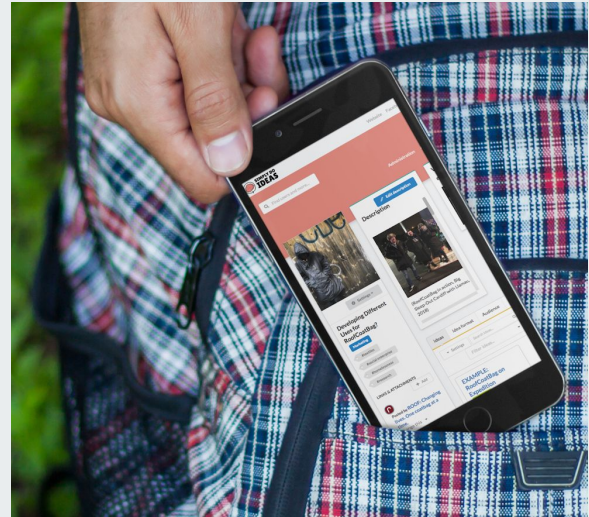


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# Innovating a Civic Mission - Valleys Innovation Project (VIP) Evaluation

John Barker, Head of R&D, Simply  
Do Ideas  
Lesley Cottrell, Enterprise Manager,  
Coleg y Cymoedd





## Innovating a Civic Mission

### Enterprise Educators UK Funded Research

22 January 2021

1. Background & Context
2. Research Questions
3. Methodology
4. Quantitative Results
5. Qualitative Results
6. Conclusions



