of 67%. Their job audience are 78% job seekers, 55% people with a high school level education or below, 7% foreigners, 6% individuals with disabilities and 37% of all trainees are women. They have 77 factories in France and 32 factories abroad, i.e., Belgium, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Ivory Coast, Spain, Romania, Senegal and Switzerland.

2.42.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

One problem Simplon is facing, is that some stakeholders question the quality of their training because it is free of cost. Simplon responds to such criticism that quality can't always be measured by a specific price and that they offer their product for free in order to foster more inclusion. This implies that Simplon is depending on third party funding to offer their training.

The framework for training certifications and diplomas (for trainees as well as employers) differs from country to country (i.e., how long they take, what the costs are). Simplon has to figure out what the local certification standards are and if they are necessary for each individual country.

Entities reach out to Simplon mainly because they want to implement their pedagogy and training methods. Their partners are entities such as social businesses or NGOs that implement their programs. In other cases, they cooperate with companies or large corporate partners such as Microsoft. After identifying a partner, Simplon supports the local fundraising process by identifying potential public and private funding sources which can include local, European (EU), or international funders (World Bank, African Bank and others).

Their main partners are Telenet and Orange, who are businesses located in Belgium that provide Simplon with seed capital to start their projects. Additional seed capital is provided by foundations such as 4Wings Foundation and Degroof-Petercam.

Also, the World Bank, African Development Bank, as well as business and philanthropic partners support them financially, so that they can invest in training and further internationalisation. Simplon is supported by Ashoka (their founder being Ashoka Fellow), which is very helpful for them in terms of networking. Finally, Bruxelles Formations is their public service partner in Belgium, who certifies their training.

Role of technology

Simplon trains people in digital skills but does not use online platforms and tools for their training. This is connected to their aim, to reach disadvantaged target groups who may have limited access to equipment and infrastructure. Simplon therefore only offers face-to-face workshops. Digital technology is however used for sharing resources and evaluation.

2.42.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Simplon is wishing for more collaboration and sharing of knowledge on the concept of social economy in different countries. Another approach is to foster collaboration and cooperation by harmonising fiscal and legal frameworks. Also, they are recommending the creation and export of financial instruments to foster new economic models for activities like theirs.

In the future, they are prioritising transnational activities and further expansion, as well as focusing on what the criteria is to be a 'good partner' for Simplon (example: some NGOs are not very open to work with stakeholders such as large corporate partners).

2.43. Smart

Name of company / entity	Smart
Website	https://smartbe.be/en/
Country	Belgium
Legal status	Cooperative
Main sector(s) of operations	Administrative, legal, fiscal and financial services (multi-sectoral)
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2009
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	2009 France; 2012 Sweden; 2013 Spain, The Netherlands, Italy; 2015 Austria and Germany

2.43.1. Overview

Established in 1998, Smart is active in artistic sector, creative economy, started in French speaking region of Belgium. It is a shared enterprise with stakeholders, at the level of the cooperative. Smart opened first in France in 2009. Further internationalisation is followed by Sweden (2012), Spain, and the Netherlands, Italy (2013) and Austria and Germany (2015). Expansion of Hungary and the UK is stalled. Smart provides tools for its members to be able to work and access the social protection schemes. It provides information, advising in legal domain, in short, social and economic aspects of the work of the (freelance) individual. Smart help such individuals to develop their own activities, such as ordering and making contracts, getting paid in time, managing conflict resolution processes, and mutualising the risk including guaranteeing the timely payment.

Tools to simplify administration for freelancers, entrepreneurs, and start-ups serves different job profiles and occasional workers, it helps developing better relations with their clients, and makes income more predictable. It relieves the administrative hassle thus individuals can focus on their core activities, including creative aspects, market projections, business development, with awareness on being protected and protection services of Smart. Revenue of Smart is course from various types such as services for Freelancers or overall member via membership fees, or proportional to invoice amount.

2.43.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Smart provides elements of social protection to freelances and entrepreneurs. Its work requires working with local groups for co-creation, localisation, where markets and public institutions are not used to deal with cooperatives, e.g. in many places when it comes to public bids, there is a confusion in between Smart the entity and Smart the individual cooperative member.

Legal frameworks are not being adapted in particular for access to social protection at national and at EU level by public bodies, and there are varieties of different client profiles,

and a need for autonomy and solidarity for community of freelancers and entrepreneurs. Learning the field, especially when there are reasons for experimentation and social protection becomes challenged due to changing realities of the work, new world circumstances, is needed. In most situations, Smart has not been there before, and needs to be given to freedom to experiment as it has to learn and draw lessons, which can even be incorporated later into legislations relating to work, to be replicated elsewhere, to be supported by public more.

Available legal forms (EU, national level) can be challenging for Smart in some countries due to the EU legislation about SMEs, micro enterprises. Tax regulations become a barrier in some countries especially where a company employs a high number of people and taxing the number of people employed does not really fit in creative sector ad to avoid undeclared works enhancing taxation is expected. Financial regulations and rules in different countries for SME, or not SME, the entrepreneur or the collective, creates an identity scale problem. The most resource consuming activity for international activities are coordination and communication, mastering languages, transposing concepts, huge investments requirements, so these activities deserve public support for experimentation and risk taking in this domain due to new and changing conditions for work.

Although corporate governance obligations challenge the separate entities together, Smart mitigated this by joint overall programming for finance and operations, collectively with partners through informal meetings and structures. Receiving external support in change management for replication methods, having clear motivation about social protection, working with local people, and adapting variety of operational legal forms for legal continuity are of mitigation strategies of Smart.

Smart received a small public grant from French speaking part of Belgium to provide training and education support. Rewarded by Ashoka and European Federation of Trade Unions (ETUI) as a good practice and received funds from EC projects. In Belgium, Smart reaches a capacity of 2000-3000 contract per day, this volume differs in different countries, to replicate contracts, workflows, the skeleton of the process of the tools, legislation parameters change in different countries, thus open standards are appropriated and adopted to the local situation. Their website enables direct connection to all members, standard layouts, branding work, logo and changes in visual identity.

2.43.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Smart stands on the conviction that it has a replicable model, and it is possible to replicate its model initiated in Belgium, in the EU and at international level. Their model lays on a number of layers, mutualisation of costs in a cooperative form, it relies on existing solidarity systems which are established historically and put together work with other entities, historically e.g., from the industrial revolution times, trade unions, contribution of employers and workers, the means to finance the social protection.

