



Best practices of inter-organizational collaboration in the field of **social innovation**



Building the culture of social innovations in Higher Education Institutions



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UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



Erasmus+



Dear Reader,

In Ashoka's network of outstanding social innovators we see an emerging pattern where innovators are building a dynamic kind of teams for new economy. When individuals and organizations cross old boundaries and align towards a shared goal, they form a "team of teams," unlocking massive amounts of social – and often business – value. We are moving into a future that requires every team member to be a leader and an initiator, and where the mindset of everyone a changemaker is the main criterion for organizational success.

Social innovations aim to address social challenges in new effective ways. Social problems are rooted in complex systems, so solutions need to tackle different systems as well. It means that social innovations are usually born in between. Between sectors, between people, between schemes. Between NGOs, business, local administration, media, local community or even church.

That's why I am thrilled to present to you this sourcebook with best practices in the field of inter-organizational collaboration around social innovation. There are examples from Ashoka universum, as well as those shared by Collegium Civitas, University of Northampton and University of Island. Dr Małgorzata Baran oraz Paweł Maranowski described The Cybernauts case, dr Tryggvi Thayer shared the KeyWe example. Dr Meanu Bajwa-Patel inspired us with the Goodwill Solutions and First for Wellbeing. Inspirations from the Ashoka Network are prepared by Agata Stafiej-Bartosik and myself. We hope you'll enjoy reading them.

Get inspired,

Martyna Rubinowska

Head of Fellowship
Ashoka Poland

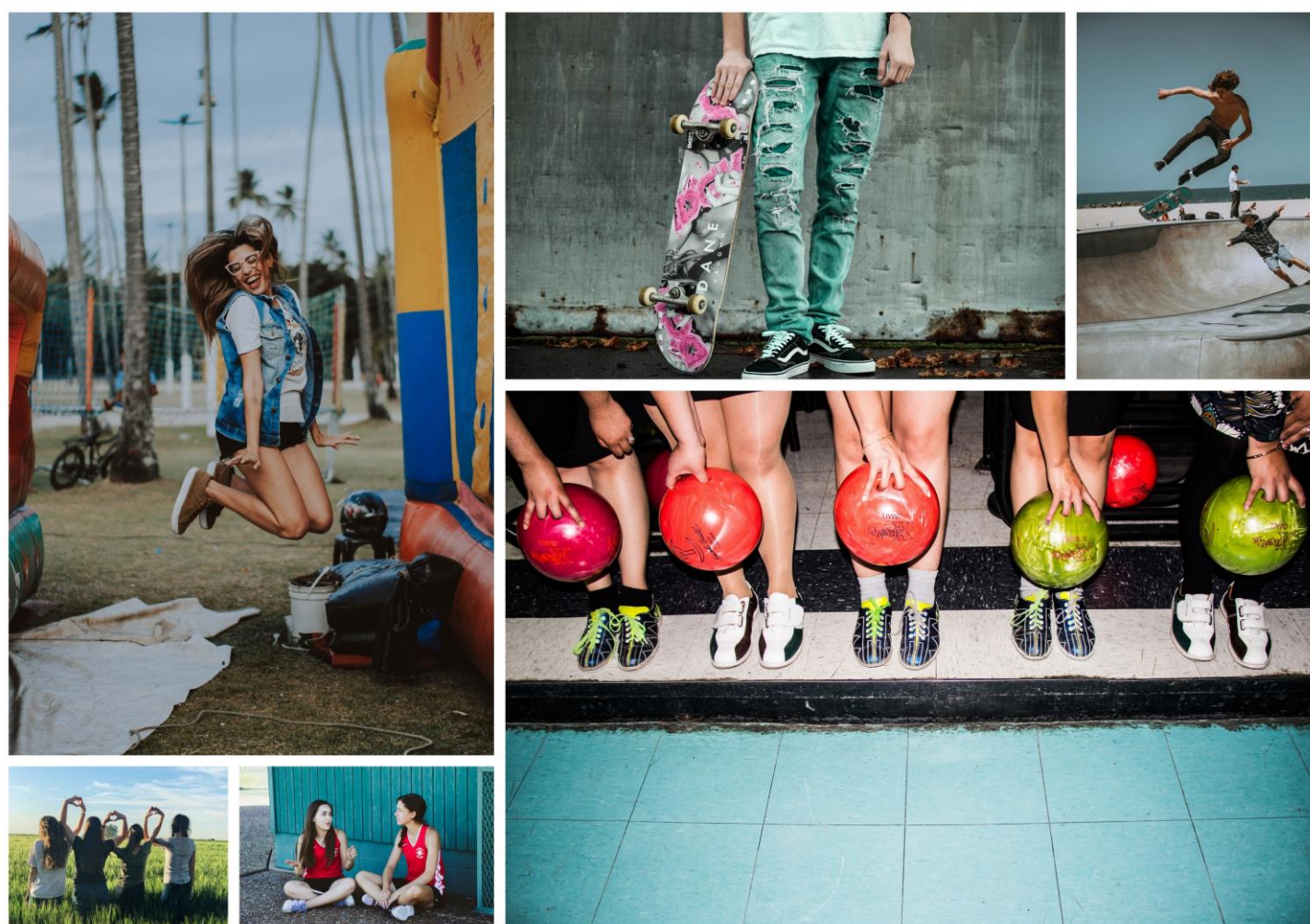
Andrzej Augustyński Siemacha Association



Social Innovation

The shopping centers have today a similar function that a city center or a town square would have in recent times. We not only do our shopping within, but also visit the cafés, meet friends, go to the cinema, and even take walks. Young people spend more and more time passively and unproductively in the centers. They lose their skills, squander their talents, and gain bad habits

SIEMACHA Spot or the “new generation backyards” are an innovative answer to the current transformations of the municipal fabric. Modern care centers situated in shopping malls provide young people with lasting relations with their peers, an attractive range of workshops, and the highest quality music and multimedia equipment. SIEMACHA Spot serve meetings and bringing up young people to make responsible citizens in the future.



Cooperation between NGO and business



This cooperation is possible

Physical closeness of food corners of AmRest in Shopping Centers and Siemacha Spot makes a cooperation possible. Siemacha opens a Spots in shopping centers, which are taking over numerous public functions. Spacious and roofed, the centres have turned into contemporary streets, and now must boldly face the same challenges as real streets. As neighbors are responsible for problems on their street, organizations that share the same roof can go hand to hand.

