

CEW AWARDS 2012 CASE STUDY

Pinkspiration – LEADERSHIP & PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

Social entrepreneur Lisa Marie Brown set up Pinkspiration as a social enterprise to help young people start their own businesses or get involved in community projects. It provides training in business skills through its team of professional freelance trainers, helps with funding, and encourages local and national companies to support projects.

Pinkspiration's Design Factor scheme is specifically aimed at transforming community spaces in Wales. Having identified a need, Pinkspiration fires up local volunteers – particularly NEET young people – to join in and carry out the work, learning new skills along the way. So far the scheme has rebuilt Wales First Garden City Café in Newport and renovated a community flat in Blaenau Gwent, although Pinkspiration hopes the model created will lead to many more projects across Wales and the UK.

The excitement and buzz created around Design Factor, fuelled by Pinkspiration's use of social media to spread the word, has attracted the attention of such luminaries as Peter Jones of the BBC's Dragons' Den and Sir Richard Branson's Virgin Media. The judges were impressed by the scheme's success in motivating local people to participate in projects that would not only help them develop their own capabilities, but provide a lasting benefit for their community.

PROCESS

Design Factor began in September last year as a road show, visiting disadvantaged areas of Wales to identify refurbishment projects to be tackled in much the same way as the BBC's DIY SOS makeover show. The road show was promoted through social media channels such as Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and Flickr. Design students were invited to compete to create innovative concepts for the chosen projects.

For each project Pinkspiration organised a small pot of initial funding and provided a team to help with advice and training. Key partners were approached to donate time and materials. Then it was over to the volunteers to equip themselves with the necessary planning, finance and construction skills before, with Pinkspiration's support and encouragement, getting stuck in.

The overall aim is to use such projects to get young people to be enterprising and creative, helping themselves and their communities. Participants are encouraged to think about starting up in business

or self-employment, or setting up social enterprises to earn money to reinvest in the community. Design Factor projects also provide training opportunities for local tenants and residents which could lead to employment and further training and deliver other social benefits, such as reducing crime and antisocial behaviour.

RESULTS

Two Design Factor projects have so far been completed. When the Hope Centre in Newport was burned down by arsonists, Pinkspiration was approached to help with the rebuild of the Garden City Café. Six months of planning paid off when, with the help of Pinkspiration's construction partners, volunteers transformed the burnt out space into an iconic community facility in just ten days.

The second project focused on renovating an empty flat in Waundeg, Blaenau-Gwent, turning it into multifunctional community space. A group of girls from the estate, which is located in an area of high deprivation, were among the volunteers who came forward to help with the works, which involved stripping the flat, replastering it, levelling the floor and fitting out a kitchen and bathroom.

In both cases a key objective was to leave a lasting legacy for the community. In the Newport project, Pinkspiration delivered business, finance and marketing training to a community group to enable them to run the café as a social enterprise. The Waundeg flat has reopened as a community facility hosting activities such as youth and homework clubs, and volunteers have been trained to run it as a social enterprise, renting out space to create an income.

Pinkspiration believes the model it has established is sustainable and could be replicated in other areas. It is cost effective and good value for money as there are no large overheads (the Newport project cost £12,000 including donations in kind from construction partners, while the Waundeg renovation cost £20,000 plus donations of materials). Programmes are designed to meet the needs of the community, which means local and national companies have an incentive to support them as part of their CSR programmes.

Through Design Factor, Pinkspiration has demonstrated that given the right lead, a community can be motivated and energised to help itself. 'It has been great working with Pinkspiration and the team, who are very professional,' said Christine Morgan, Chair of Waundeg Community Flat. 'I would recommend them getting involved with any project in your community, I feel inspired by their commitment to helping others.'