Future plans include enhancing Smart Development Fund and formalising relations with members aimed at making predictable operations, and to attract more investors. Smart would like to see a vision for European Freelance Status in legal definition, including access to social protection, since there is substantial evidence of the current situation that issues emerge with lack of accessing social protection in the EU. Smart also wants to continue developing internationally beyond EU Countries, Slovenia, Poland, Greece but they would also continue Morocco, US, Korea, Australia. From technology point of view, continuous work on specifics of platform economy and legal aspects take place.

Artists and technology interactions are ongoing experimental areas of development, e.g., in Spain, with University of Madrid. Smart approaches the challenge of being a cooperative with membership via facilitating participation in governance, future investment plans in blockchain, tools, digital tools, enabling moderation, and animation of debates.

Developing targeted measures for internationalising practices, platform cooperatives, dealing with the delivery of similar social services, also in other service domains, require support to be experimented in different sectors and cross-border contexts.

2.44. Stichting Justdiggit Foundation

Name of company / entity	Statutory name: Stichting Justdiggit Foundation
Website	www.justdiggit.org
Country	Netherlands
Legal status	Stichting (Foundation), with the Dutch ANBI status: recognised public good, charity status which allows for tax deduction for donors
Main sector(s) of operations	Greening Africa (Restore damaged ecosystems, mitigate climate change; agriculture/forestry)
Starting date of Cross-border activities	Started in 2010 in NL; In 2013 investment of 450.000 in Kenia Started in 2017 in Tanzania; Started fundraising in Germany in 2019
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Fundraising for climate change in Europe, mainly NL, UK, DE. Offices in Amsterdam and Nairobi Impact collectives with local partners in African countries like Kenya and Tanzania

2.44.1. Overview

As stated in the 2020 annual report: At Justdiggit, we've made a promise to the planet to regreen Africa within the next decade, and our goal is to inspire and empower people all over the world to join us. By combining landscape restoration techniques with the power of media and communication, data, and mobile technology, we can spread our message and scale up our regreening practices. We want to inspire, unite and empower an entire generation, and together grow a landscape restoration movement.

According to the 2013 annual report, written in Dutch, the entity under the name of Naga Foundation was set up in 2010. Based on the legacy and the contour trench technique developed by Westerveld Conservation Trust (1997) new methods were developed and implemented to combat desertification. Mayor investments have taken place in Kenia in 2013. In the same year the justdiggit approach, including an awareness and fund-raising campaign, was tested. It started with three people and in 2020 there was a staff of 28.

In the 2020 annual report (in English) Managing Director Marjolein Albers explains: "There has never been a more urgent need to restore damaged ecosystems than now, because ecosystems support all life on earth. The healthier our ecosystems are, the healthier the planet - and its people. Therefore, the UN Assembly announced in 2020, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean. Restored farmlands and grazing lands will be essential to end poverty, combat climate change and prevent a mass extinction."

"In 2020, we have been able to successfully implement our programs in Kenya and Tanzania, despite some operational delays due to local COVID-19 restrictions. To name a few highlights; we've restored over 2.3 million trees in the Dodoma region in Tanzania,

32,400 water bunds were dug in the Enkii area in southern Kenya and 3 new grass seed banks were established together with Maasai women groups. We've partnered up with Rain, MetaMeta and the IKEA Foundation for the new Green Future Farming program that revolves around regenerative agriculture and landscape improvement and have expanded our communication building strategy to strengthen and scale regreening to Uganda and Ethiopia. 2020 also marked the kick-off of our 10 million tree commitments in Tanzania, in partnership with Timberland.

As an official partner of The Decade, we dedicate our work to speed up and scale up our own and our partner's landscape restoration programs. Together with our network of global and local media and communication partners, such as Havas and JCDecaux, Justdiggit promotes regreening to farmers and inspires and mobilises people, companies and artists to become part of the (green) solution because we will only succeed if everyone plays their part".

Harold Knebel of the Supervisory Board describes in the 2020 annual report the situation of last year: "With a staff of only 28, mostly working from home, we succeeded to increase new activities, to develop a new brand identity and increase our donor base, not only in the Netherlands, but also in the UK and in Germany. After ten years of development, Justdiggit has become a much-appreciated partner in Africa for institutional entities, other NGOs and companies. Our innovations, the quality and impact of our communication approach and last but not least our impact on landscape restoration have become well known. It has given Justdiggit the opportunity to scale up our activities in Africa to restore damaged ecosystems. To coordinate and develop activities even better, we have opened a regional office in Nairobi, Kenya, last year. This was a huge step for us, but we are convinced that local representation creates a lot of opportunities and gives us credibility in the region as a development partner for a wide range of entities. The fact that we became an official partner of the UN Decade on Ecosystems Restoration (2021-2030) underlines our present role and impact in Africa. In Tanzania, we've started a pilot with affordable smart feature phones with free data and an app with instructions for small-holder farmers to restore their farmlands. The pilot will give us information how we can scale up regreening, by making use of the mobile revolution that is currently taking place in rural Africa."

Niels Dierckx (as director programmes part of the executive board) explains in the interview that Justdiggit performs two different kinds of international activities: those in Europe and those in Africa. Born and based in the Netherlands these two forms of international activities form different ecosystems and involve different barriers for cross-border activities (see section B).

The first one consists of fundraising 'abroad', namely in countries like the UK and Germany, next to the Netherlands. This also includes developing and operating campaigns to make the brand known and raise awareness. The concerning ecosystem is engaged in mitigating climate change and includes partners in the media (such as Havas Germany) that co-create the international campaign to distribute the message and raise awareness (see Figure 1). Words like 'cooling down the planet' makes people realise that planting trees in deserts also serves to combat the effects of global climate change. Examples of other international partners are: JCDecaux, Timberland, Ikea. On the website these partnerships are characterised as follows: "Justdiggit offers a wide range of shared-value business partnerships that link the impact of regreening programs to key stakeholders, such as employees, partners and customers". This includes so-called 'impact solutions' in terms of: Verified carbon offsetting; Regreen a dedicated area; Retaining rainwater; Tree restoration.