# 1. Background and Context



Civic Mission: Embedded policy within several universities

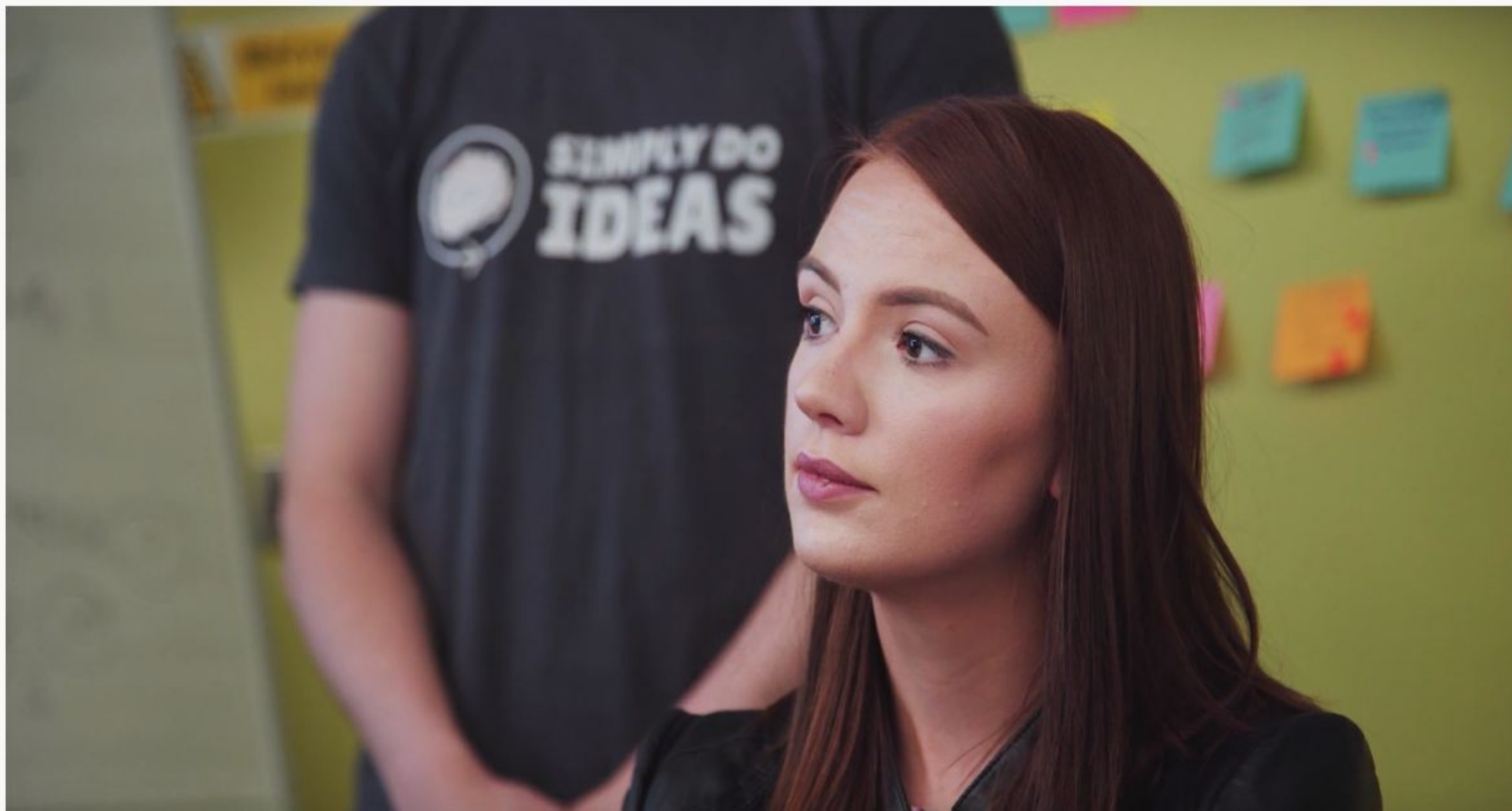


**Civic mission is defined by Thomas and Vokes (2018):**

- Combination of strategic and action orientated activities by educational institutions
- Boundary spanning civic leadership
- Links with schools and colleges
- Active citizenship
- Social enterprise and innovation

Key Driver: Understanding if and how industry and civic missions align and misalign with educational priorities. Learning is useful for the future success of these social innovation initiatives .





## The Valleys Innovation Project

On-Demand Innovation Through Digital Collaboration

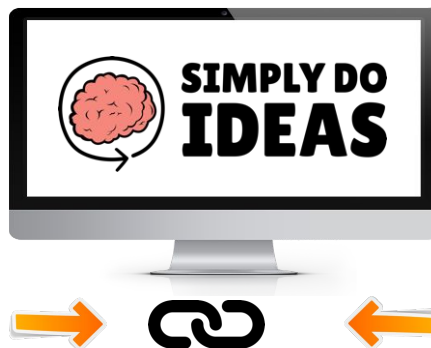
Local Organisations  
Social Challenges



NEED ON-DEMAND SOLUTIONS

NEED SKILLS

POTENTIAL EMPLOYER?



Education



Students in HE & FE



HAVE KNOWLEDGE / SKILLS / IDEAS

NEED EXPERIENCE

POTENTIAL EMPLOYEE?





***Area of Significant, Historical Economic Deprivation***  
***SOMETHING DIFFERENT NEEDED!***

- 1. *Innovation:*** Unlock the potential for innovation in the Valleys (startups, businesses, public services)
  - *But what is 'innovation'? This isn't for us!*
- 2. *Skills:*** Unlock employability and entrepreneurial capabilities of young people
  - *But real-world experience is hard to get with local employers!*
- 3. *Jobs:*** Unlock attractive, local work opportunities to drive economic growth (e.g. digital)
  - *But recruitment is risky and I don't have time!*





## **“NETFLIX” GENERATION Z (Typically up to 22 years old)**

1. Socially-minded, problem solvers
2. Enjoy on-demand, bite-sized experiences
3. First ever digital natives
4. Recognise value of work and money

***They have time, energy and talent!***



## Project Summary

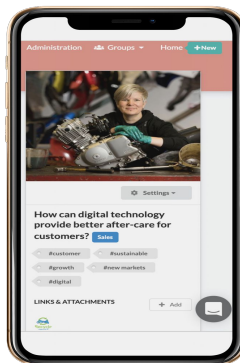
5 x Educational Partners

10 x Industry Partners

1,080 Potential Creators

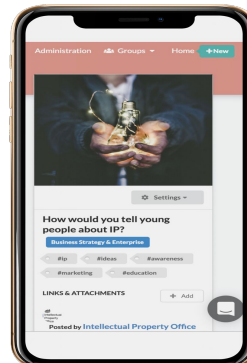
195 Ideas Created

4 x Industry Challenges



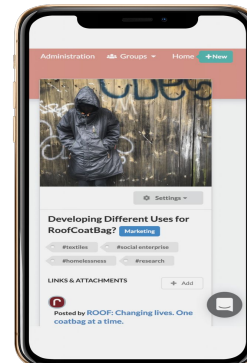
Sales

22 Ideas



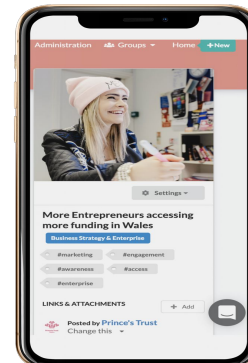
Marketing

31 Ideas



Marketing

70 Ideas



Marketing

72 Ideas

But the project needed a full and robust evaluation.....



