

EPA Green Enterprise

Project: Green Jobs in the Simon Community

Organisation: Midlands Simon & SPeco Services • Reference: 2015-ET-CP-67

Project Objective: To increase the amount of clothes that can be reused in Ireland.

Amount Of Grant Aid Awarded: €60,000



Background:

The Simon Community is a voluntary led organisation supporting people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Midlands Simon has three charity shops in operation.

For clothing donations received, a key issue is that about half is not saleable or remains unsold. This can be because it is not wearable (e.g. ripped or torn), is out of season, is not laundered, might need minor repairs (e.g. missing a button), or is not suitable for local clientele.

This material is sold as rag for recycling to commercial textile recyclers, even though much may eventually be reused abroad. This project sought to increase the value obtained from donations.

SPeco Services
HEALTH SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Project activities:

Through this project Midlands Simon aimed to expand the range of material types sold in their shops, to increase reusability of materials as opposed to sending for recycling, and to increase collections.

Midlands Simon worked with SPeco Services to:

- Raise awareness on re-using, up-cycling and prevention of waste through training, workshops, up-cycle events and the engagement of Green Schools.
- Increase donations through clothing collection drives – many of the Green Schools collected and donated clothes to Midlands Simon shops.
- Connect with delivery company DPD to take undelivered clothes parcels and parcels where the seller does not wish to receive returns, thereby avoiding these from becoming waste. DPD donations contributed a few thousand euro in sales, with over 5,000 kg of materials received.
- Host a 'Bridal and Occasion Wear' Sales event, raising €3,000.
- Host a 'New Garments' sales event, to both donate and sell garments with labels that were never worn, raising €3,500.
- Sell rags that would be used in garages and Dublin Bus, generating €43,000 over two years.
- Collect employee safety footwear from a local industry that has a regular replacement programme, with 2 tonnes collected and sold for reuse.
- Deliver presentations to Green Schools reaching over 600 children.
- Donate materials to local up-cyclers and seamstresses, National College of Art and Design, and to the Rediscovery Centre, to be turned into new garments, redesigned by designers, or used in art.



THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY PROGRAMME
The Driving Force for Ireland's Move to a Circular Economy



Riailtas na hÉireann
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Project outcomes:

- The activities in the project broadened the customer base, bringing in some new clients, and achieved more engagement with the wider community.
- More volunteers working and up-skilling of the shops’ volunteers on visual merchandising, trend forecasting, styling and accessorising.
- Midlands Simon sorting donations more effectively and utilising its space better.
- DPD and Midland Simon have built a good ongoing relationship.

Potential for further work:

There is scope for further work on rag product within Ireland – there may be a role for an industry here. There is scope for better and more consolidated sorting, as well as a role for minor repairs and laundering to help increase material that can be sold in Ireland. Storage is a big issue for the sector, there is a lack of capacity to hold on to donations that could sell in a different season.

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ICSA is a member of Community Reuse Network Ireland (CRNI)

BRIDAL AND OCCASION WEAR SALE

ONE DAY ONLY
Sunday
21st February
2016
12-5pm

Midlands
Simon
Community

Venue: Midlands Simon Shop
Main Street, Tullamore

New and pre-worn bridal gowns, bridesmaids dresses, mother of the bride, graduation and occasion wear dresses, veils, shoes and accessories

Next steps needed:

Midlands Simon continues to improve the shops and to find solutions for both sourcing and re-using materials, playing an important role in helping to deliver a circular economy service in Ireland.

For more on the EPA’s Green Enterprise programme visit [here](#)

For more information on the project contact Joanne Murray j.murray@midlandssimon.com