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NRN CASE STUDY

Social Enterprise in Rural Communities

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in Rural Areas.

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara

LEADER

Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government

1. Introduction

In Ireland social enterprises are seen primarily as non-profit organisations driven by social objectives. Irish thinking on the social economy has been influenced by US and European ideas about the nature of social enterprises as organisations. In the US, the activities of non-profit organisations, philanthropy, social entrepreneurship, corporate social responsibility and social innovation are all associated with the concepts of social enterprise and the social economy. In Europe, there is more of a focus on the organisational forms of social enterprises, such as mutual organisations, co-operatives, and associations, and there has been greater emphasis on their specific character and value and their governance structures.

Almost half of the Irish population (46%) live outside the five major urban centres. Rural areas have been severely affected by the downturn in the economy, such as high levels of unemployment, out-migration and social exclusion. The impact of the recession on the private sector has led to the closure of many businesses and services while cutbacks in government expenditure have impacted on services to citizens. This is the context in which existing rural-based social enterprises have to operate and which has stimulated the emergence of new initiatives in recent years. The objectives of this case study are to provide short descriptions of a cross-section of rural-based social enterprises, to assess the critical success factors and barriers facing them, and to discuss some of the lessons to be learned from these initiatives.

2. Context

Social enterprises are regarded as significant sources of both employment growth and service provision across the European Union (EU). New legislation has emerged in European states to promote this specific organisational form[1] and political interest in the sector is also evident in the evolving relationship between social enterprises and the state and in the emergence of the social economy and social innovation as key components of the European Commission's Europe 2020 strategy.[2]

In Ireland, the perceived significance of social enterprises is reflected in the commitment to promoting the development of a vibrant and effective social enterprise sector in the Programme for Government 2011-2016 and the Action Plan for Jobs 2012. In the first government-sponsored review of the sectoral opportunities, and policy issues, for social enterprise in Ireland carried out by Forfás in 2013, this sector is seen as:

> a small but growing part of the enterprise base… that has the potential to deliver economic potential … with the appropriate enabling and promotional effort (Forfás, 2013:2)

Forfás defines social enterprises as non-profit organisations driven by social objectives, separate from government, where at least part of the income generated is from trading activity and the surplus reinvested in social objectives. A review of rural social enterprises in England in 2011 found that they are playing an increasingly prominent role in providing services to rural communities.[3] Three types of social enterprise activities were identified: community service businesses; rural economic collaboration; and community development enterprises. Rural Economic Collaboration (REC) social enterprise involves groups and individual businesses procuring common services or jointly marketing similar type of products e.g. collaborative farmer's markets. Community Development Enterprises (CDEs) operate through providing broader social and economic benefits to their host communities by engaging in commercial activities. Community Service Businesses (CSBs) typically provide goods or services which the private sector or state no longer provide and generally trade within a defined geographical region or a defined interest group.

[1] For example, in 1991 the Italian parliament adopted a law creating a specific legal form for 'social co-operatives'.
[2] The EC launched the Social Business Initiative in 2011. Currently, social enterprises are said to account for 6% of total GDP; the Europe 2020 Strategy projects a rise to 9%; see also Bode et al., 2011.
[3] Plunkett Foundation, 2011 p. 4. See http://www.plunkett.co.uk/newsandmedia/news-item.cfm/newsid/595

3. Rural Social Enterprise – Some Examples

Each of the five social enterprises included in this short case study demonstrate elements of both the CDE and CSB types. They are CDEs in that all, to a greater or lesser extent, provide broader social and economic benefits to the wider community by engaging in commercial activities. They can be seen as CSBs because they provide goods and services in a defined geographical region and/or to a defined interest group. Two of them provide goods and services that are no longer provided by state or market. Each is briefly described in the following sections, with a specific focus on identifying the critical success factors and challenges facing them. The links between these social enterprises and the Rural Development Programme (RDP) are discussed as well as the potential for replication and the key lessons learnt.

