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Taking a step back from the individual social entrepreneur

Ziene Mottiar

Technological University Dublin, ziene.mottiar@dit.ie

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Taking a step back from the individual social entrepreneur

An investigation of how a national tourism policy resulted in the emergence of new social entrepreneurs in destinations across Ireland

Dr. Ziene Mottiar, School of Hospitality Management and Tourism, DIT

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A. Social Entrepreneurship Literature

- **Definition** - 'change agents' (Sharis and Lerner 2006), 'changemakers (Ashoka, 2014)
- **Characteristics** – 'Heroic claims' (Parkinson and Hosworth, 2008, p.291) versus Demarcro's (2005, p.48) suggestion that 'social entrepreneurs is just a new term for those generous individuals who have always existed and who are motivated to make the world better'

- Motivations – personal fulfillment, helping society, nonmonetary focus, achievement, closeness to social problem (Gemak and Robinson, 2013)
- Problem identification – Zahra et al (2009) develop a typology based on how problem is identified – local, societal or global levels

B. The Gathering

- Reaction to recession.
- Ireland has 70 million Diaspora
- 2013 Year of The Gathering – mission to attract Diaspora to visit Ireland



Organization of The Gathering



‘Target was to help create 20 or 30 events per county so a few hundred in total. We ended up with around 5,000’ (Miley, 2013)

250-275,000 more tourists came to Ireland in 2013 and additional revenue raised was 170million.

C. Research Questions

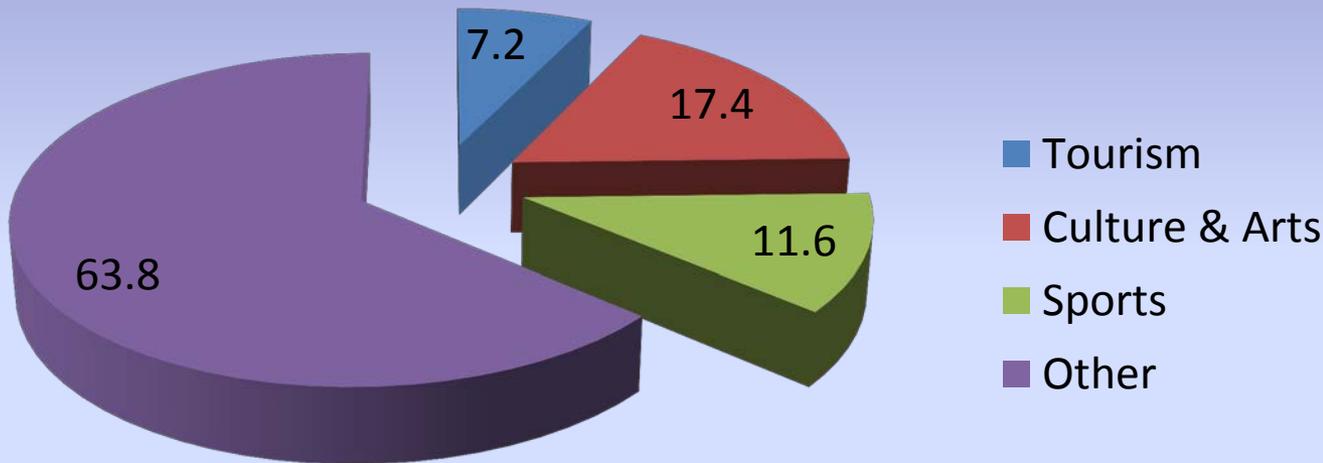
- Who were the social entrepreneurs who emerged as a result of The Gathering?
- Were they tourism/hospitality entrepreneurs?
- What motivated them to engage in these activities?
- How do the findings inform thinking on social entrepreneurs?

D. Methods

- Focus on two counties. Co. Kerry and Co. Westmeath
- **Phase 1:** Secondary sources consulted
- **Phase 2:** 16 Key informant interviews
- **Phase 3:** On-line questionnaire for event organizers – 73 responses approx 21% sample
- **Phase 4:** Five focus groups with community members and event organizers

