

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS, MARKETING & BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS WORK WITH IRISH CHARITIES TO SOLVE A CHALLENGE



BACKGROUND

International Business, Marketing, and Business Administration students worked with 10 Irish charities to complete this entrepreneurial mindset project. The charities were Marymount, Cork DAWG, Cork Sexual Violence Centre, ISPCA, Down Syndrome Cork, CUH Charity, Special Olympics Munster, Cork Mental Health Foundation/Housing Association, Christina Noble Children's Foundation and The Donkey Sanctuary.

THE NEED

The charities identified challenges that they are currently facing and presented these to the student group at an initial information session. The students were tasked with developing innovative solutions that would positively impact the charities and their challenges. It was important that the student groups cared about solving the problem, so they selected which charities they wanted to work with and applied the Design Thinking process to this entrepreneurial journey.

THE SOLUTION

The students worked in groups for the project. They selected charities after the information session, continuously engaged with them, and visited the charities' premises to gain a better understanding of the challenges faced. The students' entrepreneurial journey was captured in a scrapbook and the final idea was presented by each group. Some of the ideas included:

- “Dress up your Dog” Instagram challenge – share a picture of your dog in fancy dress and nominate a friend with a link to donate.
- Transition Year Volunteering Programme collaboration.
- Family Fun Days, Apps, Seasonal Events, Fashion Shows, and Raffles.
- Collaborations with other charities to sell fresh produce, merchandise etc.
- On-Site Cafes
- “Tinder for Pets” App



BENEFITS OF THE ENGAGEMENT

The students could practically apply the Design Thinking process, a technique they can use to develop solutions for any future challenges faced. The engagement helped the students to develop empathy and gain a deeper understanding of current social issues and their impact. The charities were presented with a diverse range of innovative ideas they can implement in the future. The charities were also able to spread awareness of their work and the significant impact it has made on students.

“This project allowed the students to practically apply their learnings and develop problem-solving skills that will assist them in their academic journey and future careers. We are so grateful to the charities for collaborating as the students have gained a new appreciation of societal issues and how they can make a difference.”

- Sharon Lehane & Trudie Murray, Lecturers, Department of Management & Enterprise, MTU.

“I really enjoyed working with the students and I love their energy and the effort they have put into it.”

- Mary Crilly, Head of Cork Sexual Violence Centre.

“A pleasure to work with the students on this project.”

- Shane Falvey, Fundraising & Communications Executive, CUH Charity.

“I was very impressed with the students' passion and ideas.”

- Margaret Smith, Cork D.A.W.G.