## 2. Research Questions



To explore the impact of the Valleys Innovation Project, the proposed research project sought to answer the following research questions:

**Research Question 1: Do learners gain entrepreneurial confidence and skills through social innovation challenges?**

**Research Question 2: What is the economic impact for local businesses using socially-driven innovation challenges?**

**Research Question 3: Does the civic mission of VIP educational partners align with local business priorities?**

**Research Question 4: How does a digital solution enhance proximity between education and industry?**

# 3. Methodology



#### Quantitative Data

**Why:** Adopted for pragmatic reasons as capturing representative interviews with learners across the 5 institutions would have been difficult within the time constraints of the project.

- 20 questions - Qualtrics Survey platform based on literary drivers.
- Distributed to 115 learners
- 17 responses received ( 14.78% sample of the total population)

#### Qualitative Data

**Why:** Semi-structured interviewing with employers and the educators due to limited sample size and the need to explore results of quantitative surveying through a narrative form.

- 2 Question banks for different audiences
- 4 educational partner interviews (80% response)
- 2 interviews with employer partners (50% response)

#### Analysis

**Quantitative:** A combination of descriptive and inferential analysis was performed on the statistical data using SPSS. This inferential analysis is not presented due to the small sample.

**Qualitative:** Thematic analysis of transcribed data was performed using Nvivo. Specifically, Corley and Giola (2004) analysis was completed to enable the development of Grounded Theory (Glasner & Strauss, 1967) .

**Mixed method “fortifies and enriches” to ensure findings are triangulated and provides more generalisable results (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 3).**

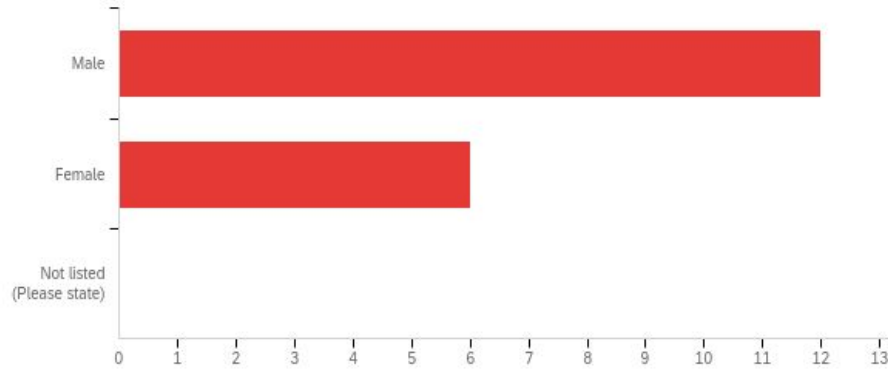


### 3. Quantitative Results



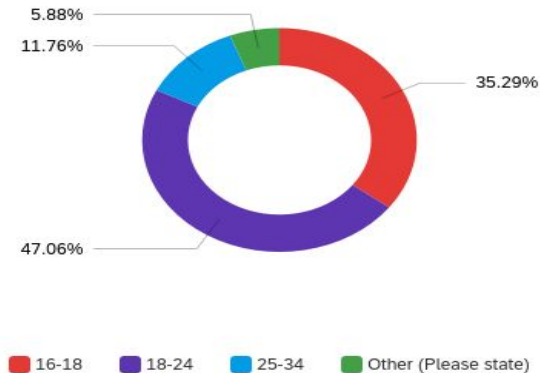
### 3. Quantitative Results | Demographic Data

Figure 1. Gender Profile



- Male bias with over double the male participants.
- Broadly representative of the project's total accessible population which featured 52% of male respondents.

Figure 2. Age Profile



- 81% of participants are below the age of 25 are within this age bracket.
- 11.76% in the 25-34 age bracket.
- The age of participants is predominantly aligns with the typical FE/HE age demographic.