What is more Siemacha Spot being already open in 9 different localization, when started a collaboration with AmRest, co-created not only inner collaboration, but also highlight common goals for both partners. For AmRest as an owner of chains of restaurants culinary education. Siemacha agreed that by cooking children can develop many useful skills as precision, perseverance, but also teamwork and joy of eating self-prepared food. Kitchen is a central part of Simacha Spot Magnolia, that they co-created with Amrest.

Win win

Ashoka Fellow Andrzej Augustyński, founder of Siemacha Assosiation is convinced that three pillars are the foundation stone for the success of young people. They need loving home, good school but also a wonderful, friendly peer group o the other youngsters, to get friends, but also knowledge and experience. He is convinced that to build a successful social innovation you need to be in right time in a right place and the idea needs to be very simple. Parntnership with AmRest allows long term, stable cooperation, without uncertainty about another grant and future of Siemacha Spot and children. What is more it's bringing an added value as enriching an offer for children based on volunteers from AmRest. AmRest have over 1650 restaurants in 16 countries and growing. They are convinced that their employees, and this generation, really wants a company that stands for something more then just doing business. Cooperation with Siemacha allows them to fulfill a commitment to the community.

AmRest want to contribute more than just a money, they want also to contribute their own work. So, they have created a system of AmRest Volunteers that people can come to Siemacha Spot and contribute their skills, passions, into helping the children to grow. Their employees can be directly involved in training children and interacting with them to really help make their lives better, to help teach them skills and give them a great future

Good advice

Look for a potential partner in your neighborhood. Sharing physical space, the same street, being opposite the same park, ect. may be a good foot in the door to start a collaboration. Sometimes you can think about a developer who invests in the same district, or a factory in the same county.



Anabella Estevez

Ana Bella Foundation

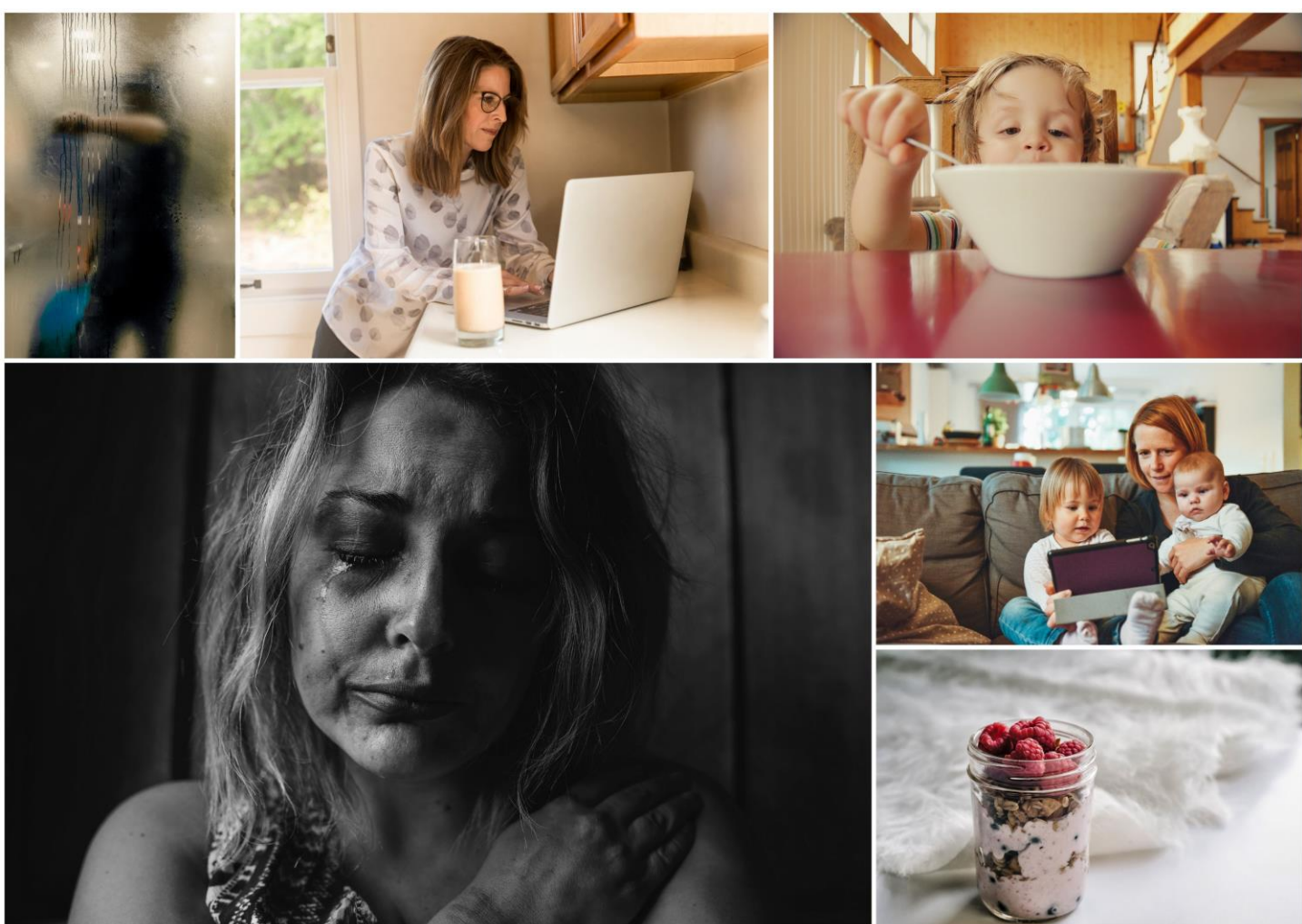


Social Innovation

One billion women, a third of women globally, suffer from domestic violence, without taking into account the impact on future generations or on the economy. This occurs in every country in the world, irrespective of age, social and economic status.

Ana Bella Foundation empowers abused women by leveraging their strengths and capabilities in order to regain self-confidence, begin the separation process from their abuser and get back on their feet after the separation

Ana Bella Social School For Women Empowerment is a co-creation model transforming companies practices and social impact. Hiring women based on personal values as survivors and their assets. Not invisible jobs as cleaners but visible positions as sales promoters.



Cooperation between NGO and business



This cooperation is possible

For business partners, Ana Bella Foundation offers co-creation models, working with corporate partners such as Danone to shape new, inclusive business models and better and visible job opportunities for survivor women. The openminded leadership of the company makes space for unconventional ways of social involvement.