3.1 Ring a Link Community Rural Transport Service

Ring a Link (RAL) social enterprise was established in 2001. The primary objective of RAL is to alleviate rural isolation by providing a community rural transport service to a geographical area, encompassing counties Kilkenny, South Tipperary, and Carlow. RAL is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status, has a voluntary board of 17 directors representative of three county transport working groups (county based voluntary groups with a specific focus on transport issues); statutory authorities; and the local development company (Kilkenny Leader Partnership) that has responsibility for implementing the RDP. RAL's revenue is generated through a combination of market income from passenger fares, participation in the free travel pass scheme and other statutory programmes such as the Community Services[4] and Rural Transport programmes. The board meets approximately eight times a year and there is a management sub-committee of four appointed directors in place which meet as and when required. The staff of RAL includes a manager, two full-time and one part-time employees and 12 drivers (six of whom are full-time). RAL is unique in its implementation of a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service model, using a technology which enables routes to be planned according to user demand. The adoption of this technology is a result of this social enterprise's participation in a variety of transnational transport projects.

[4] Community Services Programme provides supports to community businesses to deliver local services to their communities and to create employment opportunities for people from disadvantaged groups. https://www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/CommunityServicesProgramme

RAL operates a travel dispatch centre, incorporating a number of integrated software systems which help organise trip bookings and vehicle dispatch. Each bus has an on board system which provides journey information including details on route variations and passenger information. All staff receive regular training on the operation of these software systems. RAL owns 10 minibuses and operates approximately 64 weekly services. All services operate a free travel pass scheme and offer a standardised single adult fare. Traded income is derived from fare paying passengers who comprised approximately 46% of the total service users in 2011; an increase of 10% on 2010.[5]

According to its manager, one of RAL's main strengths is its voluntary board which he describes as being diverse and ambitious with a strong common commercial focus. RAL actively participates in established regional, national and European transport networks. The extent of this networking is evident in the project's participation in a variety of EU projects, and both the chairman and manager are members of the national Rural Transport Network (RTN) Executive Policy Committee.[6] The board regularly reviews the service routes in terms of passenger volumes, cost and quality of the services and approves any changes necessary to improve the efficiency of service delivery. This commitment to monitoring to ensure efficiency and quality, and the capacity to make adjustments where necessary, is a key strength of this social enterprise.

The local development company, Kilkenny Leader Partnership which operates the RDP, was instrumental in supporting the development of RAL at the outset. They are credited with encouraging a network of local voluntary and statutory representatives from across three counties and have been decribed as the original driving force behind RAL.[7] There is ongoing advisory and mentoring support from the company through its continued representation at board level.

The most significant challenges faced by RAL include the uncertainty surrounding future levels of state support for the rural transport programme. There was a reduction in statutory funding in 2012 and 2013 and this, coupled with rising fuel costs, has necessitated the need to focus on future efficiencies. There is also concern about ability to secure route licenses for demand responsive services, ongoing difficulties in securing capital funding, as well as increased competition for scarce statutory resources and the high levels of bureaucracy and administration associated with securing these resources.

[5] RAL Annual Report, 2011.
[6] The RTN comprises delegates from each of the 35 National Rural Transport Programmes and liaises directly with the Department of Transport.
[7] Intel, (2007).

3.2 CareBright Rural Home Elder Care Service

CareBright was formerly known as Rural Community Care Network (RCCN) and was initiated to respond to a service gap and provide employment in 1999 by the local development company Ballyhoura Development Ltd (BDL), which operates the RDP. It provides home-based elder care services in counties Cork, Tipperary and Limerick. CareBright is a company limited by guarantee which has a voluntary board of ten directors, holds charitable status and derives income from a combination of sources including: the Health Service Executive (HSE) contracts, national lottery, philanthropy and client contributions for homecare provision.

Initially, CareBright (RCCNCL until 2012) provided a home visitation service and concentrated on providing Red Cross accredited training to the unemployed by participating in specific active labour training programmes. In 2002, RCCN became part of the national Social Economy Programme[1] and established a new company called RCCN Caring Ltd (RCCNCL). Four nurse-managers were appointed to deliver homecare services. The CEO of BDL, who was also the chairperson of RCCNCL, together with the full time voluntary work of a member of the board, initially managed these nurse-managers and coordinated the work.

