

Best Practice Examples of successful Social Enterprises

Made in Medelpad

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Social Mission/key social objectives

Made in Medelpad's social mission is to empower local rural artisans by providing a platform to sell their crafts, fostering sustainable entrepreneurship, and promoting Medelpad's cultural heritage. Through community collaboration, they ensure profits stay local, supporting economic stability and enhancing the region's identity and pride.

Main Activity

■ Trading (cooperatives, collectives, employer-owned)

Business Structure

■ Cooperative

Background

With the vision to uplift the landscape of Medelpad through local crafts and sustainable entrepreneurship, Made in Medelpad has created a unique concept for creators and artisans living in rural areas to make a living from their art. The association consists of members who support and develop together by selling their products both in a physical store in Sundsvall and online.

Year established: 2012

Numbers employed: 11 people

Range of activities

- Organizing pop-up shops and Christmas markets.
- Selling locally produced art and crafts in a physical store in central Sundsvall and an online store.
- Commission sales where members sell both their own and others' products.
- Organizing exhibitions with other creators to expand the product range and membership base.
- Conducting joint training activities and network building.

Target groups/clients

The target groups include local artists and craftsmen from rural areas, private individuals, companies as customers, and visitors seeking unique and locally produced art and crafts.

Business Model

The cooperative's business model is based on creating an attractive destination and selling high-quality, locally produced art and crafts. The model is financially sustainable through:

- Revenue from sales in the store and online.
- Commission sales where the profit stays local.
- A strong community and shared responsibility among members. Innovative aspects include their ability to create a common platform for artists and craftsmen to reach new markets and customers.

Lessons learnt/Tips for success

- The importance of having a strong and inclusive business model.
- The significance of cooperation and shared responsibility to ensure success.
- Creating an attractive and diverse product mix to attract various customers.
- Utilizing local resources and skills to promote sustainable development.
- Building on previous experiences and adjusting strategies based on lessons learned.

Funding



Income from Activities

Main challenges and obstacles in progressing/developing

Challenges

1. **Starting and Establishing the Concept:** Initially, Made in Medelpad faced the challenge of proving the viability of their concept. They started with a pop-up shop and a Christmas market, which were initially intended to be short-term.

2. **Sustainable Income for Artisans:** Ensuring that local artisans and craftsmen could earn a sustainable income from their work was difficult, especially given the dominance of larger commercial entities in the market.
3. **Attracting Customers and Members:** Building a customer base and expanding their membership to include more artisans was another significant challenge.
4. **Financial Stability:** Maintaining financial stability and ensuring that profits stayed within the local community was crucial, especially during times of economic uncertainty.

Solutions

1. **Proving the Concept:** The success of their initial pop-up and Christmas market demonstrated the demand for locally produced crafts, leading them to secure a permanent location for their store in Sundsvall.
2. **Creating a Strong Business Model:** They developed a strong cooperative business model that allowed artists to sell both their own products and those of others on commission. This model ensured that profits stayed local and supported the community.
3. **Diverse Product Mix and Activities:** By offering a diverse mix of products and organizing various events like exhibitions and training activities, they attracted a broad range of customers and new members.
4. **Community Engagement and Support:** They built a strong sense of community among members, sharing responsibilities and creating a collective identity. This helped to overcome financial and operational challenges.
5. **Leveraging Local Resources:** They utilized local resources and the expertise of their members to promote sustainable development and create a positive image of Medelpad.

These strategies allowed Made in Medelpad to grow from a temporary market initiative into a sustainable and influential cooperative, celebrating ten years of success.

What supports have been most useful to the development?

Advisory about business models from Coompanion.