Together they help women to release their potential as effective workers in times of crisis, capable of facing employment as a source of personal dignity and committing to social and economic company goals delivering excellence service. Danone provides a social solution to a business need: empowering survivor women to avoid exclusion by offering valuable jobs through promotional campaigns. Not invisible jobs as cleaners but visible positions as Danone Ambassadors supporting sales.

Win win

Danone is a world leader company in the food industry sector with a dual economic and social project based on social innovation linked to its business. Key motivation to participate in the co-creation project for Danone Spain jointly with Danone Ecosystem Fund was to co-create local socio-economic capabilities through inclusive partnerships that reinforce Danone's ecosystem and contribute to common interest creating both social and economic value. Danone wants to create innovative business and social models that generate sustainable value. Danone was awarded the Best Sustainable and Best Suppliers Danone Awards in 2012 and Best Social Innovation Project SERES Foundation Awards 2013, as well as has received The Recognition Ministry of Equality in Spain for the project. Danone sales promoters used to be women in their 20s with high absenteeism rates which mean low efficiency and effectiveness. Hiring the survivors has also created a decrease in staff turnover from 63% 2011 to 2,25% 2013 market 40% and a decrease absenteeism from 2,83% 2011 to 1,66% 2013.

Thanks to the cooperation many of the Anabella Foundation goals have been achieved - 160 women increased their income as Danone Ambassador & others during first 6 months of cooperation, 207 women were trained for professional & skills for life, 112 women were coached and empowered, 253 children were indirect beneficiaries and over 1100 survivor women have come visible in recruitment pool. The idea of empowering survivor women to avoid exclusion by providing valuable jobs as sales promoters rather than invisible double victimization jobs has become real.

Good advice

For this kind of partnership you need a very strong alignment of the leadership values between the partners and a very open and honest relationship. The goals and objectives of both sides have to be very clear. As this is a commercial project – the budget has to be very accurate and clearly divided.

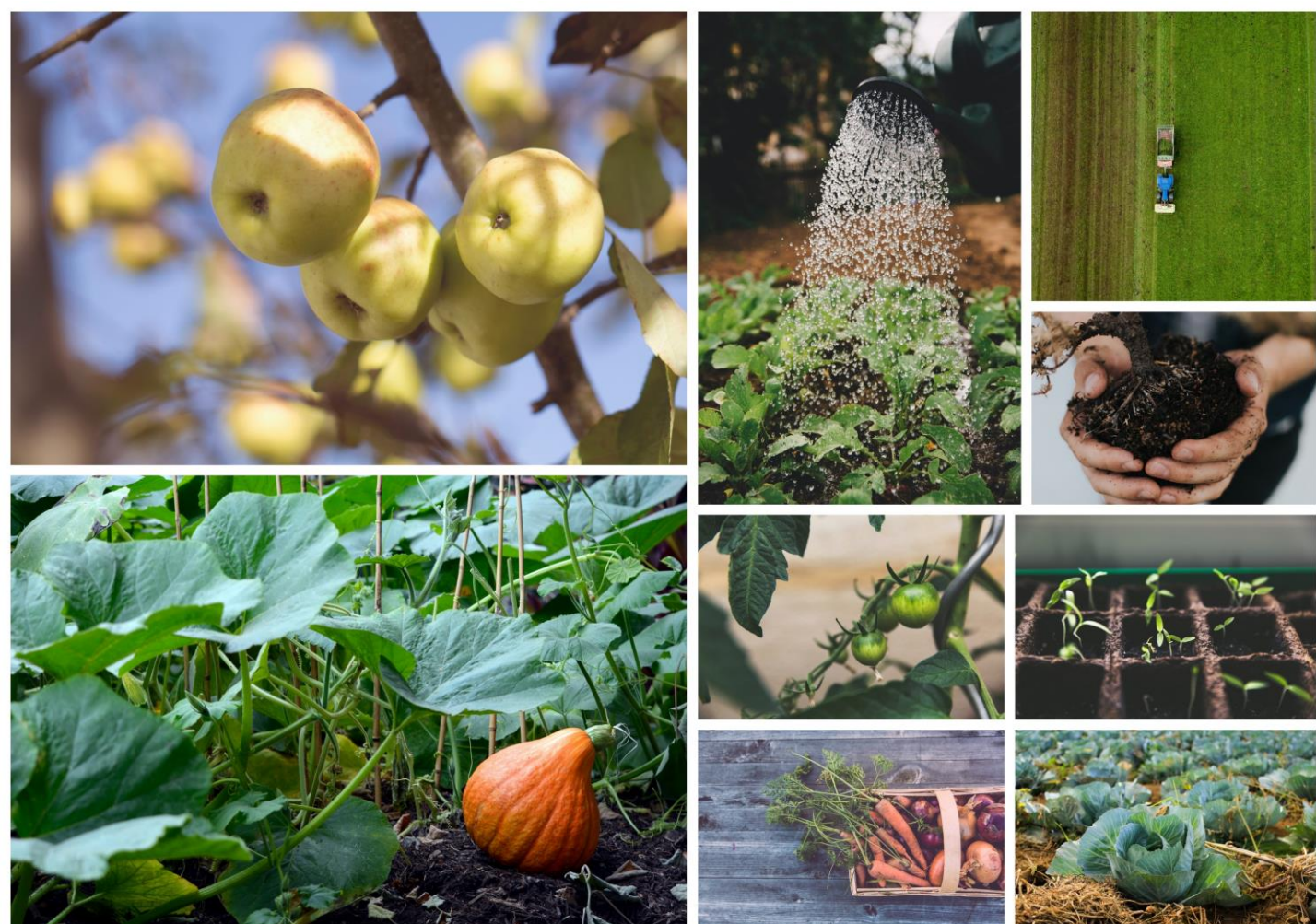


Štefan Straka Svatobor



Social Innovation

Stefan identified two latent assets in rural Slovakia: idle people and idle land. Where others have seen these as problems, Stefan saw opportunity. Most of the poorest families in rural Slovakia are the historically nomadic Roma, who were subject to forced settlement policies under the communist regime of the mid-20th century. Because of their history, the sedentary and permanent activity of cultivating land was never an activity undertaken by or made available to this population. Stefan is changing this for the Roma as well as others who are marginalized to the periphery of society for various reasons. By linking idle human and land resources, he is building a new community-based identity for the poorest and most marginalized communities in the region while improving their food security and economic opportunity. Stefan brings together land owners (primarily the state and the church) with other public and private stakeholders to create opportunity for the Roma community and other marginalized people to use idle land for organic farming.