In 2005, RCCNCL became involved in a HSE pilot scheme to deliver home care to older people in their homes.[2] From 2006, it expanded its profile of services to a fully professional home and personal support/ care service. In 2011, it had a turnover of €4m, provided an estimated 213,000 home care hours to 500 clients and had substantial reserves. It had a combined workforce of approximately 260 workers including a general manager, six senior nurse-managers, chiropodists and approximately 250 carers.[3] BDL continues to provide its board with mentoring and business support. The general manager and two board members have participated in an RDP supported Governance for Social Enterprises Programme.

RCCNCL was faced with two significant challenges in 2011: a loss of revenue associated with the fact that they were no longer eligible for support under the Community Services Programme,[4] and an unsuccessful tender to the HSE for the provision of the home care package. The introduction of new public tendering processes was not easy for the organisation and the loss of income associated with the unsuccessful tender (though contracts for existing clients continued) caused significant difficulties, including potential job losses. While these challenges serve to illustrate the danger of being over-reliant on statutory programmes and contracts, RCNNCL, by virtue of having reserves in place, was able to respond by taking time to review the organisation, including its business model, governance structure, human resources and service delivery.

This led, in 2012, to the adoption of a more commercial focus when RCCNCL was rebranded as CareBright and board membership was refreshed to include new members with commercial business skills. It has since been awarded the Q Mark and purchased a site in August 2013 for the purpose of developing a centre of excellence for care and education in home care. It has developed a new website and is exploring the possibility of a strategic alliance with another similar non-profit organisation for the purpose of developing economies of scale to enable it and similar social enterprises to compete more effectively with others in the sector.

A key factor in the success of CareBright in building to its current capacity and strength is its ability to manage change. Over a period of almost 15 years, it has demonstrated a capacity to adjust its services so as to be relevant and responsive to statutory and market opportunities. This is related to strong leadership capacity and ongoing support from BDL, as well as the availability of social entrepreneurial skills and strategic planning capacity at board level.

[8] The national Social Economy Programme was launched in 1999.

[9] The Home Care Package is an administrative scheme operated by the HSE and supports the provision of home based care service to enable older persons to live at home independently.

[10] Includes part-time and full-time workers.

[11] The Community Services Programme (CSP) supports community businesses to deliver local services to their communities and to create employment opportunities for people from disadvantaged groups. The programme is funded by the Department of Social Protection.

3.3 Lisdoonan Recreational Development Association Ltd. (LRDA)

Limited opportunities for local people to come together, and the danger of losing local identity, were two of driving forces for the initial development of this social enterprise located in Lisdoonan near Carrickmacross in County Monaghan. LRDA was established in 1993. It is structured as a company limited by guarantee and holds charitable status and is currently generating income from trading, statutory support and local voluntary fundraising.

Following an extensive process of community consultation, LRDA's first venture was a local community centre to facilitate greater social interaction in the community. An extensive campaign of local fund raising included securing €100+ from approximately 75% of local households, the organisation of a vintage rally[12] and other fund-raising events, and sponsorship from local businesses. This local fundraising strategy combined with funding from the local development company, Monaghan Integrated Development (MID), the EU Peace and Reconciliation Programme and local authority grants enabled the promoters to purchase a site and build a community centre by 1998. This centre incorporates a meeting room, a sports hall, pool room, licensed bar and a fully equipped kitchen and is the venue for a variety of local social functions including family and sporting events.

Encouraged by the success of the centre, LRDA developed a range of additional local services to the community. One of the first of these was a day care service for older people, providing hot food and social contact twice monthly. In 1999, the association was approached by the HSE to consider the development of a social housing initiative. The committee researched and visited projects elsewhere and set up a separate company –Lisdoonan District Housing Association Ltd. With the financial support of the Department of the Environment, Fortview Housing was completed in 2003. This is a complex of 14

[12] This vintage rally is an annual event and continues to raises a considerable amount of revenue for a range of local charities.

two-bedroomed houses for older persons with a separate communal space that houses laundry facilities and a guest room. In 2005, in order to encourage young families to remain in the community, LRDA built six affordable housing units in the village which were funded solely by the profits generated from the community centre. The surplus generated from this enterprise was subsequently re-invested in the development of another initiative, namely a village supermarket facility with approximately 3,500 sq. ft of retail and storage space, along with four other commercial units.

