



European Citizenship Awards

Silver Stag Scotland CIC

Description of the nominee:

We are a social enterprise in Scotland called Scottish Silver Stag CIC. It has been set up as a C.I.C. and we have designed and patented a tartan with STAND International an international NGO. It represents and raises awareness for those children, young people and communities who have experienced disadvantage and life limiting opportunity. Any surplus we make is invested into providing life changing opportunities for those at the extreme levels of poverty in a number of countries including Scotland, Eastern Europe and West Africa. The tartan is being marketed as a "tartan with a cause" to try and distinguish it from the other 11500 tartans registered and we currently have around 40-50 tartan products made. The range of products includes soft furnishings, tableware, jewellery, clothing and bags. All products are made locally in Scotland, thus minimising the carbon footprint whilst helping to support and sustain local Scottish craftspeople.

Alongside our tartan products we make soap and candles. These are made in Scotland by the young people we work with, many of who have experienced homelessness, poor mental health and drug/alcohol addiction

Impact achieved:

In the first 18 months of trading we developed over 50 products and within the first year we had a turn over circa £125000. As a Community Interest Company the profit is reinvested into the communities that we support so we used our first year profit to support 35 refugee and asylum seeking families in Scotland and used the remainder to support our partner in Ghana to buy a farm where they will grow rice and sell in the local market. Those employed in the farm are local disabled adults and also women who have been abandoned by their husbands and have dependent children. We also used some of the profit to set up a micro financing scheme with a training workshop for women who have been abandoned by their husbands to learn to sew and make bags for the local market so that they would then be able to afford to send their children to school. For us this was a better option than simply paying for the children to go to school as it gave power and control back to the families.

In addition to the above we continue to work with socially and economically disadvantaged young people and adults in Scotland. Some of these have shown an interest in learning candle making and soap making skills and they are then employed to manufacture products from our soap and candle range

What makes the initiative innovative?

The idea is that socially and economically disadvantaged people help other socially and economically disadvantaged people help other hurting people. The idea exemplifies the idea of breaking down geographical, cultural and social boundaries by using a social enterprise model which transcends prejudice, greed and typical gender stereotypes to create a self-sustaining business. By using national culture and heritage ideas [tartan] it uses these this unique product to capture the imagination of the consumer and encourage them to shop ethically.

The idea combines the model of a social enterprise with a social firm and then targets customers to become ethical consumers ensuring a more balanced economic model. As a Community Interest Company [CIC] then the surplus is automatically reinvested into helping address the issues of poverty and discrimination.

Contribution to European values:

The project has contributed to restoring people's human dignity and providing them with a way out of poverty whilst at the same time raised people's aspirations and challenged the perception society has of those who have no financial or social capital.

Our experience has consistently shown that those in Scotland who experience additional pressures of life, are no less interested in the idea of expanding social justice with disadvantaged individuals and communities than any other group of individuals. Indeed in some ways they are more acutely aware of the injustices both they and others in similar communities in other parts of the world experience. The main barrier those in the UK face when offering their assistance to address these injustices has been the discrimination that some organisations have projected on to them in becoming responsible citizens because of their personal experience of disadvantage. As a result tackling injustice has, in the main remained an activity of a particular economic/social group of people within the UK.

The core group of those who become involved in Silver Stag have themselves been at the edges of citizenship and as such have an acute personal understanding of being excluded from citizenship life within their own communities. At the core of our philosophy is that people should be the objects of transformation rather than its subjects and thus excluded, homeless people in Scotland without excess finance to donate, or the usual life securities like homes and families to fall back on can use their skills to assist their fellow man.

Website or promotional materials:

www.silverstag.scot