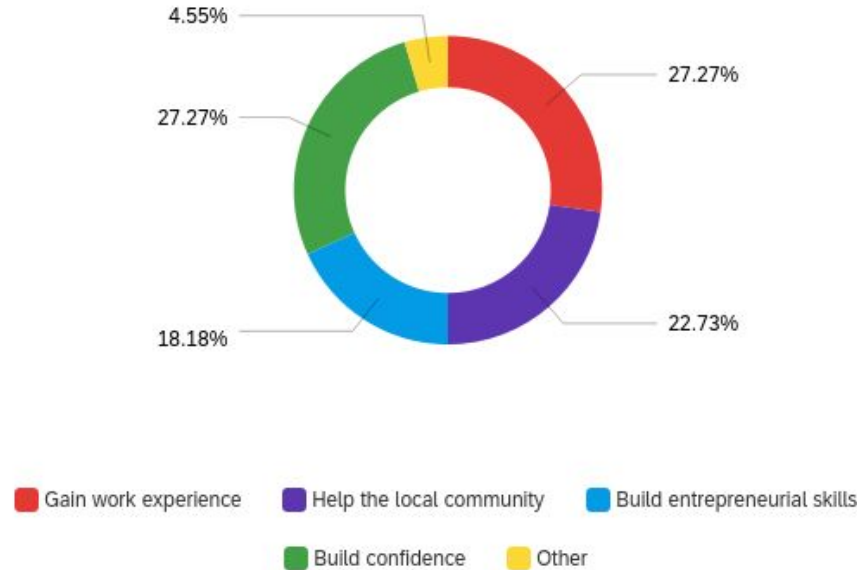
### 3. Quantitative Results | Learner Gain (RQ1)

Questionnaire asked learners to **self-assess their skills** in-relation to 7 EntreComp competencies **before the project and after the project** using a 7-point Likert scale.

EntreComp Identified Skill	Before VIP (percentage above average)	After VIP (percentage above average)	Gain/Loss (+/-)
Creative thinking	73%	100%	+27%
Creating and seizing opportunities	71.43%	100%	+28.57%
Digital skills	66.67%	100%	+33.33%
Making ideas a reality	60.87%	94.12%	+33.25%
<b>Self-reflection</b>	<b>46.67%</b>	<b>93.75%</b>	<b>+47.08%</b>
Decision-making	69.23%	88.24%	+19.01%
<b>Communication skills</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>85.71%</b>	<b>+52.41%</b>
			<b>Average Gain/Loss: +34.37%</b>



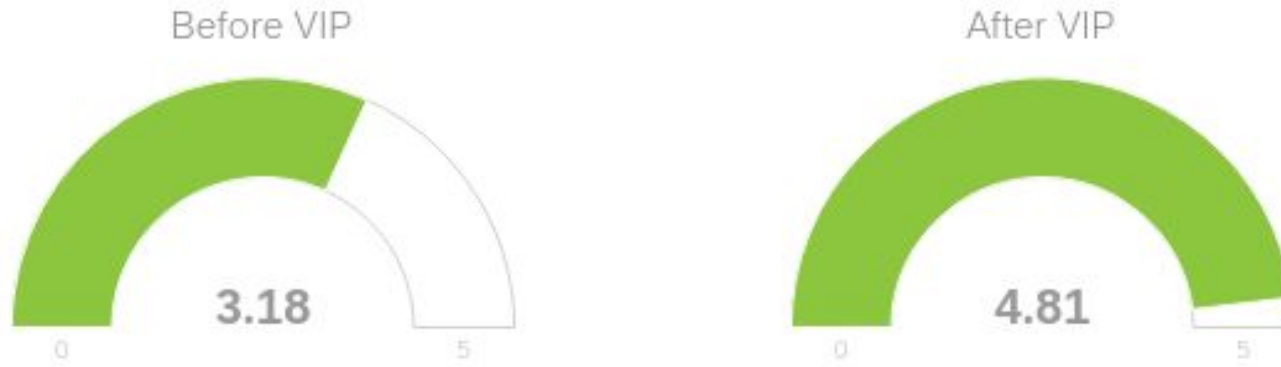
Figure 3. Learner motivations



- Majority of learners were looking to build confidence and gain work experience.
- Importance of building confidence was also highlighted by the educational partners in the qualitative interviewing and should form part of the marketing and publicity of these projects to learners in the future.



