



Kilcheran a non-profit social enterprise company, trading as Waste Innovations, STIRnetwork, Genesis Innovations, Lily's, Fruit Basket. Company Limited by Guarantee no. 467354 registered in Scotland.



We are a social enterprise on a mission to improve our social, economic and environmental future through innovation, creativity, and community involvement.



“It’s not just what we do, but the way that we do it”

Kilcheran, [sustainability facilitators](#), recently evolved from social enterprise pilots, including STIRnetwork, WASTEinnovations and Genesis Innovations between 2002 and 2019 which explored how we could make a difference in peoples' lives through volunteering as a stepping stone into employment. We worked with very diverse communities including long term unemployed, alcohol misuse, prison service, (www.stirnetwork.com www.wasteinnovations.com) university students, corporate businesses and the general public. The common denominator was the integration of the creative industries in particular through art, craft, design and innovation to transform people and create added value for the individual, the community businesses and the environment.

Now, our experienced sustainability facilitators work both in Scotland and internationally to use the above experience to explore and implement positive change into communities utilising our tried and tested "blueprints", technology, shared digital platforms, on-line learning and eco-workshops and collaborative international virtual teams.

We are currently working in the UK, Pakistan and South Sudan. (www.share-ing.org).

We work to address the 17 UN sustainability goals, targeting communities in most need and creating tailored solutions to the communities with which we work. We work through partnerships, aimed at scaling up their capability to make an impact in their own communities. This includes the following:

- To facilitate social enterprise development utilising existing community skills e.g. ethnic crafts;
- To facilitate added value through skills training in product development, marketing etc.
- To work collaboratively to identify environmental and community challenges and to facilitate solutions to these
- problems through entrepreneurship and business development;
- To create income generation
- To offer shared online platform working to reduce costs and accelerate start-ups
- To address equality issues
- To facilitate volunteering as a route to skills and employment
- To share our values and ethos of honesty and integrity through transparent working practices.



Kilcheran's way of working creates long-term change for the communities with which we work, drawing on the communities own strengths and enabling and nurturing them to plug any gaps they have in skills, training and support to overcome their unique community challenges. Kilcheran has over 25 tried and tested "Blueprints" which address key community issues including livelihood creation, community empowerment and environmental solutions. These include a pop-up cafe, products made from waste, graphic and web design collective, greetings cards, eco-workshops, jam making. We partner with existing community groups and charities to facilitate the appropriate solutions which will maximise the benefit to their specific client groups. e.g. We are currently partnering with a women's co-operative who do hand-embroidery and have worked with them to develop products and access the international [marketplace](#).

Our portfolio exhibits our key themes, reproducible nuggets of community transformation poised ready and waiting to be co-developed in other communities.

2003- 2019 These projects involved over 2000 people in an urban (Edinburgh) and rural setting (Scottish Borders) and were many and diverse including:

- STIRwood - the creative reuse of waste wood into value added products and services;
- STIRpoly- the large scale recycling of plastics, rehabilitation of ex-offenders and research for innovative reuse and recycling of the plastic waste;
- STIRart: the exploration of how to generate sustainable incomes for artists and crafters to enable them to stay in the creative zone;
- WASTEinnovations (www.wasteinnovations.com) brand consisting of over 700 product lines, made from waste of diverse types including jute sacks, paper, computer parts, electrical wire and upcycled fashion and fabrics with their own product development, cottage industry manufacture and retail of these products;
- The Portal, a creative zone with eco-workshops, artists hub, art gallery and shop selling only products made from waste.





STEPPING INTO WELLBEING

Volunteering has been central to the Kilcheran vision, utilising art, design and innovation at every step. People are diverse in their strengths, but art and creativity is the channel to well being and can be integrated into every project and team, resulting in raised confidence, self-esteem and a journey towards well being.

As a social enterprise we have engaged with the full diversity of community, meeting them where they are at and seeking to explore what they need and want and their contribution to the social economy. By creating mixed ability teams with creatives at the heart we can co-create, nurture, expand, heal and transform and at the same time deliver exciting new products, services and opportunities creating volunteering and job opportunities but also bring people into a place of community and well being.