The construction of this facility, aimed at stemming the drift to local towns for consumer services, received support from the International Fund for Ireland, the Community Enterprise Trust and Monaghan Integrated Development (MID) which operates the RDP. Following an unsuccessful attempt to secure a suitable private tenant for the supermarket, LRDA, with the support of MID, became part of the Community Services Programme (CSP) by establishing a community shop in 2007. Participation in the CSP allows LRDA to employ a manager and five full-time equivalents workers, including people with disabilities. The lease of commercial space to two other businesses (hairdresser and beautician) provides rental income as well as encouraging shop customers to purchase their services. Part of the community shop includes an in-store dining area which provides an important social outlet for many local people living on their own, such as elderly farmers. Food produced on the shop premises is also delivered to the day care centre and the Fortview houses. The shop also provides an outlet for the sale of local produce, and the advertisement of a range of local services, to the wider community. Thus, this complex has become a focal point and source of solidarity for the local community, especially those who are older and less mobile.

Among the strengths of LRDA are its innovative community response to local needs, the exceptional leadership and social entrepreneurial ethos of the board, and their proven capacity to generate traded income. The board are, however, cautious about future projects. In light of recent declining revenue from the community centre, and the possibility of future cuts in public funding, they are re-focused on fundraising to build up reserves, as there are no debts related to the community recreational facility and housing units. LRDA regards the CSP as being critical for the long-term sustainability of the community shop and the retention of its staff. Some of the challenges for future development include the need to replenish the board with new members and skill sets, as most of the original members remain. Out-migration as a consequence of the downturn of the economy means that the pool of potential new members is quite small. A further significant challenge is the lack of adequate broadband infrastructure which is seen as an obstacle to future local business development.

3.4 Frenchpark and Districts Childcare Ltd (FDCL)

Frenchpark Community Playgroup, located in North Roscommon, was initially formed in 1995 by four local professional women, with a diversity of skills (including legal and accountancy) to provide an accessible and affordable local childcare service. The group subsequently registered as a not for profit company, limited by guarantee, achieved charitable status, and are formally known as Frenchpark and Districts Childcare Ltd. FDCL derives a traded income from fees for childcare provision, training courses and music lessons provided in the centre and this accounted for approximately 19% of the total income in 2012. This social enterprise, which employs 49 workers,[13] is also funded through the Community Employment (CE) programme, CSP, the National Childcare Investment programme (NCIP), and local fundraising.

FDCL initially offered a mobile playgroup service. In 1996, the group, with the advice of the then regional statutory health board, invested €35,000 in the refurbishment of a local church hall and moved to a fixed premises. The voluntary board of ten, which includes service users, secured additional funding under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (2000-2006). This allowed FDCL to progress from a part-time service catering for 20 children in a local church hall in 1999, to offering a crèche, full day-care and after school service, catering for approximately 140 children from the ages of 3 months to 12 years in 2012. It operates from a new purpose built childcare facility on a local community owned site which was provided

[13] Including participants in CE and CSP.

by the local authority. Additional marketing and business development support was sourced from the local development company, Roscommon Integrated Development Company (RIDC).

This social enterprise prides itself on being able to provide a high quality and affordable local childcare service and has been innovative and forward looking in developing best practice. In 2011, FDCL was awarded the NCNA[14] All Ireland Centre of Excellence and was one of the first crèche facilities in Ireland to be awarded a Green Flag that same year. In 2012 the centre was awarded Level 4 (Highest Level) in Siolta which is the national quality framework for Early Childhood Education in Ireland. The service is open five days a week from 8.30am to 6pm throughout the year and provides baby, toddler and full day care pre-school services. Children from the local national schools also avail of an after school service and homework club. In addition to this, FDCL has also been approved to offer the Childcare Employment and Training Support (CET) scheme which provides childcare supports for participants in vocational training and educational courses.