Among the partners are other social enterprises such as: Tony's Chocolonely : one of the most sustainable brands in the Netherlands and the most sustainable chocolate brand in the world. Justdiggit & Tony's have a longstanding partnership where Justdiggit offsets the entire Company Carbon Footprint (through Verified Carbon Offsets) by making dry lands

green again, helping farmers to improve their crop yield and income. Other partners collaborate on developing better technology and approaches.

These are the other major international activities are the impact programmes and the greening of Africa. These activities concern impact collectives with local partners. These partnerships form a different ecosystem, and since several months this also includes an own office in Nairobi (Kenia), which now makes us think what can be better done in the Netherlands and what in Nairobi. This local ecosystem consists of many small local NGO's. Small here means a turnover of about a million. Justdiggit does not work with local government entities, because they do not want to become dependent on local governments. The approach to the NGO's is also to keep independency, so the NGO's they work with should not become totally dependent on Justdiggit.

The overview shows that all forms of transnational activities are evident in the case of justdiggit: replication, distribution, sourcing and collective impact. Overall, the two main types identified in this paragraph, could respectively be labelled as 'sourcing' of funds across EU countries, and 'collective impact' concerning the activities in Africa, which are referred to by Justdiggit as 'impact collectives'.

2.44.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

The challenges and barriers of transnational activities differ for the two types of activities.

Concerning the activities across EU countries Language is a barrier. A campaign in English needs to be translated when starting a campaign in Germany. Regulations concerning donations (and tax deduction) are a barrier. The motive for expanding to Germany in 2019 was that Germany has a strong philanthropy culture and is a large country. Because we are a Foundation in the Netherlands, we cannot shift funding collected in Germany to another country, so we had to set-up a separate own legal entity in Germany, and it was needed to make donations tax deductible.

Barriers of working in Africa are numerous. The challenge has many aspects. For instance, it was difficult for us that we were not allowed to work there, they have prevented us to work for quite a long time. It was very complex to find out what the best way was to start activities and what kind of legal entity would be best. After quite some time justdiggit found out that setting up a branch office was most suitable.

The legal entity in Germany and opening a branch office in Nairobi worked well, but it takes quite some time to find these things out yourself, such lessons should be readily available for other social enterprises.

From the Dutch ministry of foreign affairs, Directorate-General for International Cooperation, there is some relevant support available, but it is limited to countries in focus. It could further serve as a one-stop-shop for creating infrastructures abroad.

2.44.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

"Within a year we aim to expand to west Afrika: Senegal, Dakar".

Working with partners is the preferred and less difficult approach. Currently they are working on a proposal with a consortium including IKEA Foundation.

It is recommended that lessons in internationalisation from social enterprises get shared and diffused. Knowledge about barriers and solutions should be made available, e.g., at the Afrika Desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2.45. TABIT

Name of company / entity	TABIT
Website	http://en.tabit.com.tr/
Country	Turkey
Legal status	Foundation
Main sector(s) of operations	Agriculture and IT (Smart Agriculture)
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2013
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	UK (Vodafone- Turkey Branch) Vodafone Farmer's Club, Kenya, New Zealand, Tanzania, Egypt, India, Ghana, Algeria (1-to-1 interaction), Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan (consultancy) / smart villages

2.45.1. Overview

TABIT provides specialised services for Agricultural sector. It develops solutions in an engaged manner by "living like a farmer, thinking like a farmer, and feeling like a farmer." Its capabilities extend to providing services for agricultural contents, agricultural software and applications, smart Agriculture, agriculture 4.0 and social projects in rural areas.

TABIT interacts with a wide variety of actors. For farmers, TABIT conducts studies to increase the productivity and profitability of farmers with the possibilities of technology and qualified knowledge. Services extend to Cooperatives and Unions by technology-related productivity and profitability studies along with agricultural trips for farmers working depending on their institution. For companies, TABIT establishes special collaborations, marketing support in communication with farmers and studies on social responsibility in rural areas. As far as public sector is concerned, TABIT for Municipalities provides product-oriented training centres and special studies for the producers within their municipality. For general public and citizen technology-based services in agriculture and animal husbandry, studies for solutions of rural area problems are provided. Academicians and students benefit from opportunities to research in the 300-acre application area and possibilities to practice and study areas for technology students, informing children and youth about smart agriculture.

Specific portfolio covers: Smart Agriculture – Agriculture 4.0 Product Service Consultancy, Technology Supported Agricultural Productivity Consultancy, Product – Service Promotion and Sales Consultancy, and Communication Solutions in Rural Areas are key consultancy services.

Content and technology services include Agricultural SMS Services, Agricultural Mobile Applications, Agricultural Content Services and R&D Product – Service Development.

Social Project Consultancy and Application in Rural Areas; In Area, Distance and Applied Training Studies; Agricultural Activity, Entity Planning and Applications form special solutions provided by TABIT.

2.45.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Legal form and associated taxation schemes constitute a challenge for operations of TABIT due to being a unique frontier in the sector with social purpose.

Mitigation strategy of TABIT is deeply rooted in internationalisation. Tulin Akin of TABIT is selected as Ashoka Fellow in 2012. The same year she is awarded as Schwab Foundation Social Entrepreneur of the Year (2018) and nominated for the "Work for Peace". TABIT works with Vodafone, UK (Vodafone Turkey Branch) and Vodafone Farmer's Club Vodafone Farmers Club is a versatile program that is constantly renewed with advantageous services that facilitate the lives of our farmers and their relatives), and in Kenya, New Zealand, Tanzania, Egypt, India, Ghana, Algeria (TABIT engages into 1-to-1 interactions), Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan (consultancy) /for smart villages to diversify its impact.

2.45.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

There are plenty of projects of TABIT with local, national and international partners from public and private sector. These are Vodafone Smart Village Project; Farmers Club; 2434 Farmer SMS News Package; Farmer's Guide; Vodafone Farmer Training Truck; Vodafone Farmer Advertisement Service; Social E-commerce Network in Agriculture; Agricultural News and Information Portal; Harvest Farmer Card – Şekerbank (Bank); Harvest Farmer Card Village Visits – Şekerbank (Bank); Let the farmers realise whatever they wants– Garanti Bankası (Bank); Reflector Plug Prevent Accidents, Get Off The Road Strong – Brisa (Private Sector); Pulse of Agriculture TV Program (Farmers Club TV); Agricultural Web Content for SMEs – Akbank (Bank); The Pulse of Agriculture Newspaper (Media); Computer for farmers – Intel & Arçelik (Global and National Private sector); Farmer Tablet – Intel & Garage Software (Global and National Private sector); Agricultural Insurance Information Anatolia Tour – SBN Insurance; Water Awareness in Rural Areas – Vodafone; Speak Throughout the year, pay without interest at harvest time- Vodafone & Şekerbank (Bank); Supplier Discount Campaign for farmers – Vodafone; Farmer's Use of Information Technologies; Agriculture Sector Export Gate Panel; Agricultural Academy and Ermenek Agricultural School; Modern Plant Protection Program – Training Truck – Bayer & Vodafone; Turkey Irrigation Market Research and Marketing Plan – Mondragon; Foldable Plastic Crate Marketing Plan and Consultancy – Odesa Polymer.

