



ImpactAimers Ireland 2016 | Impact Report



What is ImpactAimers Ireland?

ImpactAimers, in collaboration with the Social Enterprise Development Company (SEDCo), hosted their first youth exchange in Ireland to empower nineteen young people, aged between 18 and 30 and from different social, cultural and economic backgrounds, to discover their own purpose, kick-start their career as changemakers and create a supportive community in Ireland.

We built on our pilot project in Algeria to facilitate a four-day immersive residential summit to guide young people through a powerful journey of individual and collective transformation with the purpose of inspiring them to become changemakers. We are confident that the bonds created during the youth exchange, with the support provided by our trusted local partner and sponsor SEDCo, will grow even stronger and will help participants work together to create a thriving community of social entrepreneurs in Ireland.

ImpactAimers is unique in its kind as it is entirely organised and facilitated by fellow young social entrepreneurs from all over Europe and North Africa. The direct involvement of successful young social entrepreneurs ensured that each participant received personalised support to take the first steps in their journey, as well as authentic and hands-on insights into the life of social entrepreneurs.

What is the impact of the project?

The feedback we collected from our participants (response rate of 79%) highlights the following:

87% rated ImpactAimers the best summit they have ever attended.

100% rated the overall facilitation of the summit at an average of 5 out of 5.

100% reported the youth exchange allowed them to connect deeply with the other participants.

87% reported the youth exchange increased their desire & capacity to work on themselves and their projects.

In the next two pages you will find a collection of testimonials from the participants about their experience during the youth exchange. We also invite you to watch our impact video <https://youtu.be/PtwOEJSfZUI> and view all the pictures on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/ImpactAimers.





“ImpactAimers truly helped me in a moment of struggle. When I felt like I lost the compass, I could not find my balance and my direction anymore, you guys picked me up and showed me it’s ok not to have a 9-5 job, it’s ok to want to help people as your job and that it’s not naive or childish to strive for social good and to tear down social barriers. It was an experience of self-discovery and self-love while meeting truly inspiring people and creating a community that supports each other and cares about being kind to one another.” (Chiara)

“I feel recharged, more positive, more interested in getting into the field of social entrepreneurship, more hopeful, more eager to connect with people, friendlier, more confident, love myself more, love others more...” (Eoin)



“Honestly, it was probably the most exhausting yet influential experience I’ve ever had. It forced me to look at myself and the world around me, examine what is going wrong and how I could impact change. The exchange was so well organised by intelligent and inspiring coordinators, and I felt so lucky to be part of an amazing group of people who want to have positive impact through cooking, storytelling, music, art, education, and business!” (Elizabeth)

“I went into the exchange not knowing what to expect and came out feeling refreshed, grounded inspired and adamant to work hard to make a difference in the world. It was the best form of encouragement to pursue what I want to do and also was an excellent opportunity to share and make deep connections with people I may never have otherwise met. I am grateful to have taken part in the summit and hope that others in the future benefit as I did.” (Anonymous)

“My overall experience was amazing, I feel confident, liberated, inspired, ambitious, but most of all I feel I can actually be a changemaker.” (Megan)



How is the impact achieved?

We dedicated much time to develop the content of the youth exchange to ensure we guided participants through a deeply powerful journey of self-discovery and self-transformation. Here is a brief summary of all the activities that took place over the four days together.

Two opening and closing circles, to explore the participants' goals, gifts and values and evaluate their experience and learning.

Three core workshops to help participants discover their changemaker purpose and act upon it: "Who am I?", "What's my purpose?", and "From dream to reality".

Three storytelling activities to encourage openness, trust and sharing: "Forum circle", "Discovering my story", and "Mistakes Worth Spreading".

One interactive workshop on social entrepreneurship and the challenges and opportunities for social entrepreneurs in Ireland, led by Rónán, our local host and partner.

Six participant-led open space sessions on various topics, such as "From volunteer to CEO" and "Systems change".

Three wellbeing sessions: "Mindfulness meditation", "Self-care for changemakers", and "Collaborative painting".

Five action-learning sessions to use the collective intelligence of the group to solve real problems in real time.

How do we know it works?

Here is a collection of testimonials from the participants about what activity had the biggest impact on them.

“Workshops such as “Who am I?” and “What is my purpose?” had the biggest impact on me, mainly because we are often told to look outside for opportunities and to find out what we want to do with our lives, and it was so uncomfortable and exhausting for me to do an analysis on my intrinsic motivators and interests, but I really appreciate it as I have learned a lot as a result. I am grateful that we had these workshops as they made me re-evaluate who I am.” (Elizabeth)

“The workshop “From dream to reality” had the most impact on me because it made me think hard about where I need to be going and how I am going to get there.” (Anonymous)

“It was the session on self-care for changemakers. I think the mental health aspect of setting up a social enterprise is often overlooked and I took a huge amount away from the weekend on staying true to yourself and looking after your mental health.” (Conor)



Meet our ImpactAimers Ireland changemakers



Alice Doyle



Eoin O'Neill



Megan Atkinson



Sarah Keane



Amina Moustafa



Irene Goldáraz Lanas



Lauren Foley



Isaac Aderogba



Rebekah Farmer



Lisa Maria Clinton



Conor Bolger



Ellie Morrissey



Kate Higgins-Jackson



Linnéa Lieubray



Tammy Strickland



Meaghan Carmody



Lizzie Cunningham



Rian Sweetman-Doris



Chiara Pizzi



What changed since Algeria?