Creative professionals form the backbone our social enterprises transferring skills through informal on the job apprenticeship-style working. Matching the right opportunity and skill sets is essential for the individual to unleash their motivation and nurture their strengths and the continuity that this provides creates a platform for the introduction of sustainability principles through eco-design and sustainable manufacturing strategies.

Once training is complete two options are available - a cottage industry style working where trained individuals work from home to fit into their family support schedules or a sharing partnership with a community group or charity that supports teams of volunteers.

Raising the standards and expectations are a key component of the products and services produced with emphasis on quality workmanship. This is achieved through supporting the workforce, e.g. Investor in People was awarded in 2007, and rigorous quality assurance.





Case Study : Lily's Pop up café

"Lily's" is a mobile pop-up café social enterprise. The aim of it is to combat loneliness. The café was designed to "pop" up at village halls and create the platform for community engagement, relationship development, dialogue and research in order to engage with local crafters, address mental health issues and create livelihood opportunities. What we encountered were huge differences in the way we were received. Some welcomed us with open arms and fully engaged with us, while others were resentful and even angry. We quickly learned from this experience in Scotland that the important first step is to identify local respected individual(s) with whom we could develop relationship with and inform the vision of what we were seeking to do and its purpose and then to work through them in the development of a local community led café but still utilising the blueprint approach.



Case Study : STIRgrafik

STIRgrafik composed of film, photography, graphic and web design and digital art have engaged with many professionals in the course of its development since 2003.

- Created exciting opportunities for career development for young creative designers in media and related genres;
- Created exciting opportunities for career development for young sales and marketing professionals;
- Created a platform for volunteering and support for a broad range of issues (including mental health, stroke, health recovery etc) with the support of personnel teams;
- Created web, print and media requirements for a broad spectrum of Kilcheran's social enterprise projects;
- Facilitated change in sustainability thinking in companies and organisations with which we work;
- Dissolved cultural barriers by bringing people from different geographic areas into single project centred teams.





“Integrating business, environment and community to create a sustainable future”

Case Study: STIRpaper- hand made papermaking

STIRpaper was developed as an art/design and manufacturing workshop blueprint for paper and cardboard recycling into value-added products, with the intention of it being passed on into communities to be replicated, since paper is a ubiquitous waste and readily available anywhere. It manufactures hand-made paper products from locally generated paper waste, supporting local businesses and organisations in their drive towards zero emissions. Products are sold into the community in which the paper is collected, so closing the loop and generating a circular economy.

Products include:

- A range of characteristic papers in varying sizes, colours and textures. Our paper is unique reflecting aspects of its Scottish roots with a range of papers named after the Scottish mountains, rivers and islands;
- Wedding/party stationery;
- Original art greetings cards;
- Ready to use papier mache for craft eco-workshops;

Outcomes:

- Value-added development of products with design is a key feature utilising the talents of numerous artists;
- Training/apprenticeship/job experience for volunteers, school placements, retired and disabled giving the opportunity to be part of design, manufacturing workshop, business or sales/marketing teams;
- Volunteering alongside paid professionals creates opportunities of confidence and self esteem building leading to improved well being outcomes;
- Inter-generational skills exchange;
- Contributes towards zero waste and circular economy;
- Livelihood generation through cottage industry network.





The creation of a shared community enterprise hub where women can come and meet others, be inspired and seize opportunities for the fulfillment of well-being, skills development and economic empowerment.

Case Study : Addressing Mental Health through the creation of shared community space.

[Mahraka Centre](#), Chitral Valley, North Pakistan

A partnership with [Kho and Kalashi](#) has led to the development of the Mahraka centre- a community hub where the women can come for friendship, support, and training and to open up economic opportunity for them. Sustainability is at the heart of what Kilcheran does, and an early priority was to ensure the centre's long-term viability, not reliant on external funding. The creation of an internet café offering ID photographs, photocopying and CV development provides a local need and can generate sufficient income to cover running costs.

Impact

Women's empowerment, social connectivity and mental wellbeing are key issues in this project and will be addressed through income generation by enhancing the skills set of some of the artisans, building confidence and self-esteem to ensure physical and mental well-being, and development of self-supporting social networks.

