

PRESS RELEASE
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Role of Social Entrepreneurs crucial in current climate
*Ireland's Leading Innovators Honoured at
Annual Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awards as NTR plc are announced as
official partner*

Ireland is now officially in a recession, credit is more difficult to come by and the current financial crisis will inevitably put state services under increasing and unprecedented pressure, with the most vulnerable in society suffering as a result. Now more than ever we need the innovative solutions that social entrepreneurs provide to tackle such social problems.

This was the announcement at the annual **Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awards, supported by NTR**, held last night in Dublin to honour 38 exceptional individuals for their work in tackling social problems throughout Ireland.

This year there was even more to celebrate on the night as the organisation announced a three year partnership with NTR plc who will commit €450,000 over the period to help Social Entrepreneurs Ireland deliver on its vision of bringing about fundamental social change.

Speaking at the awards, Jim Barry, Chief Executive Officer of NTR plc, said; "I cannot think of a more fitting partnership for us than Social Entrepreneurs Ireland. NTR's entrepreneurial culture has been the bedrock of our significant growth and success across our renewable energy and recycling markets. What is particularly appealing for us in this partnership is the tangible way in which Social Entrepreneurs Ireland supports those who have the vision and are prepared to take risks to fulfil their ambition for fundamental social change in Ireland."

With the programme in its fourth year, Social Entrepreneurs Ireland is increasingly playing a role in solving social issues. **Guest speaker, Liam Black, former CEO of Fifteen**, Jamie Oliver's social initiative for disadvantaged youths, reiterated the importance and necessity of innovation in making social change and progress. Liam himself has held several high profile social enterprise leadership positions including at Liverpool's FRC Group, widely seen as one of the UK's pioneering social businesses.

Congratulating the recipients, he said "Now more than ever we need innovative solutions to the social challenges we face, we need people to step up to the mark to take on the task of tackling these issues, the need for social entrepreneurship is stronger than its ever been.

"You may well ask whether social entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurs Ireland is still relevant in this climate of crisis - the answer is yes, now more than ever! Their work needs to be encouraged because without them a whole section of society is at risk "

The winners, who showed outstanding innovation in their communities, were honoured at the ceremony where two levels of awards were presented. Of the 38 winners, 8 were honoured in Level 2 (highest award) and 30 were honoured in Level 1 (early stages of development).

Among the Level 2 winners on the night, **Sharon Vard** was awarded for founding *Anam Cara*, set up to offer support to bereaved parents and siblings by those who have experienced a similar loss.

Also awarded was **Golden Anikwe**, a native of Nigeria, who has been working to establish a customised support structure for co-operative businesses in Ireland to serve diverse ethnic communities and **Kate Gaynor and Kieran O'Donoghue** for Special Stories Publishing, set up to provide high quality and child focused material that addresses the countless social and health issues that so many Irish children face.

Level 1 winners included Niall Buckley who set up WorkFair, an initiative directed at combating labour exploitation of migrant workers, **Olivia Carr**, for WOVe, set up to empower women **coming from violent environments**, **Charlotte Dryden** for Love Music hate Racism, and **Dara Hogan** for Fledglings Childcare, a franchise model to provide affordable, quality childcare in the local community.

Speaking at the awards, Sean Coughlan, Chief Executive of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland said; "Given the current turbulence in the financial markets and our slide into recession and cutbacks, state support for vitally needed services has and will continue to come under unprecedented pressure and as always, it is the most vulnerable in our society who suffer the most.

"Social entrepreneurs are filling an increasingly important role in solving social issues, they have stepped up to the mark, and are actively making a difference and igniting change. Social entrepreneurs are by definition entrepreneurs; they take risks, they are passionate and resourceful in what they do. They offer a vital role within our communities and they are truly exceptional individuals that need to be encouraged as well as congratulated."

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, established in 2004, is a privately funded, not-for-profit organisation that believes that innovation and social change in Ireland will be driven by exceptional people with exceptional ideas. They have developed a support model that helps these social entrepreneurs grow their ideas from concept to reality.

In the last three years, Social Entrepreneurs Ireland has committed funds in excess of €2.8million to 116 social entrepreneurs. In the past 12 months alone over 17,000 people have directly benefited from the activities of award recipients and 165,000 have indirectly benefited.

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Social Entrepreneurs Ireland aims to ignite social change by identifying, investing in and supporting Irish social entrepreneurs – individuals who are prepared to take risks by applying their energy, drive, ambition and innovation to tackle some of Ireland's most entrenched social problems. Since 2004 the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awards programme has selected and supported 116 leading social entrepreneurs, providing financial support, training, education and network opportunities.

For more information, visit www.socialentrepreneurs.ie

About NTR plc's Partnership with Social Entrepreneurs Ireland

NTR plc has committed €450,000 in support of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland over a three year period from 2008 to 2010. NTR executives also provide mentoring support to awardees and where possible, help awardees apply their commercial entrepreneurial insights to broader social change. NTR sees in Social Entrepreneurs Ireland a means of providing important practical injection of support for those people who are prepared to take risks to fulfil their ambition for fundamental social change in Ireland.

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Notes to Editors:

Biographies on all 38 recipients are available on request

Level 2 Awards

The awards are suitable for applicants who have proven their model, have already fully launched their project and who are now looking to significantly grow its scale and impact. Level 2 awards consist of €70,000 (€80,000 for partnerships) over a period of 2 years plus technical support, training and access to the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland network of social entrepreneurs

Level 1 Awards

Level 1 awards are suitable for applicants who are at the early stages of development of their project, typically at proof-of-concept/pilot stage and consist of an award of €5,000 over a period of 12 months plus technical support, training and access to the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland network of social entrepreneurs.

2008 Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Award Winners

Level 2 Award Winners

Golden Anikwe

Kate Gaynor and Kieran O'Donoghue

Sr. Antoinette Keelan

Robert Mulhall

Mary Nally

Conor O'Leary

Sharon Vard

Co-operative Support Services

Special Stories Publishing

St John's Education Centre

Lucca Leadership

Fáilte Isteach

Rural Arts Networks

Anam Cara

Level 1 Award Winners

Suleiman Abdulahi	Dublin Cross-Cultural Club
Kazik Anhalt and Cormac O'Donnell	Central-Eastern European Network
Niall Buckley	WorkFair
Olivia Carr	WOVe
James Corbett	Vizitant
Gearóid de Brún	Aran Islands Zero Carbon Transport Initiative
David Doherty & Kevin Madigan	Source
Charlotte Dryden	Love Music Hate Racism Ireland
Glen Clay Eneh &	
John Kingsley Onwumereh	Mutual Cultural and Literary Exchange Centre
Joe Hendry	Father Quality Mark
Dara Hogan	Fledglings Childcare
Laura Kavanagh	The Lady List
Mary Keogh	ConnectAble
Robert Lee & Lucia Parle	NANO Creative Integration
Niall McManus	ReEnPower
Nobuhle Nduka	Lifeline Africa Foundation
Kate Nolan and Rosie O'Reilly	Re-dress
Shane and Daniela O'Halloran	Ireland Donates
Micheal O'Loinsigh	Eco Homes and Gardens
Kareen Pennefather	Monkeyshine Theatre
Robert Smith	Sign Video
Anne Twohig-Wall	Ananda Programmes - Mindfulness
Erik van Lennep	TEPUI
Andy Wilson	Rediscovery Centre