



# Social Innovation Training for Virtual Work Based Learning

## Newsletter 4, October 2019

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This fourth and final newsletter for the COOP-IN project reflects on the key outputs and outcomes from the project over the last two years as well as key highlights from the multiplier events and final conference held in Newcastle upon Tyne in September 2019. There is also a thank you from the project partners.

### Key Project Outputs and Outcomes

The COOP-IN project started in October 2017 with the first project partner meeting in Santander, Spain, hosted by Documenta. At this meeting, the seven partners set out their plans to develop a social innovation toolkit and an online serious educational game, supported by a self-assessment tool for businesses and an offline training toolkit for VET professionals.

Over the last two years the partners have put these plans into practice by producing the following:

- A series of national research reports which summarise the key outcomes from a needs analysis undertaken with businesses in each partner country. These reports explore perceptions of social innovation, the extent and nature of social innovation activity and the learning and skills needs associated with introducing and implementing social innovations at work
- A social innovation toolkit consisting of six modules based on themes which map onto the outcomes from the needs analysis. The themes include what is social innovation, bringing the future forward, moving from opportunity to action and assessing the impact of social innovation. Each module consists of a knowledge base (which provides an applied review of current thinking and practice), a glossary of key terms and a set of case studies
- An online serious educational game. The game, called Curiosity (<http://game.coopinproject.eu/en>), highlights the ways in which social innovation is appropriate to the needs of a range of different businesses and organisations and

provides an opportunity for managers and leaders to develop an understanding of different aspects of social innovation and reflect on the skills required to manage the journey from idea to action

- An offline training toolkit for VET professionals. The toolkit consists of 28 training activities which can be used by VET professionals in supporting social innovation
- A social innovation assessment tool. This enables businesses and organisations to identify strengths and areas for development in introducing and implementing social innovations, as well as providing suggestions for developing action plans.

The outcomes from the project can be accessed at <http://coopinproject.eu/en/>. If you would like to use any of the learning materials or simply require any further information about the project please contact Leigh Sear at [leigh.sear@sfedl.co.uk](mailto:leigh.sear@sfedl.co.uk).

## Insights from the Multiplier Events

Between May and September 2019, five multiplier events were held by the project partners. Attended by 164 businesses, VET professionals and business support professionals, the events highlighted:

- An interest in social innovation given its relative newness as a concept within current thinking and practice
- The importance of developing relationships with others as a way of acquiring the resources required to introduce and implement social innovations at work
- The need for support in introducing and implementing social

innovations at work – such as support from either another part of the business or external agencies such as mentors or a business adviser

- A value in the learning materials, such as the social innovation toolkit, as a way of developing an understanding of social innovation and the associated challenges and opportunities
- An interest in the gamification of learning as a way of developing an understanding of social innovation although it was suggested that this approach may appeal to certain groupings of managers and leaders.

*The Multiplier Events in progress ...*



Erasmus+

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## Highlights from the Final Conference

The final conference for the COOP-IN project took place in Newcastle upon Tyne on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019. Attended by nearly 40 people, the event provided an opportunity not only to showcase the outcomes from the project but also reflect on the experiences of three businesses who have exploited opportunities related to social innovation in the development of their businesses.



The three guest speakers were: Colin Herron from [Zero Carbon Futures](#), Beverley Sherratt and Jo Cameron from [Launchpad HR](#) and Robert Ashton from the [Barefoot Entrepreneur](#). All three reflected on their experiences on exploiting

opportunities for social innovation. These were: at a sectoral/industry level to change behaviours towards carbon use; as managers and leaders in a small business in offering a different type of HR service to a different group of customers; and as a social entrepreneur making a difference to groups who face challenges in achieving their plans. The experiences of the guest speakers were used to create a set of questions which could be discussed by the participants in break-out groups.

*Colin Herron CBE*



*Beverley and Jo*



*Robert Ashton*



The key highlights from the final conference included:

- The importance of reaching consensus on a definition of social innovation
- The need for a set of personal 'enterprising' skills to be able to cope with the increasing dynamism of change in the economy and society
- The importance of being 'unreasonable', pushing boundaries and asking questions in identifying opportunities and creating an urgency around the need for change and innovation
- The need for time to 'bring the future forward' as a way of identifying opportunities for social innovation. It was perceived as a critical activity but one which tends not to be encouraged within a wide range of businesses - the learning materials within the online serious educational game were perceived as a valuable in supporting such learning 'on/at the job'
- The importance of networks, relationships and collaborating with others in managing the journey from idea to action - e.g. in acquiring resources to implement a social innovation
- The importance of investing in learning and skills development in understanding potential choices in introducing and implementing social innovation.

As with the multiplier events, there was a great deal of interest in the gamification of learning through [Curiosity](#) and the potential opportunities for the game in engaging non-traditional groups of learners.



### And Finally ...

The project team are grateful to all those businesses and organisations that have shown an interest in the project over the last two years and provided their time to support the development of the various learning materials and resources. Your contribution is greatly appreciated as it has helped to create a set of materials and resources which will hopefully make a difference to those businesses that use them to understand more about social innovation and its value to their business.

#### *The COOP-IN Project Partners*



Please visit our [project website](#) or [Facebook page](#), where you can find out more about the project and links to other resources and materials on social innovation.