Read our latest [feature](#)

“Making and Taking Space” for the women of Chitral has been the priority in this project. Mental health issues and suicide are significant in the region particularly among women. They become squeezed between a “Can do” internet world of virtual connectivity and the isolation and loneliness of a “Can’t do” reality of cultural and geographical restraints. Priorities of addressing poverty, equality, and education for girls are all high on the agenda of the Pakistan government and these are among the United Nations Sustainable Development goals announced in 2019. The project was much needed. and will continue into the future.





“Investing in art and design communities is essential for raising self-esteem and creating future paid, appropriate sustainable livelihoods.”

ENGAGING WITH CREATIVES

In our experience, many creatives become disillusioned when ready to confront a limited scope job market and many end up in low paid jobs serving the hospitality sector. Motivation dwindles, often to the point of no return.

Quality craftsmanship, skills exchange, and quality assurance standards are therefore only possible through strengthening the creative networks. This has been achieved by creating a platform for artists and designers across many genres through exhibitions, collaboration forums, shared workspaces and artist – in-residence opportunities. This leads to confidence building resulting in readiness and capability to embrace paid new opportunities.



Case Study : STIRart

STIRart was developed specifically to engage with diverse arts communities through the utilisation of domestic and industrial waste into art objects and home décor items. This led to community centred art exhibitions and a permanent art exhibition space at The Portal, Kilcheran’s eco-shop, opening opportunities as curators, workshop leaders, film, photography, product designers, trainers and manufacturers:

- Training, apprenticeships, work experience and interest workshops for the wider community;
- Multi-strand self-sustaining income stream through the sales of art works, products, commissions and workshops
- Art exhibitions as a shop window;
Home and garden products with a large turnover potential.

Impact

- Reusing/recycling waste
- Zero waste
- Waste hierarchy optimisation
- Sustainable development
- Proximity principle, using waste where it is generated
- Generating maximum added value from waste
- Valuing people
- Maximising individuals' potential
- Creating jobs
- Addresses area waste plans
- Educating public
- Educating business



CEILIDH CONNECTIONS

Ceilidh Connections is one of Kilcheran's social enterprises focused on the preservation and encouragement of the cultural heritage of Scotland through music and dance in particular. It is in the process of developing a craft range based on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Scotland, including its Celtic roots. It creates community partnerships and runs ceilidhs to fulfill the following aims:

- To provide a platform for traditional Scottish musicians, dancers and bards and encourage skills exchange through workshop development;
- To raise the profile of Scottish culture and produce world-wide;
- To promote family and all age events;
- To create vibrant enjoyable events that exude enthusiasm and fosters community spirit and belonging;
- To fund raise for our ongoing work in the area of sustainability and job creation;
- To act as a catalyst within the communities in which the ceilidh occurs to be a platform for the development of community partnership projects both in Scotland, and overseas;
- To advertise opportunities for volunteering in the host community;
- To encourage the further development of additional Ceilidhs through the dissemination of *Ceilidh Connections Kits*;
- To bring community groups together under a unified aim of community development;
- To promote Fair trade, organic food production and quality Scottish produce and products through the ceilidh catering provision;
- To link in with and develop new events which celebrate the historic roots of our Ceilidh Connections and heritage e.g. the Celtic people, early Celtic Christianity, the Votadini, traditional music and dance, archaeological sites etc.





“Dipping into the past may be the answer to find sustainable solutions for the future.”

INTERGENERATIONAL SKILLS SHARING

Awareness by governments and public of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of crafts globally has been raised by UNESCO intervention. However, artisan techniques and skills still risk being lost and opportunities need to be created for the younger generation to be enthused and to see future livelihood opportunities in these.

Taking heritage crafts and transforming them into sustainable new futures is key to maintaining rural populations, coupled with digital technology and remote working. This opens up genuine livelihood opportunities for sustainable home working, digitally connected to markets and multi-strand income streams through eco-tourism, on-line workshops and e-commerce.



