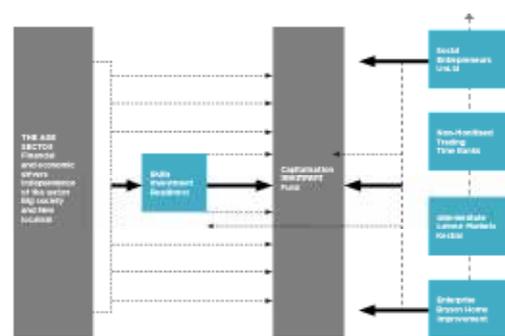
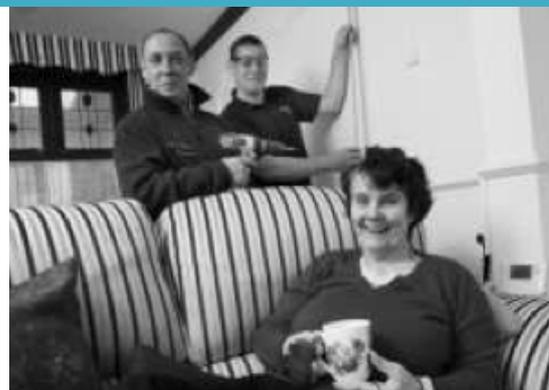


Social Economy Age Programme

Atlantic's Northern Ireland *Age Programme* has worked to develop a social economy programme as an integrated set of grants concerned with strengthening the supply of capital finance to age-based social enterprises across the province. It has also developed financial skills across the age sector in terms of investment readiness, and through non-monetised trading schemes such as Time Banks. Specific projects increased the number of older social entrepreneurs, pilot-tested a home-improvement social enterprise and used intermediary labour markets (ILMs) to bring older people back into the workplace.

This social economy programme aims to strengthen a third approach in which ethical practice, social values and the needs and priorities of older people shape service delivery.



Impacts and Successes

The grant to Charity Bank supported the **Investment Readiness Programme** that developed the **financial capability** of the NI age sector. The bank was also grant-aided to develop lending to age-sector social enterprises.

The **Kestrel Project** aims to provide **positive employment practices** for people **over 50**. Since it began in 2009, **107** people have completed formal training, with **94** of these obtaining employment and **33** becoming formal volunteers

The **UnLtd project** offers **mentoring** and **financial support** for social entrepreneurs. Through the Ignite awards, it has supported the development of **40 social enterprises** and delivered **20 full-time jobs**

The **Bryson Energy Handyperson Pilot** aims to maintain the independence of older people at home while improving their **quality of life**, security and mobility. The programme delivered **549** separate improvements to **183 households**

Sustainable Practices

Developing an economy for and by older people will require new cultures, skills, finance and organisational formats. By demonstrating what is possible, Atlantic's programme provides an important resource for the sector in NI and beyond. But this is a long-term project and the enabling environment in skills and social finance need to be resourced across the community and voluntary sector in Northern Ireland.

The politics and practicalities of the approach also need to be recognised. This is not about a semi-privatised state or cheap welfare; it is about creating and retaining wealth within the age (and

related) sectors in ways that provide quality services for older people. The ethics of these practices need to be constantly recognised and evaluated.

The age sector has some excellent social enterprise models but to build scale, quality and financial efficiency greater collaboration will be needed across the different organisations and sectors.

The SROI model is an evaluation technique that could be used to better understand sustainability and to make the case about impact, social value and the need for further funding, especially from government.

An integrated approach is required, linking grants together to build an infrastructure to sustain a more independent age sector. Such approaches require patience, a degree of risk and an ability to learn when things don't go well

Social Economy Age Programme
Bryson Charitable Group; UnLtd;
GEMS; Volunteer Now; Charity Bank.

Analysis prepared by Queen's University Belfast.