Thus, TABIT is a unique case where a traditional sector such as agriculture gain new impetus with digital technologies and with a social purpose through public, private, local, national and global cooperation partnerships. Cross sectoral (among traditional and emerging sectors) and cross border collaborations (among frontier and developing regions) are deemed important measures in design of policy and support mechanisms for such social economy enterprises.

2.46. TEAM U

Name of company / entity	TEAM U
Website	https://www.team-u.de/
Country	Germany
Legal status	gGmbh (non-profit)
Main sector(s) of operations	Professional services for companies in distress
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2011
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Has trained entities in Spain, Italy, Greece, Poland, works together in Denmark (Early Warning), France, Netherlands, Belgium (Dyzo), Austria, offers services to all EU Member States, cooperates with Ashoka

2.46.1. Overview

TEAM U focuses on managing an enterprise with respect to its various phases (e.g. prevention, crisis/job loss, up-again-restart (Restart)/create jobs, encouragement), including a potential experience of bankruptcy. Its services rooted in providing empathy and a structured support system for insolvents. TEAM U approaches insolvency as a step towards future opportunities for many micro-entrepreneurs who suffered the hardest hit in the business world. Failure is an opportunity for a new start for TEAM U. Team U not only provides entrepreneurs and SMEs with the infrastructure and network needed to prevent future instances of personal bankruptcy but also builds a community of support for insolvent individuals at all points in their insolvency experience, operating under the principle that those experiencing insolvency themselves can reverse the vicious circle of shame and isolation. Trainings work best in person, in direct contact. Restarter can be also provided via training online (e.g., Zoom, in Germany, tutorials, self-paced). Support and trainings for entrepreneurs, SMEs, and self-employed increases resilience and recovery, and start-ups are informed about resilience and recovery., help make them risk averse and clarity about risks.

2.46.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Types of revenue of TEAM U are cost free for entrepreneurs (public funding), and through EU funding, public funding (Ministry of Economy in Germany) and consultancy fees. Thus, tax regulations are deemed too high for TEAM U, some services are deemed to better deduce from 19% to no tax. Financial regulations and rules are heavily bureaucratic, e.g., days of work to apply and checks declarations. Corporate governance obligations of gGmbh hold two CEO responsible. Ministries of Justice, national insolvency law are the key actor and the law in the domain of activity. New European Legislation insolvency regulations intends to make support mechanism and services in mandatory.

Co-creation, as no top-down legal solution yet exists; learning from partners, systemic co-creation with adaptation to local legal situation is a key to success. Sourcing takes place via knowledge transfer between both sides, hence mutual learning. Lack of funding while demand is huge is a barrier, thus, TEAM U participated in development of project proposals and received financial support from the EC via EU-level projects, especially from COSME. Networking support is provided by Ministry after the request from TEAM U. Main capacity building partner and legal adviser of TEAM U is Ashoka. Ashoka fellow for 3 years seed fund the start of the project TEAM U. Support from donors and foundations are only possible via direct contact, and mutual awareness. The use of technology in partner country comes with a webpage, to apply/register, adapting local legal situation and replication save enormous amount of money, once master framework, concept and IT people ready.

2.46.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

In Germany, TEAM U aims at becoming the number 1 entity where entrepreneurs refer to in crisis, and in Europe, it wants to be a part of the network that supports entrepreneurs at EU-level. TEAM U appreciates the opportunities that the digitalisation provides and via a digital platform EU wide (as a future plan with financing of the platform), it aims at extending its social reach. However, fund providers and more innovative policy instruments that are efficient in supporting NGOs, social entrepreneurial approaches are needed since social impact is different from mainstream business entrepreneurial activities that comes with return-on-investment reporting and key performance measures (KPIs).

In this respect, TEAM U emphasises the need of a funded incubator for social innovation. There needs to be wider and flexible public funding, that is not limited to one sector, projects programme e.g., COSME, INTERREG. It needs to be multi-level co-funding, and multi-domain due to legal and complex issues, e.g., broader financial support structure and legal support for different sectors (solvency). Capacities of NGOs and their participation should be taken to account since many of them have no or low level of capacity for applying EU funding.

TEAM U is a unique case of a situation that where a social enterprise, on the contrary of its usual social and environmental impact, can also create economic impact and value for private sector and business entrepreneurs.

2.47. Too Good To Go

Name of company / entity	Too Good To Go
Website	https://toogoodtogo.org/en
Country	Denmark
Legal status	B-corp Social Impact Company
Main sector(s) of operations	Food & Environmental
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2016
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Denmark, UK, Norway, Germany, France, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Austria, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, and Ireland, United States, and Canada

2.47.1. Overview

Established in Denmark and launched in four EU countries (Denmark, Norway, France, and the UK) in 2016, Too Good To Go (TGTG) is a social impact company that has as its mission to inspire and empower everyone to fight food waste together. It does this mainly through its free application, which, by connecting food businesses (partners) and local people (users), empowers them both to 'be' the solution against food waste. The TGTG application is a geo-localised application that can be used across markets and is the most direct way for people to get involved in fighting food waste happening at retail and food service level - an instant good deed for the environment because of gases emitted by food sent to landfill. TGTG also creates real impact on the issue of food waste, through campaigns in public affairs, education, and together with households and business.

The TGTG application is now the world's largest B2C marketplace for surplus food and has grown exponentially as the company's most direct way of fighting food waste. It boasts a community of 44 million people, and 106 thousand partners (cafés, restaurants, supermarkets, bakeries, hotels, etc.) who have together saved more than 89 million meals and continue at a rate of one million meals every week. TGTG partners saving food on the app simply make their surplus food available on the app as 'Magic Bags', once they know how many will be available that day, so that users can reserve their bag, and arrive to collect the food at the end of the day.