Cooperation between NGO and church



This cooperation is possible

This cooperation is based on mutual trust, that was initiated by a trustworthy leader. Roma community has no good reputation in Slovakia and the partners would not agree for a long-term lease without broker who has responsibility on fulfilling the contract. Sense of security, loyalty and meeting one's commitments bridged trust between Stefan and church, which effect in dozen of. years long partnership. With years of collaboration developed trust, work on wider society, building trust in Roma people.

Win win

By connecting these excluded communities to the land, Stefan is creating in-kind income (food and energy) and development opportunities that ensure their self-sufficiency, enabling a sense of purpose and permanence, and breaking the cycle of exclusion and discrimination by shifting public perceptions of this population. Stefan's model builds work ethic and long-term planning skills and opens up new opportunities for food security. The families he works with improve their nutritional status and find a new identity as farmers with connection to land and purpose. This creates new bonds between this population and their neighbors, who now see them as productive members of the community, thus breaking the cycle of exclusion and negative stereotyping. Stefan's initiative has changed the minds of early skeptics and caught the attention of the government, the church, NGOs, and foundations, all of whom are now looking at his work as a best practice and working with him to replicate it.

In order to address the lack of access to land, Stefan introduces communities that are willing to grow crops to the opportunity of a long-term lease of idle agricultural land from either the State Land Fund or Church (second largest landowner in Central Europe after the state). He has discovered a great divide between the vast amounts of idle land on the one hand and emerging farmers on the other hand and realized that a long-term lease is a solution beneficial both for land owners (neglected land is turned into land for plowing) and also for new farmers (as it allows for strengthening food security at minimal to no cost and can serve as a training ground and springboard for further development).

Idle land is wasted resource of church which thanks to Stefan generate income. What is more, church in Slovakia raise its profile as a one closer to people, supporting others. Finally who, won't eat plump from the tree after Sunday service.

Good advice

There is one rule, trust first. Initial trust is a fundament for trust of partners. Stefan approached church and proved his idea, by investing in land, initially without long term contract. This model requires patient and honesty, but it is stable and fruitful.



Ewa Kaliszuk

Montessori Mountain School in Przyłęków



Global Change Leaders

Powered by Ashoka

Social Innovation

The Montessori Mountain School - a private school, free of charge for pupils operates in Przyłęków, a mountain village in remote area of Poland. In this school children use drama during their classes on emotions and talk about trivia and difficult matters in a circle. Every child takes responsibility for their educational process by deciding what they want to do in their own workroom. There is a lot of space for outdoor education and there is even a forest classroom available. In Przyłęków there is a place where children, teachers and parents discover, gain courage and skills to be changemakers.



Cooperation between school and local community



This cooperation is possible

Values shared by the local community are mirrored in the school. In Montessori Mountain School in Przyłęków the values are - love for children, respect to nature and the feeling of community. Without those values the innovative ideas and the creators of the school, who came to the village from a city, would not be accepted in mountain valley. First sign of those values was a battle that parents fought with the local government, when the school was at risk of being closed. At this time, they have decided to invite the Foundation of the Queen Saint Jadwiga to run their school. Sharing the same values manifests also in cross-connected life of the school and the community as common Christmas carol singing or bringing animals by the shepherds when kids are in the forest classroom.

Win win

The schools' forest classroom was constructed in the land of one of the neighbors and a wooden bridge needed by the pupils was built by their fathers. Because school is free of charge for pupils, so their resources are very simple. Also the local community is very simple, so they are supporting each other as much as they can – and with what they can.

The local community gained a school and a local community center. They have a place where in one hand kids can learn in the respect to the local values, based on local resources, in the other hand they can extend their horizons beyond their valley. The local community is stimulated by pupils' activities from caroling as it used to be in old good times, to supporting senior neighbors and school cultural events open for local community.

Good advice

This kind of partnership requires sense of connection, honesty on both sides, and long conversation to name and agree upon shared values. It is unique, to build this kind of partnership, but when it is built it can counteract every struggle. If you feel, that there is a potential for this kind of partnership, invest in it as it will be extremely valuable in the future.



Teresa Ogrodzińska

Child Development Foundation

Social Innovation

The Playgroups project is a response to the dramatically poor availability of services for the youngest children (aged from a few months to three years) and their parents especially in rural areas of Poland. In Poland, there is an increasing awareness that early childhood is the formative period for our basic intellectual, social and emotional dispositions and competencies underlying our future academic and professional accomplishments. A Playgroup offers meetings for young children and their parents or caregivers under the guidance of an Animator. Unlike other settings for the young, a Playgroup makes it possible for adults to accompany their children in the classroom, thus contributing to the children's sense of well-being, helping parents to enhance their parental skills, and strengthening parent-child relationships. Parents have an opportunity to explore the value of play and realize its developmental significance.





Cooperation between NGO and local administration

This cooperation is possible

Playgroups are a great way to support the development of young children, particularly if they are too small to go to pre-school, or if no such services are available locally. Regular meetings help to enhance family organizational and social skills. Parents are actively involved, laying down group rules, planning group work and class schedules, proposing and carrying out activities for children in consultation with the Animator. They provide play resources, food and drinks. They also get to know other parents, ensure mutual support and share information. Playgroups can be partially financed from the local budget, for example through social prevention funds or rural development funds. Local entrepreneurs are also worth contacting, as they may offer various in-kind donations (furniture, stationery, etc.) in exchange for business ads. Engagement of so many partners is possible thanks to shared goal – development of young children.

Win win

Participation in a Playgroup allows the children to: learn by observation and imitation; communicate with children of different ages; learn new vocabulary; develop self-reliance; play with other children; learn and follow group rules – thus facilitating their adaptation to the pre-school and (later) to the primary school environment.

Participation in a Playgroup allows the parents to: observe the development stages in children of different ages; share information about children's upbringing; focus on their child – parents are encouraged to listen and talk to their child; to recognize the child's needs; to meet the child's need for closeness; to learn how to foster the child's curiosity and perseverance; to create good conditions for learning by ensuring adequate freedom; and to learn various ideas for play.