Figure 4. Pre and post project entrepreneurial confidence



- Results illustrate the positive impact of VIP on entrepreneurial self-efficacy
- Learners built entrepreneurial confidence through social innovation activity in this project.



## 4. Qualitative Results



### **Education and industry partners identified economic benefits in social innovation:**

*"It can improve processes, then obviously that's going to improve value in terms of the business itself, whatever the business is." (Education Partner 1)*

*"I suppose wider economic impact is ultimately the program we chose that we wanted to try and drum up the ideas around is one that would contribute to the wider economic society, and young people starting a business, gaining income, and contributing to the economy." (Industry Partner 1)*

### **Social innovation also offered partners cost and time-saving opportunities:**

*"It's like casting into an audience that you may not have considered who could generate ideas far more cost-effectively than in engaging in external agency for instance." (Industry Partner 1)*

*"It would be maybe more time-consuming. Well, definitely more time-consuming." (Education Partner 2)*

**Underlying theme is one of financial benefits for all partners involved in social innovation**



### **Further education partners outlined positive proximity to the community:**

*"we've got close links with the town center, we've got excellent links in terms of word-based learning. I would say we've got a very strong community and we do live our values and live our mission in that way."* (Education Partner 2)

*"Help the whole community. That's people, the businesses, the charities, to help everybody just to give everyone-- to help that way in all aspects."* (Education Partner 3)

### **Industry partners highlighted similar investment in the community:**

*"supporting young people with tangible skills, knowledge, and experiencing they need to progress in life is most important. Very closely aligned to that, is being able to contribute to society."* (Industry Partner 1)

*"We already support local schools, colleges, and universities with our work in the education sector. Raising awareness of intellectual property and where it fits. We also support local businesses through our outreach program."* (Industry Partner 2)

**Underlying theme for both education and industry partners was the development of skills in the local community**



**Industry partners highlighted digital platforms as a positive tool for engagement with young people:**

*"embrace digital platforms because that's the future and that's the future of where young people will be, will be working, where they need to develop key skills."* (Industry Partner 1)

*"we engaged with young people that possibly we wouldn't have engaged with if we'd launched the competition ourselves. It also enabled us to easily reach young people in different educational institutions."* (Industry Partner 2)

**The educational partners highlighted ease and effectiveness of a digital platform in supporting the activity;**

*"If we hadn't done it digitally then they would have had, you know, 25 bits of paper with the students' ideas on. I think that the digital platform is of huge benefit."* (Education Partner 2)

*"we realized how important digital connection is and perhaps we come to realize how we can use it more effectively."* (Education Partner 1)

**Underlying theme is a that digital platforms can support better engagement, effectiveness and ease of use for both industry and education in social innovation projects.**





# 5. Conclusions



### **Q1) Do learners gain entrepreneurial confidence and skills through social innovation challenges?**

- Learners do gain entrepreneurial confidence and skills through the social innovation challenges of VIP.
- 34% average increase across 7 skill sets mapped against the EntreComp competency framework.
- Learners also identified a specific rise in entrepreneurial confidence in setting up a business - illustrates the potential impact of social innovation on entrepreneurial futures.

### **Q2) What is the economic impact for local organisations using socially-driven innovation challenges?**

- Participants highlighted a range of economic benefits of social innovation
- Cost and time savings were highlighted by industry and education
- Process efficiencies and potential income generation for learners were also identified as secondary benefits.



### **Q3) Does the civic mission of VIP educational partners align with local business priorities?**

- Industry partners support the values of community and civic missions
- Key areas of synergy between education and industry include the development of talent and skills
- Matching of institutional values needs to be performed prior to project launch to ensure that the community-based values of educational institutions are not in conflict with the economic imperative of industry partners.

### **Q4) How does a digital solution enhance proximity between education and industry?**

- Gains were seen in terms of project organisation, process, and engagement with learners using a digital platform.
- Feedback from employers about the need to meet the educational partners in a physical space to build longer-term relationships



# Best Practice Report and Resources

Contact: John Barker, Head of Research  
and Development, Simply Do Ideas  
[john@simplydo.co.uk](mailto:john@simplydo.co.uk)



# Q&A