The expansion of the application had been exponentially spread globally in a short time. Starting in 2017, TGTG began to replicate the business model in other European countries, then continued into the USA in 2020, and then finally launched in 2021 in Canada and Ireland. As TGTG continues to increase global market coverage, several methods of cooperation had been used for the transnational activities, such as co-creation methods within collaborative campaigns between Too Good To Go offices, replication by making the app scalable for the local markets, and collective impacts by joint efforts to reform legislative frameworks on an international level of reducing global greenhouse gas emissions.

TGTG complements these efforts against food waste through indirect impact via households, businesses, schools, and public affairs. TGTG targets (1) behaviour changes

at home; (2) sustainable practices adoption in businesses; (3) sustainable food habits for the young generation; and (4) long-term partnerships with public institutions to reshape and reform legislation.

2.47.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

A key barrier to TGTG's activities is a lack of awareness among people, businesses, and other stakeholders, of the connection between food waste and the environment, and the negative impact of food waste on our planet. Some food businesses particularly are not aware of the link between food waste and its environmental consequences, and until recent years, it has been more widely regarded as a monetary issue. TGTG is breaking down this barrier by providing people and businesses with inspirational talks, marketing campaigns, and by launching informative and creative communications content through TGTG platforms.

TGTG achieved B Corp certification in 2019, meaning that the company has been successfully assessed against its five key Impact Areas. In 2021, TGTG was recognised by B Lab, the B Corp awarding body, as a 'Best for the World', thanks for its top 5% ranking in the Impact Area of Governance.

As for the financial support, TGTG has received investment from both private angel investors, and VC funding.

Role of technology

As a company with an app-based marketplace at its core, technology has been core since the first launch. The TGTG app can be downloaded for free as an android or iOS-based application. It has also provided effortless cross-markets services that can be easily used by all users around the world.

The simple replication of the technology means the TGTG app scales quickly and easily, helping the company realise its mission of inspiring and empowering everyone to fight food waste together.

2.47.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

As a company that has seen success through growing a global movement, TGTG recommends that social economy transnational activities need to expand and foster collaboration with private and public companies. This is the means by which impactful synergies are made, and all parties can understand the aims and needs of the others. Also, important to note is that although campaigns can be done transnationally, it is important to focus on the local context to give a compact and concrete solution for local communities, and it is important to localise their efforts as much as possible. In the future, TGTG aims to increase its positive impact on the planet through saving one billion meals and inspiring 250 million people, by 2024.

2.48. Wheelmap

Name of company / entity	Wheelmap (Part of SOZIALHELDEN (Social Heroes))
Website	https://Wheelmap.org/ https://sozialhelden.de/en/Wheelmap-org/
Country	Germany
Legal status	Non-profit / Digital initiative / Crowdsourcing platform
Main sector(s) of operations	Online, worldwide map for wheelchair accessible places
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2010
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Worldwide

2.48.1. Overview

Wheelmap is an online, worldwide map for wheelchair accessible places. It is an initiative implemented by Sozialhelden e.v., a German non-profit organisation that has been developing creative projects addressing social problems since 2004. Through Wheelmap people can find out if a location is accessible or not and also are able to tag locations themselves. All location data comes from Openstreetmap, the biggest user-generated mapping project of the world, which is a sort of Wikipedia for maps.

Wheelmap was launched in 2010 following the idea of its founder who wanted to crowdsource information about the accessibility of places by wheelchair users. The app has currently over 1,200,000 locations mapped worldwide. The maps generated actually serve two functions: one is to let people know how accessible a place is, the other is to change the way city governments think about accessibility and give NGOs and activists a tool to use to lobby for improvements.

While the majority of the places added so far are located in Germany, the mapping platform works globally, as it is based on OpenStreetMap (OSM). The Wheelmap interface is currently available in 33 languages including Arabic, Danish, German, Greek, English, Spanish, French, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Swedish, Turkish, Korean, and Polish.

In addition to a small paid staff, Wheelmap works with a large network of volunteers engaging in various activities from programming to marketing. The initiative started in 2010 through prize money and they continue funding via taking part in contests, receiving donations from public and private sponsors, by selling ramps that are manufactured by local small suppliers, through monthly subscriptions and by providing personalised Wheelmap-Versions for cities/municipalities.

The international aspect was integrated in the design of the platform right from the start, as the whole concept of the platform relies upon crowdsourcing, working together with data partners (e.g., parkopedia.com) and aiming to advocate about accessibility on global level. Following the typology discussed in the study, the type of cross-border activity used by wheelamp is that of replication – as its business model is replicable to other countries – and also collective impact – as through collaboration and networking Wheelmap is able to achieve and multiply its impact on global scale.

Regarding some key milestones, it would be worth to mention that in 2018 Wheelmap was completely redeveloped and also a training program for ambassadors was launched in an attempt to improve advocacy. To date more than 30 Wheelmap ambassadors are involved around the world aiming to promote Wheelmap and raise public awareness for wheelchair accessibility in their region, neighbourhood and network of friends, families, colleagues, media and public authorities.

Transnational activities

The transnational activities started in 2010, with its launch as the platform is aimed to be used on global level and crowdsource global level on accessibility.

Other non-profit entities around the world had a similar idea to Wheelmap which led to the development of an exchange format – Accessibility Cloud – which now serves as a backend bringing together over 130 other data sources, such as OpenStreetMap, FourSquare, Parkopedia, HERE WeGo, Jaccede and AXSMap among others. These sources are regularly updated by members of their own users' communities. The datasets provide over 1.5 million information on places and their accessibility worldwide, including countries like USA, India, France, South Africa, UK, Austria, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Japan and Taiwan.

Also, it should be mentioned that there are more than 30 Wheelmap ambassadors active in different parts of the world, such as Germany, Austria, UK, Greece, Turkey, Canada, and USA that advocate for places accessibility as well as the promotion of standardisation in relation to accessibility signalling.

2.48.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

The success of Wheelmap did not come without challenges, some of which are associated with legal aspects. In further detail, as discussed with the initiative's representatives, networking with similar type of entities to achieve collective impact has not been easy or straightforward due to the fact that some of them considered them as competitors rather than collaborators. It took a lot of energy, discussion and explanations to help these entities understand that they had more in common and collaboration would benefit wheelchair users or strollers across the world.