Benefits of Playgroups to the local community: creation of a new type of ECEC provision; an awareness of the significance of children's education from birth; an enhancement of community prestige; opportunities for the meaningful use of local resources; better adaptation of children to pre-school and primary school settings; a new approach to social prevention that is both cost-effective and systematic (involving the whole family); an effective form of financial support for local women, who are employed as Animators; the possibility to take advantage of the various skills of parents.

Good advice

Social innovation very often emerges around common goals. Show, that this goal is not your goal, but initiate a conversation around common goals and emphasize the role of this goal for the whole community.

Ida Karpińska

Flower of Femininity



Social Innovation

Ida Karpińska has launched a bottom-up driven movement to address one of the major causes of death among young women in Poland – cervical cancer. She is bringing together women from all walks of life and professions in a peer-to-peer relation of support and education, that is eventually leading to creation of a preventive infrastructure encompassing medical personnel, legal support, media interest, decision makers and female patients.

Through a number of different activities such as promotion in media, cinemas, roadshows and “Women’s cities” in the shopping malls in different parts of Poland, Ida’s organization the Flower of Femininity reaches thousands of women every year. Moreover, women can get a “coupon” from the Glamour magazine to have a free of charge cytology examination. Ida Karpińska also deals with the issue of ovarian cancer, leading an educational campaign “Egg smarter than hen” for daughters and mothers, to motivate them to regularly visit gynecologist and do the examinations aimed to reveal any precancerous changes.



Cooperation between NGO and media



This cooperation is possible

Ida works with media by providing them with a meaningful but at the same attractive content. Her experience in working with the filmmakers (she used to be a make-up artist), gives her a good understanding of the needs of the newsrooms and advertising departments of media outlets. By involving celebrities and creating catchy but credible messages, Ida can fully harness the power of media for good, all by respecting the rules of the game.

Win win

For the media Ida's campaigns are a great way to execute their social responsibility, as well as involve the viewers and readers. Ida is willing and capable of creating a narrative that fits the needs of today's news.

The multidimensional approach to cervical cancer created by Ida and her organization provide an effective framework for cooperation between different institutions and organizations involved in prevention, education and support efforts at every level of the healthcare system. Her education and awareness raising leads to examinations and attitude change, across multiple groups of women, ranging from teenagers, students, public officials, midwives, but also young men. Only in 2012 through all the initiatives, Ida and her Foundation reached over 300 000 women in Poland.

Good advice

Ida understands her media partners. She is not trying to convince them that they need her, but she is providing them with what they need. Understanding the needs of each of the partners is key, as well as adaptation to the culture differences and building bridges over them.

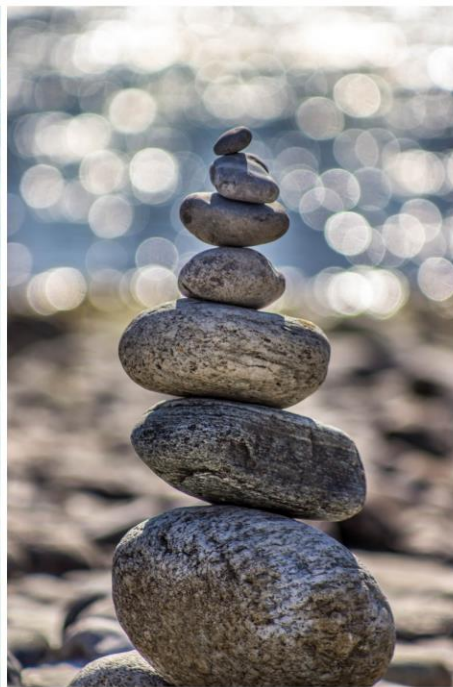
Can you answer needs of media in a smart way? What can be your message that is interesting for them? What benefit will this cooperation bring to your beneficiaries?

First for Wellbeing University of Nothampton



Social Innovation

First for Wellbeing was set up as a social enterprise to serve the needs of its local community. Its three founding partners – the County Council, the Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and the University of Northampton – have a shared vision for improving the physical, emotional and social wellbeing of people in the local community by offering an integrated health and wellbeing service. With public, private and voluntary sectors working together to streamline existing services and create new and innovative ways to help people live the best lives that can. The aim is to build a community of ‘wellbeing experts’ to provide an integrated service that prevents poor physical and mental health in the community; provide a bespoke service that treats each person as an individual to effectively balance all aspects of their wellbeing and use a community-wide approach to deliver a holistic approach to health and wellbeing.



Cooperation between University and local administration



This cooperation is possible

All of the partners are based in the local area and all bring different expertise to the partnership. Using experts, service providers and evidence from research together, alongside compassion and respect for one another makes the cooperation for this enterprise possible. Clear governance and structure alongside accountabilities allow for more effective cooperation across the three public sector organisations that own First for Wellbeing. All the business support functions are provided by the three partner organisations in direct support of First for Wellbeing.

Win win

The benefits for First for Wellbeing of working with the University of Northampton are numerous, from having members of University staff on the board, providing their education and commercial experience, to having access to researchers and the University's Social Impact Matrix to allow them to evaluate their social impact.

The University of Northampton gains through improved health and wellbeing in its local community, which may even impact its own students' health and wellbeing and improve its recruitment. It also allows the University access to data on health and wellbeing for use in research and education. Also a direct benefit is that students, staff and visitors to the campus can receive free health and wellbeing advice from the resident advisors at the pop-up clinics.

