

Exceptional Lives Project & Book Overview.

Project Purpose:

To inspire a generation of young people to lead exceptional, socially orientated lives.

Book Synopsis:

Interviews and photos of social entrepreneurs, or '**people who change our world**' around the globe, accompanied by a travel log from the author.

Call to Action:

Inspired by the stories, and the people, the **call to action** is for young people to seek out ways in which they can effect social change, locally or globally.

1. What the Project will Involve

The project will involve a six month **journey around the world**, interviewing and documenting '**people who change our world**', a book produced which will be followed by a roll out project in Ireland, showcasing the material. Photographic portraits will be taken of each individual. The project includes a 'showcase' stage in Ireland, in which the material collated will be disseminated through a book launch, PR campaign and a tour of universities in Ireland.

The project, including the book, is predominately aimed at college students and recent graduates, who are still defining their career paths. It will also appeal to people who are in career or life transitions, looking for alternative life paths.

2. What the Project Hopes to Achieve- high level project objectives.

1. To encourage young people (18-30) to **seek new opportunities** for service, social contribution and ways to effect change- locally or internationally, by learning about people who are doing it.
2. To create international socially orientated **role models** for young people
3. **Raise the profile** and social credence of social entrepreneurship by raising awareness of how people around the world are working to address social problems.
4. To make the concept of **social change more accessible** to young people.
5. To encourage follow up **action** among young people, specifically young people in Ireland.

3. Background: Why this project?

In July 2005, over 20,000 people, young and old, took to the streets in Dublin to join in the global Make Poverty History campaign. A further 225,000 marched in Edinburgh prior to the G8 summit calling for the world leaders to embrace the Make Poverty History manifesto. Millions of other joined Bono and Geldof in the Live8 concerts on July 2 around the world, many wearing the symbol of the campaign, a white band, to assert their solidarity in calling for 'Fair Trade, More and Better Aid, Drop the Debt'.

The campaign indeed raised awareness; but social change requires more than just wearing a white band. With the outcome of the G8 summit reflecting the relative reticence of the world leaders to really work to Make Poverty History, there is a generation left wondering; what next, what will work, and do I have to be Bono to make things happen.

Against this background, there is a need for **role models** who are not hatched from the celebrity basket. Ordinary people, who push themselves to do extraordinary things, people who the 'white band generation' can connect with, understand that change is possible, and realise that they can play a part in it.

There is a need for increased understanding of how people who are effecting change are doing it, and how they got to where they are. This project will seek out such individuals, and connect young people to the story of their journey, challenges and motivations.

4. The Interviews- captured in the book

The interviews will focus on the **personal story** of the individuals involved; the social entrepreneurs. It will examine the path which people have taken to get where they are. The focus will be on how they recount their own story, challenges, hopes and dreams. Each interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed. Profiles of each individual will then be crafted and published.

Where possible the interviews will take place in the context of where the social entrepreneur works, helping to create a more relaxed, open atmosphere. Photos will be taken of the individuals, plus photos of the 'context' in which they work.

Sample Interview questions

Interviewees will first be asked to draw a life map of their journey to date, which will help facilitate the interviews. These will be included in the publication.

The following are sample questions which will be asked.

- What is the problem you are trying to address?
- Why?
- What difference do you hope to make/ What contribution do you hope to make?
- Why are you doing it?
- What makes you tick, and keeps you motivated?
- What are the values which shape you? Where do you think they come from?
- How have you got to where you are; what has been your path?
- What challenges have you faced, and how have you tackled them?
- Who has influenced you? What has led you to where you are?
- If you could do it all over again, what would you change?
- How did you get involved?
- Key lessons?
- What advice would you give to young people setting out on their careers?

Each profile will also include a web link to the individual's organisation (if available).

5. After the Interview

Profiles will be written, and prior to publication, the text will be agreed with the individual profiled. Amendments/ alterations can be made at this stage if necessary.

6. A note about the author

Clare Mulvany (27) has previously been programme manager for the Suas Volunteer Programme, a youth leadership development programme, which promotes service, leadership and global citizenship in Ireland. She holds a Master's degree in Education from the University of Oxford, and a BA in English and Psychology from Queen's University Belfast. She has co-ordinated a youth group in Tonga, spent a year as an English Literature lecturer in China's top academic institution, Peking University, and has travelled and worked in Zambia, Kenya, India and the Faroe Islands.