We dedicated an entire day to feedback and reflection, in order to carefully evaluate the progress made since Algeria, as well as to explore the next steps for ImpactAimers Ireland and ImpactAimers in general. Here are the three most important improvements.

More time: We added half a day and one extra night, which allowed us to dedicate more time to each component of the programme and to each participant, without ever feeling rushed. This gave the participants more time to bond and to absorb the full experience. Most participants commented they had never been given so much time to connect deeply to others, cultivate active listening, and share their story.

Nature: We chose a venue out of the city of Dublin and immersed in Nature, which encouraged the participants to disconnect from the busyness of modern life and re-discover their deep connection to Nature. Many participants reported feeling recharged and re-energised as a consequence of disconnecting from their phones and spending more time outdoors. 100% of our participants rated the accommodation and workshop space in Slane (in the countryside one hour out of Dublin) 5 out of 5.

Local host: We developed a strong partnership with SEDCo, which did an incredible job to ensure all the logistics ran smoothly. This gave us the chance to really be present for all participants. Moreover, SEDCo has the capacity to offer ongoing support to this cohort of changemakers, ensuring that the great energy created throughout the summit does not dissipate, but is rather channelled to have a positive impact on Irish society.

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How did the participants respond?

Here is a collection of testimonials from the participants about their thoughts on the flow of the programme, venue and logistics.

“[The flow of the summit] was perfect – we fit a lot in but it was never too much. The breaks were a good length and the fact that we could take personal time, drink tea, take our shoes off, etc. made a big difference. It was really great to have everything in the same place where we were sleeping. As for the sessions, there was a good balance of participant-led sessions and facilitators-led sessions.” (Meaghan)

“It was so relaxed and holistic, I felt that we could really make our own of it. We developed the safest of safe spaces and I made some friends for life. It also gave me the motivation to get started on my journey towards helping society.” (Anonymous)

“The flow of the summit was excellent – it wasn’t overly strict time-wise but it was organised enough to maximise timing on each activity. The spaces used were bright, beautiful and really contributed to the overall bright energy of the events.” (Anonymous)





How do we amplify our impact?

We have developed a three-level strategy to ensure we keep supporting the Ireland cohort in their efforts to be changemakers in the service of people and planet.

- 1 ImpactAimers Spark:** Our community engagement initiative deepens the bonds between all members of the ImpactAimers community and encourages synergies to amplify our impact on people and planet. Each first of every other month, our changemakers are randomly matched with another member of the community, inviting them to meet over Skype or in person. On November 1st, we sent out the first match for the Ireland cohort (among themselves) and we will send out mixed matches between the Algeria and Ireland cohort starting in 2017.
- 2 SEDCo:** Through SEDCo, the Ireland cohort will have the opportunity to join workshops and events for social entrepreneurs and changemakers in Ireland, with the purpose of helping the progress on their journey. For instance, a week after ImpactAimers Ireland 2016, some participants joined SEDCo's Ideation workshop, held in collaboration with two other social entrepreneurs from the ChangemakerXchange community: Evelien Buynsters of Superheld.nu and Emilie Schmitt of Activ'Action.
- 3 Train the trainers:** It is our goal to run two ImpactAimers youth exchanges in Ireland per year. In order to make it sustainable and scalable, we aim to train a few participants from each cohort to become organisers and facilitators. By doing so, we offer further training and development to those changemakers who want to pursue a career in training, coaching or mentoring for young people and social entrepreneurs, whilst also ensuring that ImpactAimers Ireland grows organically and is shaped by changemakers, for changemakers.



Looking at the future...

Notwithstanding the resounding success of ImpactAimers Ireland, we are aware that we are still at the beginning of our journey. We are confident in the transformative potential of our holistic programme, as well as in the supportive and collaborative space we are able to re-create each time. But we are always looking at ways to improve the participants' experience, as well as ours. So we have identified three main priorities for our future work.

More time for wellbeing: Pretty much in the same way ChangemakerXchange has identified the need to dedicate more time for wellbeing, we are planning on incorporating more wellbeing activities. We also aim to have an extra 'decompression' day for facilitators, as we worked an average of 15 hours per day for a full week.

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Collaboration fund: In order to build on the excitement and positive energy developed throughout the youth exchange, we would like to offer small seed grants to implement community projects that will benefit the local communities as well as strengthening the bonds of our changemakers.

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ImpactAimers 2.0: We are aware of the need to work with aspiring young changemakers or early-stage social entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, we aim to amplify our offer to support more advanced changemakers and people working in different fields (e.g. ImpactAimers for people wishing to change careers or ImpactAimers for activists).

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We are now looking for partners and sponsors who want to help us manifest the vision of ImpactAimers.



Kindly supported by

Robert Bosch **Stiftung**

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