Good advice

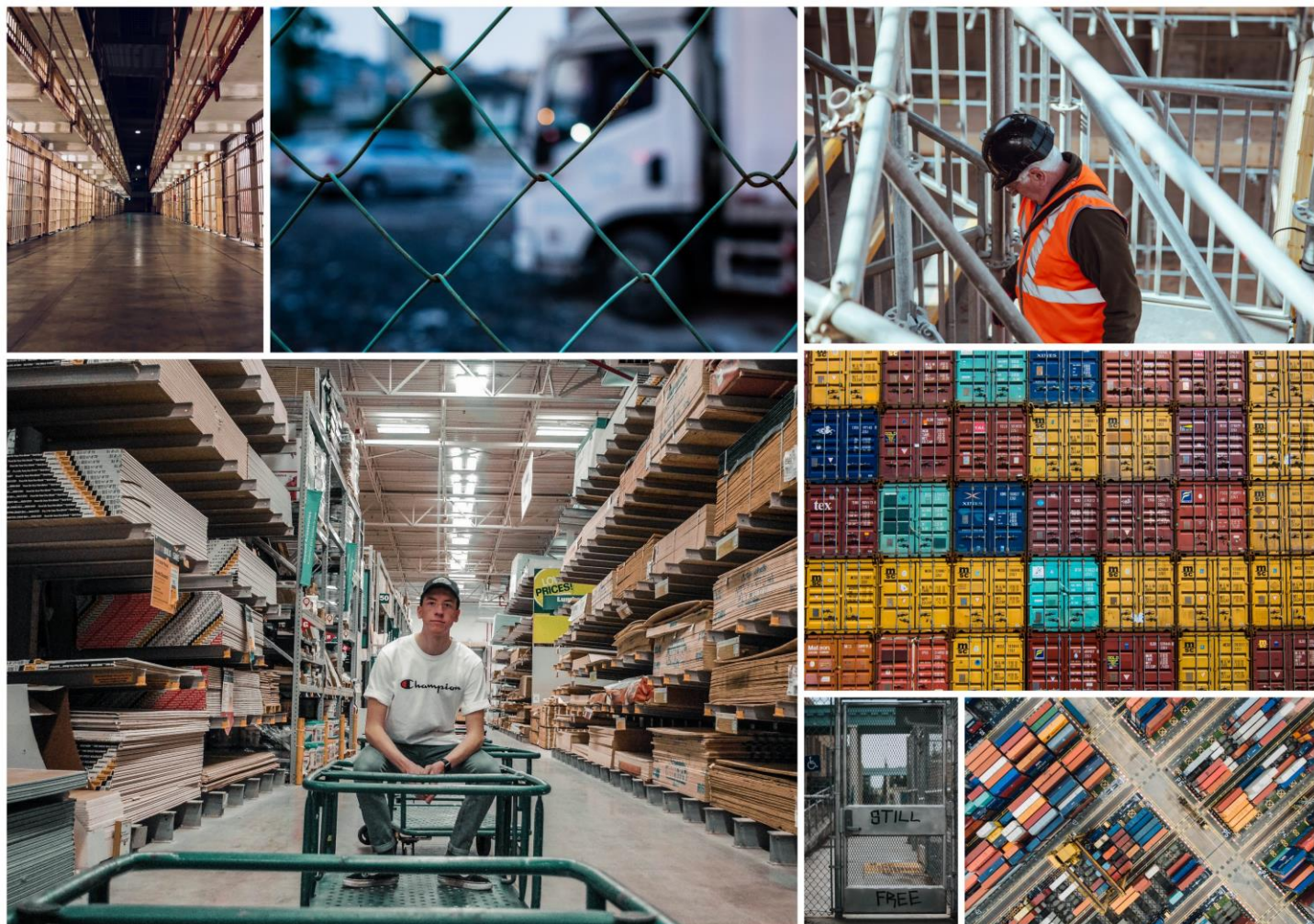
As with any partnership, the key is good relationships and communication. Regular meetings and an open dialogue make this partnership a success. Each partner stands to make gains from the relationship which binds them altogether.

Goodwill Solutions University of Nothampton



Social Innovation

A local business designed to help the local community by providing back to work training and support for disadvantaged local groups, including: ex-offenders, armed services personnel and the former homeless and long term unemployed. Training and support in logistics or catering helps members of these groups become valuable and productive members of society and build a life for themselves again. The commercial focus, alongside the training and support provided to clients at Goodwill helps equip them with the skills and motivation they need to seek paid employment.



Cooperation between University and social enterprise



This cooperation is possible

A shared local community and the aims of transforming lives and inspiring change and ‘doing good stuff’, make this partnership work. Their shared desire and determination to create a positive impact on society through commerce is what underpins the cooperation between the two organisations. Goodwill Solutions headquarters are very close to the University of Northampton campus and members of the University staff serve on the board of Goodwill Solutions. The University of Northampton is an Ashoka U Campus and its focus on social enterprise and innovation means that organisations like Goodwill Solutions are natural allies.

Win win

Goodwill Solutions benefit in numerous ways from having a relationship with the University of Northampton, for example they have access to high quality research to assess their annual social impact and inform their strategy. They also gain recognition within the local community where the University has been established for many years and they benefit from having experienced educationalists and managers serving on their board providing advice and guidance.

The University of Northampton gains in several ways from having a successful partner in commerce in the local area. Being connected to Goodwill Solutions, not only means profit for the University but also helps get their name out in Northampton and across the UK. It means that people connect the University to more than just degrees and academia. Goodwill Solutions also provides a place for University students to complete placements and gain valuable industry experience. It allows students to be inspired in the area of social enterprise and encourages many of them to become socially innovative themselves as they work with a great example of an industry ‘doing good stuff’ and making profit.

Good advice

The key to forming and maintaining such a partnership is relationships and good communication. It is important for partners to look beyond the traditional narrow roles of commerce and academia and realize the potential social impact of working together and making a significant difference to their shared local community.



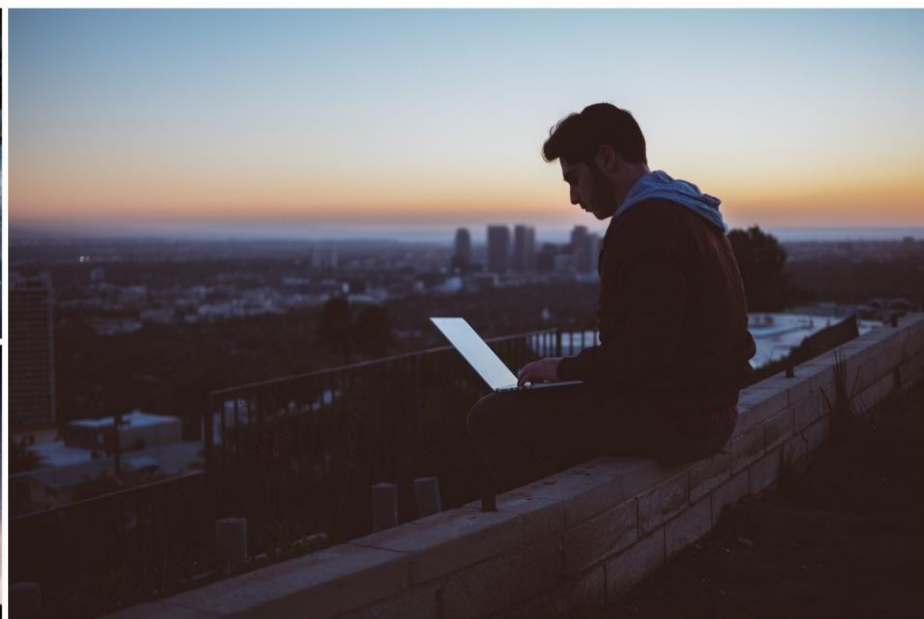
Goodwill Solutions

The Cybernauts Collegium Civitas

Social Innovation

Children and teenagers widely use the Internet, becoming an inseparable part of it nowadays. Consequently, the use of the Internet involves many dangers, in particular to young people, such as cyberbullying, interaction with strangers who pose a threat, malware and the illegal use of applications and various cultural products (e.g. films, photographs or music).