A key strength is the capacity of the board and management to be target-driven and successful in accessing a range of state supports. FDCL has also shown leadership and innovation in responding to the challenge of developing and implementing appropriate human resource policies for its workforce of 49 in the highly regulated childcare sector. This has included the provision of ongoing training in childcare, health and safety, child protection and specific curricula for pre-school children. In addition to this, management have implemented a formalised system of staff appraisal and staff training in order to maintain high quality standards.

3.5 Loughmore Co-operative Shop and Tea Rooms

In late 2011, in the small rural village of Loughmore, in North Tipperary, two local women, concerned about social isolation and wishing to provide a much-needed shop for the villagers[15] decided to open a tearoom and shop. Rather than operate as a private enterprise, they set about researching the steps required to develop a social enterprise by contacting the British based Plunkett Foundation and arranged to visit five community shops in rural England and to set themselves up as a co-operative. They identified an attractive premises in the centre of the village, ideally located for a teashop/cafe and shop. Armed with advice and experiences from the established rural social enterprises they had visited, the women approached the local development company, North Tipperary Leader Partnership (NTLP) which operates the RDP. They availed of a range of business planning training and advice services, which they consider to have been instrumental in the progression of their plans.

[14] National Children's Nurseries Association.
[15] The community had been without a local shop for almost six years by this time.

Their first venture, in 2011, was to organize a Christmas market which attracted 42 trading tables. This was an effective means of bringing the local community together and also provided an opportunity for nine local food producers and eight local crafts persons to advertise and sell their produce locally. These local food and craft producers continue to sell their products through the co-operative. The women harnessed the success and goodwill generated through the Christmas market and called a public meeting to progress their proposed tearoom and community shop. In addition to inviting the local community, the women also invited potential future stakeholders including NTLP, the Plunkett Foundation and ICOS.[16] Arising out of this public meeting, a local producer group and a volunteer/fund-raising strategy emerged and the community was invited to become either a volunteer and/or to purchase a €10 share in the social enterprise. Three hundred shares were sold locally generating revenue of €3,000 and approximately 20 volunteers came forward. The cost of getting the project off the ground was around €46,000. It is structured as a co-operative, with NTLP funding 75% of the set up cost and the additional 25% generated through the sale of the 300 shares, volunteer input and a personal term loan taken out by the two founding members. Additional support included a six week HACCP[17] training course and occasional day courses for the members of the producer group, funded by the North Tipperary County Enterprise Board. More recently, the social enterprise has benefitted from a philanthropic donation of €1,000.

Loughmore Co-operative Shop and Tearooms are open 9am to 6.30pm, seven days a week. The tearooms sell locally produced bread, confectionary, crafts and other goods. Daily newspapers, the basic essentials and local produce are all available in the shop, which also sells mobile phone top ups and acts as a Post point for the village of approximately 100 inhabitants. A community notice board ensures that local information is shared in the village. There are four paid staff employed in the social enterprise and volunteers are offered vouchers that can be spent in the shop. The social enterprise is governed by a board of seven represented by two founders of the initiative, a local accountant, a community representative (the parish priest), a member of a local agricultural producer co-operative and two local food producers. This social enterprise has a clear marketing strategy; they have a national presence on social media through a website and Facebook, while mentions on local radio and word of mouth help to maintain a local profile. They attribute the growing number of visitors visiting the tearooms to this media presence.

The Loughmore Co-operative Shop and Tea Room is committed to creating a space to facilitate better community interaction through the provision of a communal space for neighbours and by creating an outlet for local producers and artists to sell their wares. The co-op brings all age groups together through unique events such as a sandwich-making competition for local children.

A key strength of this social enterprise is the commitment, drive, friendship and ideas of the two founders who share a common understanding of, and vision for, rural community life. Their combined strengths of entrepreneurial skills and strong social convictions drive their activities and business decisions. They engage in extensive networking with established social enterprises (and other business networks) and sought practical advice and support from relevant sources at each stage of the process of establishing the business. They have developed effective mechanisms for linking with the local community through organising community events such as the Christmas market, and they formally acknowledge the contribution of volunteers through their innovative voucher payment system. The founding members recognise the serious commitment required to establish a rural social enterprise, how easy it is to be overwhelmed by the responsibility at the start, and that succession will be a crucial determinant of the future sustainability of the co-operative. Both are strongly committed to the principles that underpin the co-operative structure; however, they do think that more information/advice should be available to potential rural social enterprises on the process of setting up a co-operative. They also suggest that consideration should be given to introducing the concessions available to community shops in rural Britain (such as reduced electricity and insurance costs) in Ireland.