Moreover, different legal frameworks across the EU – and globally – concerning accessibility provisions (what is marked as accessible in one country is not the same in another) as well as what is considered as disability across countries (even across the EU) have put extra challenges to Wheelmap, as to how these differences would be incorporated and addressed by the platform.

Finally, two challenges that currently the platform faces concern the questioning of the quality of the data incorporated on the platform by public stakeholders (municipalities, local authorities, etc.) who aim to use the platform because the data is collected by people rather than trained staff; and GDPR and data privacy rules that relate to the use of photos of places, etc. as these legal provisions limit the type of information that can be incorporated on the platform and help people with disabilities other than moving (e.g. sight related disabilities that can be assisted by the use of pictures or elders).

The issue of networking has been an important one for Wheelmap as without the contribution of other entities/initiatives the platform would not have been able to go international in such a scale and timing. The dedication of the Wheelmap team together with the support of the Ashoka network towards this end have been supportive. In this latter point, during the interview it was highlighted that the internationalisation process is a step-by-step process that takes time and efforts. Finding the "right" people and entities to work with in other countries is neither easy nor straightforward. But the support provided by experienced and well-connected intermediaries, like Ashoka, has been most beneficial in this end.

The issue of the different perception on accessibility and disability, as depicted in the different national/regional legal frameworks, as well as the issue of GDPR and data privacy are two points that the initiative is still working and advocating on European and global level.

Regarding the quality of the data, this is addressed through the involvement of big data sourced by millions of users across the world. The more users log on the platform and input and simultaneously validate the data provided by others, the more credible and updated the platform becomes.

2.48.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Through internationalisation Wheelmap accomplished to achieve increase in impact (more people using the tool, the better the information recorded and made available to others) as well as in outreach (the more people they achieved to serve through the expansion of user's communities brought together to offer their services to Wheelmap). Moreover, Wheelmap is making an impact on policy level and issue recognition, as through its global advocacy on wheelchair/stroller accessibility in places, elevators and escalators it discusses the point of accessibility and how it can be improved, but also what can be considered as a common accessibility standard across all countries or even further what is considered disability across the different countries.

Concerning future plans, currently Wheelmap offers real time information on two new types of accessibility: elevators and escalators which at the moment are mainly recorded in Germany but the team strives also to expand as points of information collection in other areas also. Moreover, the application also shares information with regards to whether a place is quiet, has automatic doors or if there is an induction loop for users with hearing aids (other types of disabilities).

Additionally, as discussed above, they have recently launched an international ambassador's programme that aims to inspire and activate others on the topics addressed by Wheelmap. To this end, the training they have already started putting together for the ambassadors will be further improved as Wheelmap aims to create a wide international advocacy network. And training will be important to ensure a minimum of common understanding on the topic among all ambassadors, how to network, how to advocate at different policy levels, etc.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, they aim to develop an international disability standard for websites and any other online source of information, on how to address different disabilities in a common, unified manner. The standard will concern the common description / use of words to describe/explain certain places (e.g. WC, bathroom, toilet, etc.) as well as what it means to be accessible (ramp, etc.).

2.49. Wise Greece

Name of company / entity	Wise Greece
Website	https://www.wisegreece.com/
Country	Greece
Legal status	Non-Profit Organisation
Main sector(s) of operations	Marketing of food products
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2015
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Countries: United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Norway, Cyprus and the USA

2.49.1. Overview

Wise Greece was established in 2013. Even though the country was undergoing an economic crisis at that time, Wise Greece started approaching producers, explaining them its vision, and sharing the idea of how this project could work. In this context, Wise Greece is a social enterprise with a double social cause. It supports small producers, by promoting their products in national and foreign markets, and targets socially vulnerable groups and the small family-owned businesses. Wise Greece transforms the profit from the sales into food donations for people in need. It also turns the profit into food supplies for covering the basic nutritional needs of unprivileged people. The variety of its products, almost 2.500 goods, helps Wise Greece to reach a wide consumer group. These Greek products are placed into various points of sale in Greece and abroad.

Wise Greece has a self-financing system as a **non-profit initiative**. In 2015, Wise Greece started to carry out transnational activities. It was the same year that it received the Award "Models of Excellence 2015″ by the President of the Greek Republic Mr. Pavlopoulos.

Its translational activities are conducted in cooperation with countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Norway, Cyprus and the USA. These transnational activities include trade relations based on the exportation of food products made in Greece. In the context of increasing its food exports, Wise Greece has achieved to grow its sales, by promoting Greek products and the Mediterranean diet abroad. In this way, Wise Greece maximises its social impact continues to provide basic food supplies to Social Groceries. The activity of Wise Greece also contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals for climate change, gender equality, zero hunger and economic growth.

2.49.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Wise Greece had to address the economic crisis of the country where it is established from the early beginning of its foundation. Due to this fact, Wise Greece met the challenges of lack in credibility because of the capital controls. Given that, it was rather difficult for Wise Greece to convince other countries about payment processes and the delivery of orders on time.

Furthermore, Wise Greece had to develop marketing strategies for promoting Greek products abroad, especially in regions where Greek products were not highly preferred in the market. This phenomenon was also identified with regards to the legal frameworks and the specific regulations of the targeted foreign country, and especially a non-EU country. For example, Wise Greece had to address high taxation rates when exporting alcoholic beverages to Scandinavian countries. The American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) also requires some differentiated kind of legal approvals that are associated with exports from Greece.

Finally, Wise Greece had to create fertile ground for introducing into the international market products such as the spoon sweets. It was often possible that Wise Greece's consumers had different eating habits, and some products were less promoted than others.

The Greek Community abroad helps Wise Greece via a kind of support that is mainly ethical. Given that social enterprises represent only the 10% of all the businesses in the EU, Wise Greece believes that social the engine for maximising social impact globally via the configuration of a common legal framework and a system of mutual assistance.

One of Wise Greece's biggest goal is achieved through transnational activities with foreign consumers around the world, gaining increased market share. The key milestone in setting up those transnational activities was provided through compelling steps, by building solid and effective transnational activities. By increasing its sales, Wise Greece achieved to support further food donations to Social Groceries, Soup Kitchens, Orphanages, etc. However, non-EU countries have created some obstacles in the trans nationalisation process because of their customs and the different existing regulations.