E. Who were these social entrepreneurs?

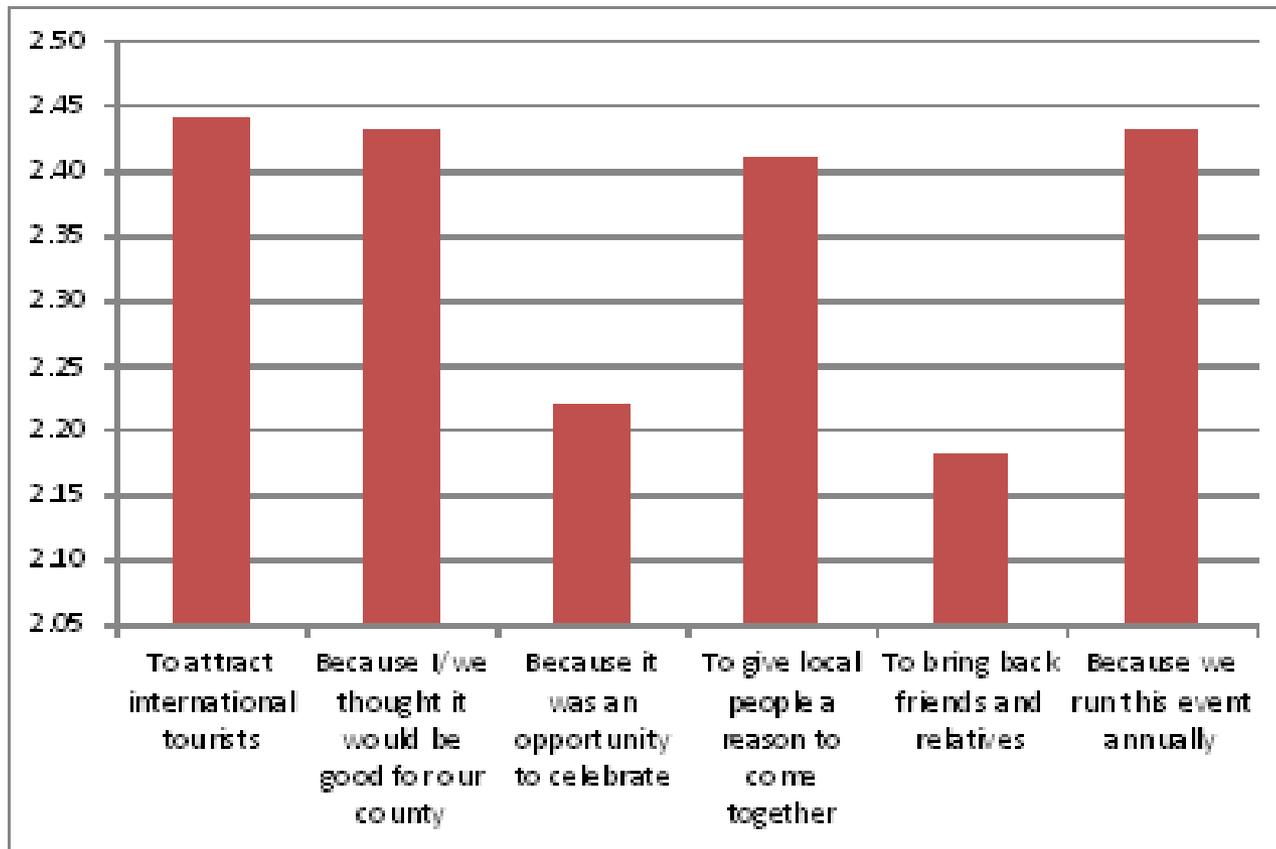
What sector were event organizers from?



26% were not active in any other local group

‘Failte Ireland wanted to bring more people here to make money for business but community made a conscious decision that the Gathering is not just for people abroad, it was for community’

Why did they engage in these activities?



- Impact of government on objectives
- Focus on local impact

- The Gathering generated a stimulus for action

'The Gathering gave us a kick-start'

'It gave ordinary people an opportunity to come up with different initiatives; gave them a purpose; opened up their minds'

'the Gathering provided an opportunity for people who had never been involved on committees before to get involved'

Once the event was included on the Gathering calendar 'I had to do it'

- It made SE work in a different way

'forced us to stand back and review what we had and what we could make of it'

We 'established a proper committee, and this will endure'

What impact did The Gathering have in terms of social entrepreneurs?

- Created ***new social entrepreneurs***: 64% of sample (and 70% nationally) were new events
- Training was offered and of those that attended 81% said it provided them with ***skills*** that they will be likely or very likely to use again
- For existing groups the Gathering made them become ***more structured and organized***
- Highlighted ***tourism focus*** in local communities
- Will have a ***long term impact*** – 74% said they would run their event again

Conclusions – how does this affect our understanding of SE