[16] ICOS – Irish Co-operative Organisation Society.
[17] HACCP – food safety training.

4. Can these social enterprises be replicated elsewhere?

The fact that social enterprises are businesses with social objectives means that they can be viewed as a solution to a variety of social and economic problems. The examples selected for this case study illustrate the diversity of problems that can be addressed by such enterprises such as: social and geographic isolation; provision of affordable and accessible services and housing to groups at risk of social and economic exclusion; and job creation in rural locations with limited employment opportunities. In theory, it should be possible to replicate the organisational models, the service provision, job creation, access to state programmes and other funding sources in other circumstances in rural places. But it is important to remember that the social enterprises included in this study are also quite striking in terms of the strong leadership, organisational, social entrepreneurial and strategic thinking capabilities that exist in the voluntary boards and at management level. These key strengths are reflected in: innovative fundraising strategies; commitment to generating and combining market revenue with state funding; networking and sharing good practice at home and abroad; setting clear achievable targets; the capacity to adapt and diversify a portfolio of activities in line with changing market and public funding trends; and recognition of the need to build reserves to cope with an uncertain future.

In each of the cases, there are specific local circumstances that contribute to success and create challenges, but it is the human resources of leadership, strategic and entrepreneurial focus and how they generate the activities listed above that appear to be the common factors. These need to be borne in mind in any consideration of replication potential.

5. Lessons

- A key success factor in these five rural-based social enterprises is their effectiveness in mobilising and harnessing a variety of resources through the state, market, philanthropy and volunteers. All five generate market based revenue and are profitable. Four of the enterprises have sufficient reserves in place to cope with shocks associated with changes in public and market based resources. All five are actively engaged in building up their reserves.

- Each of the five social enterprises is a legally incorporated entity: the company limited by guarantee is the typical structure and a co-operative is the exception. This legal identity affords protection to the voluntary members of the organisation and facilitates access to state, market and other resources. The choice of a co-operative structure by one of the social enterprises has helped increase its profile in the media as a timely alternative to conventional businesses and has enabled the social enterprise to avail of the support of the UK based Plunkett Foundation which has a track record in supporting community shops.

- Government and market failure serve, in part, to explain the emergence of rural-based social enterprises.[18] However, the promoters' recognition of the importance of fostering a sense of community spirit and reducing rural social isolation are key motivational factors which explain why these rural social enterprises emerge and sustain over time. These social enterprises both mobilise and replenish local repositories of social capital. A key strength in some of the cases is the strong ties of friendship and solidarity which bind the volunteers together and help them remain committed to their social and economic goals.

- Local development companies have been very significant in stimulating, supporting and promoting these rural-based social enterprises. They have responded to the varied and distinctive support needs of these businesses by providing a range of hard and soft supports including: capital financial assistance; business mentoring; leadership and governance training; marketing support; and facilitating networking events.