2.49.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Wise Greece embraces the idea that a digital platform can document all the social businesses analytically or even better construct a social impact system. The legislation of an EU regulation for social businesses will allow the measurement of their social impact in the future.

In 2021, Wise Greece plans to add 80 new producers with innovative and award-winning products and to expand its activities in order to provide essential food supplies to more Social Groceries, Soup Kitchens, Orphanages and families in need. Until today, Wise Greece has exported to 8 countries and has created a stable collaboration with 100 small producers selling more than 2.500 products from all over Greece.

2.50. YAPS

Name of company / entity	YAPS
Website	http://www.yaps.al/yaps/?lang=en
Country	Albania
Legal status	Social Enterprise
Main sector(s) of operations	Mail delivery services, Cleaning, and Maintenance sector
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2001
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	YAPS Albania has replicated the business model from YAPS in Azerbaijan (Georgia). Employees in Tirana received training from the staff operating in Azerbaijan and with the close help of UNESCO in Tirana.

2.50.1. Overview

YAPS in Albania followed the successful initiative established by UNESCO, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and Oil Consortium (AIOC) Shell, MOBIL and BP, and the UK Embassy in Azerbaijan. The framework in which YAPS Georgia was created is associated with the military conflict over Nagorno Karabakh, when state economy collapsed and was replaced by market economy. It was at that moment when many people were displaced around the country, 70% of them being women, children and the elderly. YAPS acted as a strengthening mechanism against the deprivation of basic support for the majority of institutions caring for disadvantaged children and youth. Given that children from orphanages were living a life on the street, by selling commodities, washing cars, begging and even stealing, the main objective of YAPS was to bring together notable actors from the public and private sector in order to mobilise funding resources.

While most social enterprises in Albania are usually built upon previously existing non-profit enterprises, YAPS was established initially as a business venture with a social consciousness. The services offered are in three areas: Cleaning and Maintenance, Mail and parcel delivery, and administrative services (Call centre).

YAPS Albania started its operations with the aid of 6 Board members, including UNICEF, Vodafone, Coca-Cola Bottling Albania, Boga associates, Ada group, and Albanian Children Foundation. It employs mainly disadvantaged children and youth, in particular disabled children, and orphans as well as people from Roma community. YAPS employs 100 people from Roma and Egyptian minorities, orphans, people with disability. It has over 200 customers and offers mainly two kinds of services: delivery of mails and cleaning. The employees have the opportunity to find a job and to follow some University classes, once they complete their collaboration with YAPS.

Overall, 500 people have passed from YAPS as workers and accomplished to find job later in large corporations in Albania, such as Philippe Morris. YAPS help its employees to enhance their self-esteem and their attitudes about themselves. For example, 8 YAPS employees have entered universities, 3 of them plan to start their own business, most of the couriers have obtained driver licenses, and 10 of the young people attended the courses on management of private business, and in English.

YAPS's main customers include board members, embassies, and hospitals. Some of its clients are Vodafone Albania, Tirana Business Park, U.S. Embassy, and Embassy of the Netherlands, while the enterprise holds 13% of the cleaning sector and 12% of the delivery market in Albania.

One of YAPS's main objectives is to re-integrate vulnerable groups into the mainstream of society as productive individuals, who can acquire new knowledge and skills and strengthen the reputation of the entity vis-a-vis founders, donors, the government, potential clients, and the mass media.

2.50.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

YAPS was replicated by UNESCO, following the example of YAPS in Georgia. Even though its founders could not structure self-sufficient premises, the international aid provided by the UN was key for the establishment of YAPS's services in the country. Given that, YAPS received some basic, but essential, know-how of creating its own network in Albania from a global perspective and achieved to guarantee seed funding from private donors (such as Vodafone), which were already successfully cooperating with YAPS Georgia for relevant purposes.

Currently, YAPS is considered a competitive company together with other 25 enterprises of the cleaning sector, while its delivery services have to meet the high standards set by other 32 companies of the same sector. For this reason, YAPS on a regular basis provides training and support to its employees to improve their skills and competences, so as to then improve its services as well as improve the confidence people have in themselves.

YAPS collects lessons learned from its employees and advocates vulnerable groups capacity for social inclusion to be recognised, appreciated, and considered in policy and programme development adjustments. Moreover, YAPS collaborates with the Bocconi School of Management and external trainers and co-organise short capacity-building programmes for improving its staff's skills and competences.

Finally, YAPS is a successful business enterprise. The payment process is made through contracts with the clients, consisting mainly of hospitals and embassies. The revenue thus produced is based upon contract reliability, which enables YAPS to avoid risks of cash flow and to ensure its profits derived from both cleaning and delivery services.

2.50.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

The enterprise supports the idea that social enterprises plan their own strategy for reaching out their goals by reducing their dependency on funding support provided by charities. The manpower that constitutes the board members of a social enterprise can take on internal audit procedures, to reduce external intervention that is associated with non-members, and to encourage private actors to play an active role in initiatives that can boost the Social Economy sector.

Having said that, YAPS for the past 20 years has had an objective to achieve corporate support via the provision of high-quality services and creating social impact, **attaining to sustain its operations in the long term.**

In the future, YAPS aims to be replicated in Serbia, North Macedonia, and in Kosovo. The main activity that it intends to replicate is related to the delivery services.

2.51. YouthBank International

YOUTHBANK INTERNATIONAL®

Name of company / entity	YouthBank International
Website	https://www.youthbankinternational.org/
Country	United Kingdom
Legal status	Charitable limited company
Main sector(s) of operations	Young people (15–25-year-old)
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2001
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Armenia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Italy, Egypt, Georgia, Honduras, India, Ireland, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, North Macedonia, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, Turkey, Ukraine, US

2.51.1. Overview

With Participatory Grantmaking as an instrument, the YouthBank Model seeks to enable young people to take charge of their future and the future of their community. It is a unique method of involving young people in community activities. It shifts power, money and attitudes to demonstrate the value of participatory grant-making at a grassroots level based on a simple, flexible and transferable idea: YouthBanks are funds run by young people to support practical, youth-led projects that address issues that matter to them and improve their communities.