The Cybernauts is an innovative project, whose aim is to improve the level of safety of children and schoolchildren as well as to educate their teachers and parents on the safe use of the Internet. The project involves state schools, which hold workshops for students and their parents and teachers and assess their effectiveness together with the university and NGO that carry out the project. The social innovation of this project consists in addressing the use of the Internet not only from the perspective of dangers involved but also as an opportunity for the development of various useful life skills. The innovation applied resulted in raising the awareness of the new media and online safety among all groups of beneficiaries.



Cooperation between University and Schools



This cooperation is possible

Cooperation between the university and state schools is possible, because all these institutions serve a similar purpose, i.e. education. Furthermore, schools often lack necessary knowledge in the field of advanced teaching methods and are unable to develop them, whereas universities are a natural hotbed of new ideas that need dissemination. New knowledge developed by university experts should be implemented in schools; this makes this cooperation possible and desirable.

Win win

Scientists usually conduct studies and analyses to develop certain ideas. A situation where findings of their work are only used to acquire knowledge that no one is going to apply later is not advisable. Academic research should serve external institutions and society. As part of the “Cybernauci” project, scientists and experts have an opportunity to verify to what extent their teaching and innovation assessment methods work in the field. Experts and scientists involved in the project can test their ideas on “living material”. The project enables the university and the NGO to accomplish four goals: help people improve their safety on the Internet; teach how to use the new media; improve teaching methods; and test social innovation assessment methods.

State schools lack adequate resources (e.g. knowledge, time or money) to organise training courses on Internet safety and creative use of the Internet on their own. Participation in a project co-managed by a university and an NGO is an opportunity to acquire useful expertise. The project is carried out directly in schools and teachers will be able to access additional materials, the so-called educational toolbox, after the end of the workshops to conduct classes on their own. It is therefore an opportunity to gain knowledge developed by specialists and experts in a given field and apply it in practice.

Good advice

The key to building partnerships between universities and secondary schools is to find a common goal. A similar profile of these institutions facilitates joint activities. Lower-secondary and upper-secondary schools are usually open to innovative projects carried out by universities that serve students of these schools. Making the first step is important in building a partnership between universities and state schools. The responsibility for entering into partnership lies primarily with the university, which wants to test its ideas in the field, for a specific target group.



Kompleksowy projekt kształtowania bezpiecznych zachowań w sieci

Zgłoś swoją szkołę!

IKEA Meeting Kitchen

Social Innovation

IKEA Meeting Kitchen is a place for everyone who loves to cook and spend time together in a cozy atmosphere. Everyone can book one of the two IKEA Meeting Kitchens and invite your friends or loved ones to the culinary treat. IKEA Kitchen of Meetings is an open space for spending time together, therefore the use of it is completely free. You only need ingredients to prepare your favorite dishes that you should bring with you. Everyone has the same chance of booking the space they need to give an interesting answer to one of the competition questions on Facebook. Located in the center of Warsaw this concept gives the Warsaw urban dwellers yet another space for meetings, co-creation and workshops. Neighboring Collegium Civitas University is benefiting from this space to help students understand the idea of user experience, as well as to help them integrate.



Cooperation between business and local administration



This cooperation is possible

Both partners see the value in practical experience of their customers. They also both realized that living an experience is a very different argument than reading, listening or watching pictures of it. Sharing a belief in a working method makes it so much easier to cooperate and create value together.

Win win

For IKEA this space is a user experience show room. It took 72 seconds to reserve all dates in the first week of the IKEA Meeting Kitchen operation. From November 2015 to June 2016, 7,675 people visited the kitchen. The kitchen was a witness to birthdays, baptisms, engagements and bachelorette parties. Italian and oriental specialties ruled in it. Every year IKEA Meeting Kitchen changes its design to reflect a current offer from the IKEA Catalog, so that visitors are able to see what life is all about for IKEA in the kitchen. Based on this unique UX idea, IKEA UK created a similar space in London.

As part of the course "Marketing of experience in brand management", thanks to the courtesy of IKEA, the students of Collegium Civitas have an opportunity to experience how the IKEA Meeting Kitchen works and to know what projects underlie the effectiveness of this unique marketing experience concept. Students get to know the genesis of the project, its daily functioning and changes. During the meeting, they prepare a delicious meal by themselves, which they share while conducting a conversation about the details of this unique - not only in the scale of Poland - and the award-winning project.

Good advice

Look for partners who share your ideas on working methods and who have a similar approach of certain issues. It is so much easier to work if you don't need to explain why you do certain things in a certain way. Building that partnerships take time, but it will bring added value to both of you.

Kuchnia
Spotkań



KeyWe

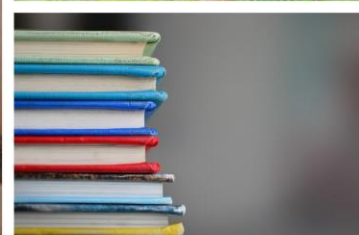
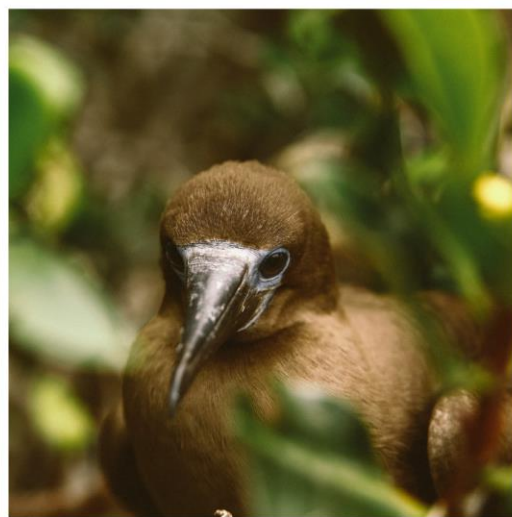
literacy learning software

Social Innovation

KeyWe is an edtech company, launched by handball player, Ólafur Stefánsson, known as Óli Stef, that produces software to help students learn to read. Their primary solution is the KeyWe app for tablets, smartphones and computers.