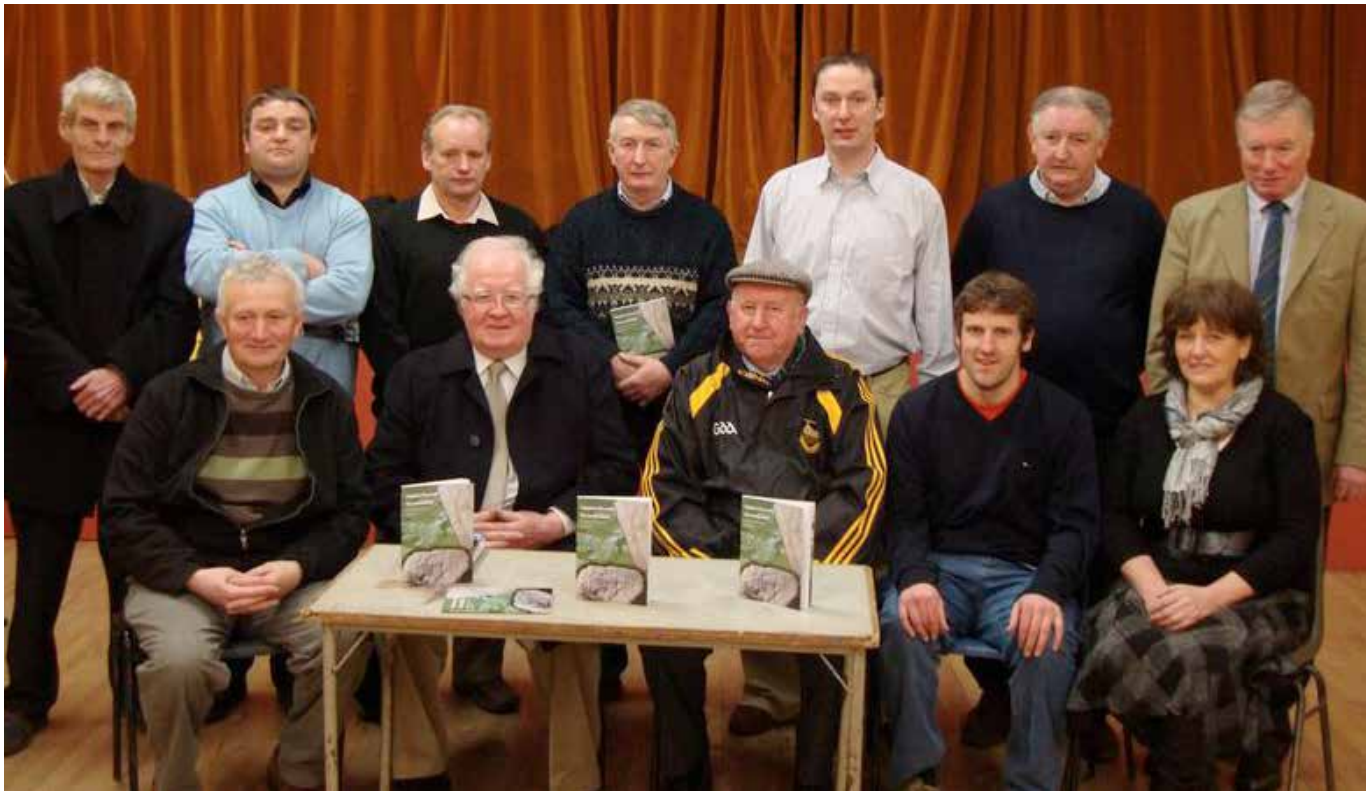
[18] Weisbrod (1977) developed the theory of government failure as a way of explaining the emergence of non-profit organisations. He argued that such entities play a primary role in providing collective consumption goods which cannot be provided by governments.

- The boards of each of these five social enterprises reflect a diversity of member skills. These include knowledge of local market opportunities, strategic vision, practical guidance, and a strong social entrepreneurial focus.

- One of the most significant challenges facing these rural-based social enterprises is the uncertainty surrounding future state support. While none of the social enterprises in this study demonstrate an over-reliance on statutory funding, some have designed their portfolio of services, and consequently taken economic risks, in line with statutory service requirements.

6. Conclusion

Both the European Commission's 'Europe 2020' strategy and the Forfás report on social enterprise in Ireland acknowledge the potential for social enterprise growth across Europe. However, it is also recognised that such potential can only be realised with appropriate policy and other support measures. Forfás identifies a number of enabling measures for the social economy such as: the development of a coherent policy framework; improved capacity building within the sector in areas such as governance; public tendering and business management; and improved access to funding and finance. While each of these will invariably contribute to the future development of the sector, it is important that future state support goes beyond a mere acknowledgement of the role of these organisations in providing local jobs and services and recognises their significant contribution to building and sustaining community solidarity. Future support will be necessary to: (a) harness the resource mobilisation capacity of rural based social enterprises; (b) strengthen volunteer recruitment and retention strategies; (c) build the capacity of voluntary boards; (d) encourage social enterprises operating in the same service sectors to consider developing formal alliances for the purpose of benefitting from economies of scale; (e) support those who wish to position themselves to compete for state contracts; and, in light of the future uncertainty of statutory funding; and (f) explore new models of social enterprise financing such as community shares and social impact bonds.