Case Study: [Heritage Fishing Baskets and Livelihood Creation in Scottish Fishing Communities](#)

The potential for creating future livelihoods in Scottish fishing communities by copying heritage fishing baskets from the late 19th early 20th century is currently being explored. Urgency for action became apparent from feedback from UNESCO, national government, Zero Waste Scotland and fishing communities. Sustainable livelihoods could rejuvenate coastal communities where fishing has declined, drawing on cultural heritage and addressing plastic waste in the oceans at the same time.

- Intergenerational skills exchange and training programmes;
- Highlights the need for research and interventions;
- Sustainably produced willow baskets and creels could replace plastic in fishing industry and reduce plastics in the oceans;
- Potential livelihood regeneration in fishing communities;
- Multi-strand income stream potential resulting in a viable sustainable income for younger generation in rural locations.

Project funded by [Historic Environment Scotland](#)



CREATING JOBS

The creative industries cannot work alone. In our experience the creativity often, but not always, precludes the key skills typically required for good business management including administration, accounting and marketing skills.

The Kilcheran business model that we have piloted since 2003 has taken account of these strengths and weaknesses in individuals and created, through partnership working, a core business hub centred around a digital framework which allows us to fully function in a virtual environment with no geographical boundaries other than access to internet. This shared digital platform allows community enterprises to grow quickly as they do not seek to reinvent the wheel each time. This accelerates job creation and allows rural community initiatives to flourish even where graduate competencies in business management are missing. This permits jobs in creativity and innovation to be maximised where the skills are located often in rural ethnic communities. resulting in increase in accelerated growth and capacity building, leading to more jobs in a short space of time.



FUSION

[Fusion](#) has resulted from a collaborative partnership between Kilcheran in Scotland and Kho and Kalashi in Chitral, North Pakistan. The products resulting from this collaboration, for example [Kalbuki dolls](#), have been co-designed between international designers and Kho and Kalashi and are being marketed with 100% of the income returning to the community in which they are beautifully embroidered.

- Interpretation of ICH for future trends and markets;
- Open door digital design studio facilitating skills exchange and training;
- The digital platform amplifies artisan skills for local benefit;
- The digital business hub has been key in a very quick transition from a community group of women artisans into a legally structured social enterprise.
- International collaboration enhances skills and quality of work;
- The volunteer bank, part of the digital hub, creates opportunities to connect those with time and skills across geographical divides to enhance productivity, e.g. some of the volunteers working with Kho and Kalashi are from the UK, Germany, Finland and Pakistan;
- Replication potential into other communities within Pakistan and UK and wider international communities.

Watch short film [here](#)



Case Study: Waste Innovations

WASTEinnovations creates eco-kits from a centralised hub of waste resource material that are then manufactured into a variety of fashion, home and garden product lines. In addition these eco-kits are also used for eco-workshops, alongside community cafes and on-line.

- Creating jobs and volunteering in the creative sector from waste;
- Upcycling waste from business partnerships, for example through our Oxfam second hand shop partnership, instead of it going to landfill;
- Eco-kits are then used by community partnerships to create jobs and volunteering to make up the kits;
- [On-line eco-workshops](#) increases marketing capacity and therefore income generation and waste reuse;
- Covid-19 compatible enhancing well being in participants through an on-line community including young single parent families, older people, disabled and vulnerable.
- It will encourage creativity, communication and community in this season of additional vulnerability for these target groups.
- Over 700 product lines made from waste.





MAPPING – Building on Existing Foundations

Central to all of Kilcheran's work is collaborative partnerships, building on the already existing frameworks that exist in communities and overlaying them with sustainability outcomes, to the benefit of community, business and environment. We identify existing creative projects, businesses and environmental initiatives in a geographical area, map them and this then forms a visual foundation on which we can build to illicit change and maximise source materials and creative partnerships. We have recently explored GIS mapping to assist in this process, so optimising project outcomes through geographical proximity.

STIRwood

Our first community mapping project in Leith resulted in the development of STIRwood in 2003, a social enterprise focused on upcycling pallet wood into eco-products. By mapping 3 layers-business community and environmental initiatives we were able to collaborate and gather pallet wood from businesses in a feasible geographical area. It allowed us to identify existing community resources, a community fully fitted wood workshop, which provided a low cost start-up solution for the first 2 years, and surplus Council maintenance wood working machinery.