The KeyWe app is essentially an electronic note-taking app in which the user records thoughts, ideas, stories, etc., using graphic blocks, or conceptual icons (in Icelandic, *hugtögg* - a play on the words for *concept* and *tag*). The conceptual icons represent and communicate the users' individual sense of meaning, that is *their thoughts* from *their own perspective*, by combining a descriptive image with a written concept. Users share their icons and borrow from others when they need to expand their own lexicon.

KeyWe has partnered with Icelandic schools to allow teachers to implement the software and learning tools in their classes and provide important and useful feedback to KeyWe. The software is also available for free on the KeyWe website for everyone to use.





Cooperation between StartUp and schools

This cooperation is possible

The cooperation between KeyWe and the schools that have partnered with them is driven by Óli Stef's firm belief that education can be made more meaningful and better for young learners. Óli Stef has committed to the collaborative development of novel solutions for education to the point where he even took an extended leave from his lucrative position managing one of Iceland's top handball teams to dedicate his time and efforts to KeyWe. Also, the open and collaborative approach adopted by KeyWe, i.e. sharing data and experiences with teachers and making the KeyWe software available to anyone on the Internet, has greatly facilitated cooperation.

Win win

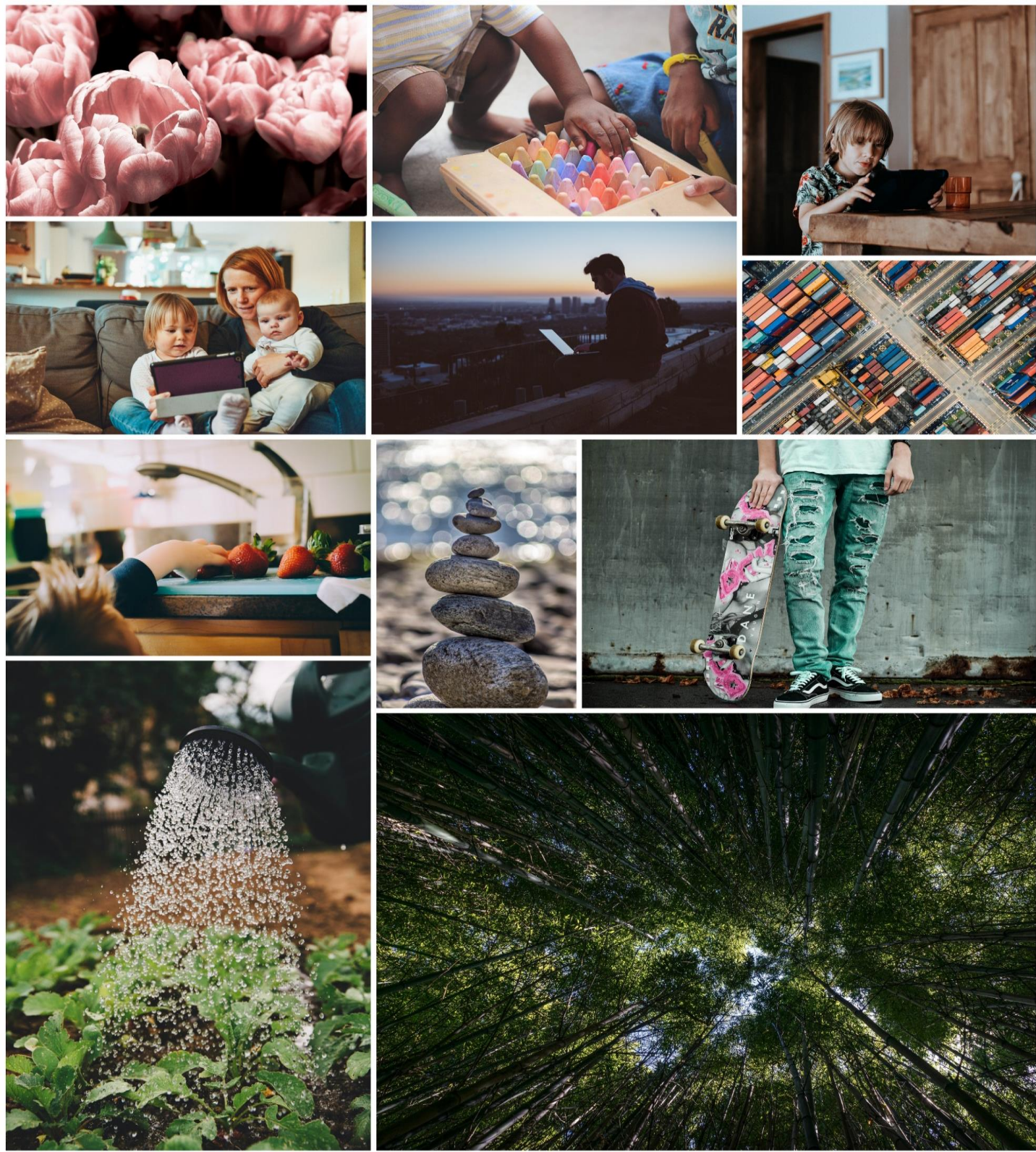
The cooperation between KeyWe and the schools that have partnered with them is driven by Óli Stef's firm belief that education can be made more meaningful and better for young learners. Óli Stef has committed to the collaborative development of novel solutions for education to the point where he even took an extended leave from his lucrative position managing one of Iceland's top handball teams to dedicate his time and efforts to KeyWe. Also, the open and collaborative approach adopted by KeyWe, i.e. sharing data and experiences with teachers and making the KeyWe software available to anyone on the Internet, has greatly facilitated cooperation.

For Icelandic schools, the cooperation with KeyWe has made available a tool that allows them to experiment with literacy education in novel ways that are better tailored to their students' needs. Obviously, this ultimately benefits the students as they gain better literacy skills. Furthermore, by formalising their cooperation with KeyWe, teachers and their students gain a sense of ownership in the tool and their learning.

Good advice

The key to KeyWe's partnerships with Icelandic schools is in the open development approach used. By openly sharing their platform, it becomes the users, i.e. teachers and students, that drive development rather than software developers. The approach also acknowledges teachers' expertise, thus empowering them to produce meaningful change in their environment.





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