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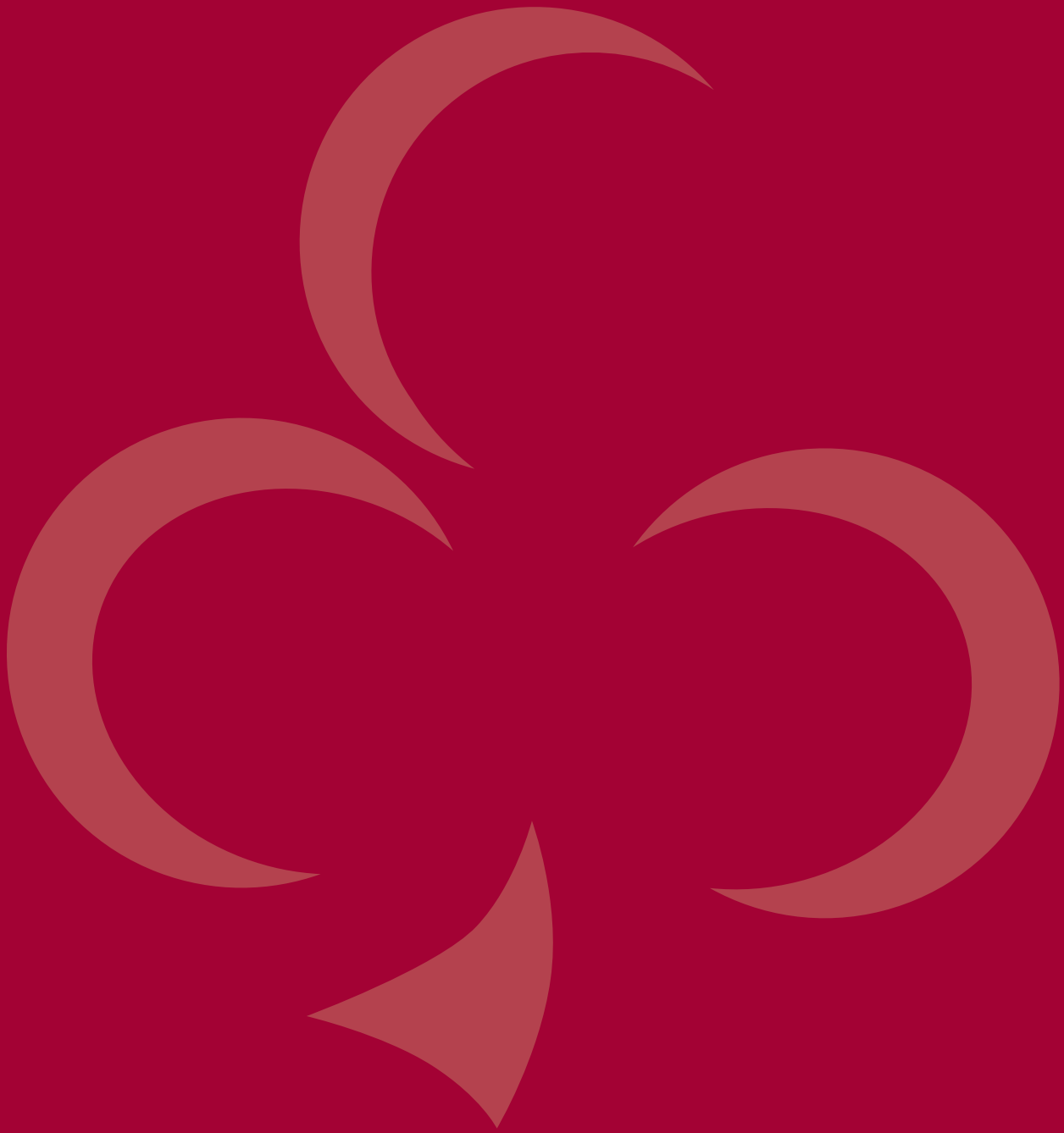

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