- Maximises existing community resources;
- Minimises reinventing the wheel;
- Provided much needed collection of pallet wood for businesses which was a costly nuisance to dispose of;
- Facilitated sustainability outcomes through partnership;





GENESISinnovations (STIRPoly)

Central to our GENESISinnovations vision is recycling on an industrial scale, coupled with creativity and innovation utilising science and technology.

We identified one of the biggest businesses in the Scottish Borders who at that time weren't recycling any of their waste. Following a contractual agreement, we embarked on diverting tonnes of polystyrene packaging waste which composed over 90% of their food processing waste, which we processed from day 1, creating jobs and volunteering opportunities.

- Mapping and research was central to the identification of Farne Salmon in Duns in the Scottish Borders and location of our industrial base;
- It also identified other partnerships in the town, including the Scottish Prison Service who were closely involved in the project, and a derelict garden;
- Adopted state of the art polystyrene recycling technology;
- Utilised biofuel collected from local fish and chip shops to run our vehicle;
- Initiated our "Industrial Ecology Unit" (IEU), which is now central to Kilcheran's shared digital business hub, researching reuse alternatives to recycling polystyrene fish boxes and scientific analysis to assess future recycling options;
- As a direct result of the IEU and the community mapping, we very quickly developed a garden refurbishment programme alongside the STIRpoly, reusing the polystyrene fish boxes as tomato grow boxes in the refurbished 60 foot greenhouse, and identified abundant primulas through the local council, salvaged following seasonal planting;
- A community network of inter-dependent social enterprise initiatives were developed as a result of the early mapping procedures, generating more jobs and volunteering opportunities.

Makers Labs Feasibility

Makers Labs Feasibility is a project funded by the Scottish government to map the artisan skills in remote villages in the Chitral valley, which are out of reach for conventional skills training at the Mahraka centre in Chitral town, and assess the needs in terms of skills gaps for finishing and quality control in particular.





PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Market analysis and trend analysis have been important starting points to designing products that people want to buy at a price that they are willing to pay. Cost analysis and manufacturing logistics are therefore also important at this early stage, requiring the need of professional input to establish forecasted cost analysis and margins to assess the product viability even before the design has started.

Once assessed and passed this stage the eco-design and final product can be realised, minimising additional materials and incorporating sustainable supplementary materials and packaging. For example our jewellery ecokits are packed in compostable transparent cellulose bags, and the upcycled beads are strung with organic hemp rather than cotton cord.

Products from Waste: Albion Road Creative Studios, Edinburgh

We developed a fashion design studio focused on upcycled clothing, and a multi-use creative workshop for a variety of other crafts, including mosaic, wood and jute. The eco-fashion team harvested left over clothing from Swaperama community clothing events and developed 3 ranges of clothing:

R1 -reusable vintage clothing

R2- recycled, brief 30-minute modification by fashion designers to make on trend;

R3- reconstruction

Products from Intangible Cultural Heritage Roots- Chitral, Pakistan

Exactly the same principles are applied to the development of products rooted in ICH in the Chitral valley. Replication of the WASTEinnovations blueprint for product development, quality assurance and manufacturing as a reproducible framework has been extremely successful, adapting the blueprint to the unique cultural backdrop of the artisans in Chitral, and has confirmed its role in rapid acceleration of product development in other communities, both for waste and ICH.

These shared principles are:

- Zero waste;
- Circular economy;
- Added value to waste through creative design and workmanship, e.g. stencilled or applied motifs of fabric or embroidery;
- Innovative development of offcuts into other products, e.g. the fabric offcuts were developed into a range of co-ordinated eco-accessories;
- Even the offcuts of the offcuts were salvaged, colour separated and "Bottled" into reusable lemonade bottles and sold for collage to art students and general public.