YouthBank International (YBI) develops and supports a growing global network of young people who use the YouthBank model to create practical positive change in their communities. Over the last seven years, YouthBank International has worked with local host entities and donors to develop and support the growth of over 314 YouthBanks operating in 25 countries, distributing 7 million GBP. The outcome of the YouthBank process is a series of defined agendas for change determined by young people that are addressed and brought to life in funded projects. Young people learn how to share power, make decisions that have a consequence, think creatively, solve problems, work in a team(s), organise events and share their story of change.

2.51.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

The YouthBank infrastructure has strengthened over the last couple of years with the use of greater levels of online resources to manage many of the administration and operational functions. The inability to travel has forced the entity to prioritise work to bring the YouthBank process online. Significant work has gone on over the past eighteen months to reframe the YouthBank process into a new 5 phase 18 step process.

The entity has to find creative ways to balance important administrative tasks with time for strategic development.

One of the biggest challenges for YouthBank International is to find a broad range of suitable investors who believe in the values of supporting youth-led decision making. This is why,

YouthBank International is seeking to create a funding platform with sub-sites for the individual YouthBanks, where they can upload pictures and videos, so that people can see how funded projects are addressing their agenda for change and donate money.

YouthBank International is not a donor themselves but encourage others to invest in the values-led approach (charities, funders, youth serving NGOs, individuals). YouthBank International is registered in the UK, as a charitable limited liability company. Post Brexit it may face restrictions without a registration in another EU country and are currently discussing how such a registration can be completed.

Role of technology

Technology plays a big role in YouthBank International's day-to-day activities. A full range of the Google suite of tools, a wide range of apps to engage partner entities in discussion, as well as additional tools for collaborative online work are all utilised. Where evidence is required the use of the padlet app has been creatively used to encourage a variety of responses. An additional benefit of online meetings is that practitioners are able to show their working environment, and other relevant aspects of funded projects. Where young people are involved in training, translators are often required to make simultaneous translations and act as the bridge between young people and trainers.

2.51.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

YouthBank International is a growing network that seeks to offer authentic leadership and community building opportunities to young people and to increase and deepen the impact of partner entities. In attracting new partners, it is important that the values of supporting youth-led work, ceding decision-making power and encouraging young people to set their own agenda for change are upheld. The focus on neighbourhoods and local communities as the primary locations for YouthBanks to thrive needs to be protected and investment focused on. The simplicity and attractiveness of the model is in its commitment to putting decision making into young people's hands, getting new or under-recognised voices around the table to explore what really matters to them and then decide on how to spend their own budget, enabling their peers to innovate and create their own solutions.

YouthBank International should consider allocating some of its already stretched human resources to develop the ideas for a funding platform that would be available for local YouthBank's to use that links their agenda for change to people from their villages, towns and regions who have moved away for work or study. With core central functions already defined, efforts to broaden the YouthBank team to provide opportunities for new associates to deliver YouthBank training must remain a priority.

2.52. Zeitpolster

Name of company / entity	Zeitpolster
Website	https://www.zeitpolster.com/
Country	Austria
Legal status	Ltd. Company and association
Main sector(s) of operations	Elderly, Care
Starting date of Cross-border activities	2020
Other countries you are active in/ entities in other countries you cooperate with	Liechtenstein, Germany

2.52.1. Overview

Zeitpolster ("time cushion") is an innovative model, that connects people in need of support with younger "helpers" through a "time credit" system. The "helpers" support elderly people, families with children or people with disabilities through various smaller services like e. g. gardening, housework, shopping or companionship. In return, they receive a time credit which they can redeem later when they need support themselves. The model includes a mechanism that provides "guarantees" so that helpers - if the network should dissolve or if they want to leave - can exchange time credits to EUR. Zeitpolster operates as a social franchise system that offers comprehensive manuals, support (community building, administrative processes, marketing) to potential partners. Currently there is a total of 250 helpers active in Austria. The online platform for administering time credits is managed centrally. Zeitpolster has already been replicated in Liechtenstein and is currently looking for replication partners in Germany.

2.52.2. Challenges, Legal Barriers, Mitigation and Support

Zeitpolster faces quite a bit of scepticism around their new approach. The Zeitpolster system has been established to fill the gap between private commercial offers, public offers and volunteer offers and to "activate" new communities of helpers. Although Zeitpolster showed that it attracts new groups of helpers, it is still perceived as "competition" by important players in the sector. It is very hard to overcome such barriers that are based on deeply rooted ideologies. Even after years of building relationships with key players Zeitpolster is still looking for an effective strategy to overcome this barrier. However, we can already point to several successful collaborations. Depending on the country, it can be hard to establish their project, because of legal requirements. In Austria it was necessary to sort out legal controversies around the new model in court. There was no possibility to "submit" the model and get it signed off by legal and financial authorities. Thus, Zeitpolster had to invest their own time and effort to figure out all legal steps and requirements.

Ashoka has been a big supporter for Zeitpolster, in order to develop a bigger network and find advice and counsels. Also, various entrepreneurs have been supporting Zeitpolster in the sense of connecting them to different individuals and entities, which enabled them to develop their own processes and relations. Partners are i.e., the business agency of Vienna, the federal ministry and Austria business services.

Role of technology

Technology is a crucial tool - especially regarding the online platform for administering 'time-accounts', match-making processes, and important personal data. There have been initial plans of developing software for Zeitpolster, but the company came to the conclusion, that it would be better and less expensive to use and adapt the existing software. The next step will be to offer online learning platforms for target groups 55+ years.

2.52.3. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Zeitpolster is trying to establish a transnational network with a focus on educational training in their context, which is planned to be digitalised. This will also enforce the growth of their network, which will cost a lot of work and engagement. Therefore, Zeitpolster is currently developing more partnerships, which will enable them to apply for more funding.

Moreover, they are planning to scale their work in Germany and scout other countries and potential partners in Europe. Zeitpolster recommends putting sufficient work into preparing a transfer, in case the model hasn't been implemented in other countries yet. One of the core needs for that, are good networks and systematic support during the transfer process. Also, it should become easier to scale established systems and practices into other regions and countries. The political discourse should lead to making that easier so that government leaders etc. accept the established practice the way it is without making the scaling more complicated. That would be a big step in showing, how important social innovation is, and it would help many social entrepreneurs to implement their work and scale it. Lots of initiatives do not have the awareness that scaling is a very valuable option. By opting not to scale they miss an important opportunity to professionalise their entity.

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