

Best Practice Examples of successful Social Enterprises

Galdrasýning á Ströndum (Museum of Icelandic Sorcery and Witchcraft)

Address: Höfðagötu 8-10, 510 Hólmavík, Iceland

Contact Details: galdrasyning@holmavik.is

Website: <https://galdrasyning.is/>



Social Mission/key social objectives

Galdrasýning á Ströndum is a cultural and educational institution which main aim is to collect information and support research about history of witchcraft and folklore in Iceland and share this information with the exhibition, publishing, lectures and through cooperations with other institutes.

Main Activity

- NGO/Charity (NGOs and charities operate on both a large and small scales and are usually established to support a specific social, environmental, or political goal.)

Business Structure

- In Iceland it is called a self owning institution which means all profit will go into running the institution and no one can gain or loose on its success or failure. It is similar to NGO but not necessarily for charity but for some other purpose than financial success.

Background

Strandagaldur ses is a non profit NGO which runs the Museum of Icelandic Sorcery and Witchcraft. It was founded by group of local people who wanted to create a magnet for people to come and visit the region and learn about the cultural heritage.

Year established: The exhibition was opened in 2000 and the second part, the sorcerer's cottage, opened in 2005

Numbers employed: 3 people working the whole year (but not fulltime) and during the summertime staff members are increased to 5.

Besides running the exhibitions, the institution also works with researchers and artists whose work align with our theme. The institution has also published books on the material and actively shares the information we have about Icelandic witchcraft through our homepage. We consider us a cultural center for the local community by hosting events and assist in planning festival, like the recent Sorcery festival. The institution takes on a leading role in tourism development and is the only museum in the Westfjords that is open the whole year around.

Target groups/clients

The main target group is international tourists, locals, artists, researchers, cultural and research institutions

Business Model

For the institution to be financially sustainable we run a restaurant and a gift shop at the main exhibition in Hólmavík.

Lessons learnt/Tips for success

There are many things that has affected the success of the institution, but the main one is to have a full time manager working on it the whole year who is ambitious, open for new opportunities and cooperations. It was also important that there were locals who founded it in the beginning and were able to work on it in good cooperation with the local community. It has also worked good to have a non-profit organisation because that has brought much goodwill.

Funding

- State/Regional Funding Assistance
- Income from Activities

Main challenges and obstacles in progressing/developing

For Startups

1. Getting people to believe in the idea and getting funding to start it.
2. To have the grit to last through the first hard years.

For Established Ses

Our business weighs heavily on tourism, so changes there have great affects. The challenges for us are the same for tourism companies in the countryside in Iceland: weather and road conditions, seasonal changes in number of guests and being far away from where the most tourists travel in Iceland. Of course, also political changes as in changes in funds have effect on us and have pushed us to find other ways of income, like the restaurant.

What supports have been most useful to the development?

For Startups

- Getting governmental fund and preferably a contract for some years while the Startup is getting on.
- Have a good network of people/institutions who are willing and able to help the project.

For Established Ses

- Funds that have supported special projects. Both projects are cooperation with other institutions like schools and maintenance, which takes a lot of time and money, but is needed.
- Good network of people/institutions that can help the project develop.