INNOVATIVE MARKETING STRATEGIES

Product development, eco-design concepts are worthless without carefully planned marketing strategies. Kilcheran's journey has been a journey of exploration, running:

- an eco-shop, eco-art gallery and eco-workshops in a centralised high footfall area of the Edinburgh old town called The Portal;
- running a partnership pop-up shop in Edinburgh St James Centre in an eco-collaborative partnership with Scottish and Southern Electric (SSE), who were promoting reduced electricity consumption and green energy.
- The "eco-party", centred on individuals running pop-up home based opportunities to showcase our eco-products through a participatory eco-workshop over a glass of wine and nibbles;
- Sustainability market stalls, linked into pop-up café ;
- Sustainability markets for large corporates e.g. Royal Bank of Scotland;
- Sharing income through partnership

Case Study: Shakti Women's Aid

- participated as a group in our on-line eco-workshops;
- lives were transformed as a result of improved well being through the community created on-line and participation in craft activities;
- Volunteering developed;
- Involvement in running on-line workshops;
- Involvement in running stalls
- Income sharing to support their work;
- Multiple outcomes for their client group-improved well being, volunteering and fund raising to contribute to their work.



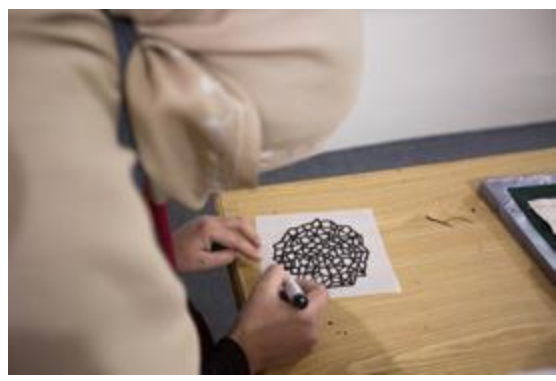


CRAFT EDUCATION

Our manufacturing process involving the intermediary step of eco-kits as described earlier, creates opportunities to access the huge DIY market of crafters. Eco-kits form the basis of involving and educating the public of all ages in craft, and raising awareness of environmental issues at the same time.

Initially our workshops were held in cafes, community groups, gala days, our eco-party and as part of our own programme of activities in the Lily’s pop-up café. More recently as a consequence of Covid-19 we have developed a programme of on-line eco-workshops that have proven to be very successful. People and organised groups sign up prior to the eco-workshop , receive an eco-kit in the post and an invitation to an online live eco-workshop experience. The workshops are designed to cater for different age groups, skills and interest groups.

- Participation is a route to well-being;
- Community development;
- Releases latent creativity inspiring the pursuit of other craft activities;
- Involvement through craft workshops frequently results in a desire to volunteer to support the work we do;
- Creates stepping stones into employment.





INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

Kilcheran's Creative Co-lab is part of the digital platform business hub that is available through partnership and is a portal for international (and national) collaboration. It fulfils very specific and localised needs to plug the skills gap in order to facilitate the production of products to the required quality standards.

Research field trips that map the artisan skills and catalogue them alongside an appraisal of skills gaps needed to bring local artisans up to standard for the commercial market, provide the information needed to compile e' learning vocational courses and collaborative workshops with international product designers and other specific skillsets identified. For example screen printing workshops have speeded up and improved the reproducibility of embroidery designs.

- Volunteer bank, permits access to virtual volunteers delivering skills and support that is not available in the local area;
- Access to international designers and product developers;
- Access to vocational skills;
- Cross cultural exchange;
- Sharing of cultural motifs that can enhance products in both countries;
- trade exchange to maximise income and added value.





ENGAGING WITH GOVERNMENT

Engaging with national and local government is an important aspect of being sustainability facilitators and creating opportunities to be an influencer is important. Recent awareness raising of our work in Pakistan was well attended by Scottish MSPs earlier this year.

It is also important to be in alignment with government policies and frameworks as they seek to create influence and opportunity internationally. Our success in a very competitive arena to win a recent Scottish Government grant to develop the “Makers Labs” in Chitral indicates that we are in alignment with Scottish government international aid agenda, reporting on the UN Sustainable development Goals and working through partnerships to collaborate and co-develop projects, for example.

Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland is seen riding one of our Edinburgh based eco-advertising bikes.



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