



Department for
Communities and
Local Government



Investing in **your** future: Case study booklet

Edition 2



East Midlands European Regional Development Fund Programme 2007 - 2013



EUROPEAN UNION
Investing in Your Future

European Regional
Development Fund 2007-13

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Overview

East Midlands 2007 to 2013 ERDF Programme

In 2007 the East Midlands was awarded €268.5 million through the current ERDF Programme to support projects that create jobs, help new businesses to start, existing businesses to grow and flourish, and regenerate local areas for communities to enjoy and benefit from.

The Programme has three main objectives:

- Increasing productivity through innovation
- Improving resource efficiency in businesses and communities
- Increasing sustainable economic and enterprise activity in disadvantaged communities

The impact that ERDF funding has had to date is impressive. As a result of the investments made:

- **5,310 jobs have been created**
- **8,902 people have been assisted to start a new business**
- **13,544 existing businesses have received assistance to improve their performance**

Priority axis one:

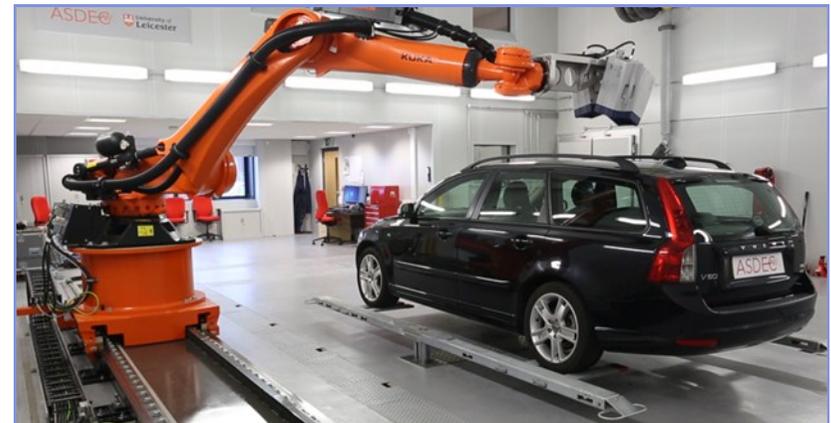
Increasing productivity through innovation and sustainable business practice

Engineering innovation

The **Advanced Structural Dynamics Evaluation Centre (ASDEC)** has been set up by the University of Leicester with funding from both ERDF and the Regional Growth Fund. It provides the UK's first commercial vibration consultancy service based around vibration measurements made using automated 3D laser systems. Offering expertise and training in structural dynamics it is the only service of its type in Europe.

The ASDEC acts as a facilitator for small or medium enterprises (SMEs) in the automotive, aerospace and space industries. Local businesses are able to access the facilities and expertise of the centre through equipment hire, data reporting and analysis, and collaboration. By the end of the project 20 SMEs in the East Midlands will have been assisted with new and existing products and designs through real time testing, and 20 graduates will have been placed to help companies with testing and evaluation.

Laser vibrometry, carried out at ASDEC, can be used to test any structure made of any material allowing analysis of products out of reach in normal testing environments. The versatility of the system allows testing to be carried out at the ASDEC facility or on site with the SME.



Artist's impression of the finished building

The iconic **Centre for Supply Chain Innovation** in Derby aims to encourage collaboration across the supply chain, with open innovation practices and specialist equipment. The centre will include both office space and workshop space, and will target companies hoping to break into, or expand their role in, the supply chains of large aerospace, rail and automotive companies in the Derby area.

It will boost the localities reputation as an industry leader, and act as a catalyst for growth in the wider Infinity Park Derby area.

The centre will house Encsite, a collaboration between Aston, Cranfield and Derby Universities to support transport engineering companies. To date Encsite have worked with businesses such as Autochair Limited, world leaders in adaptive technology for vehicles, and natural gas pumps pioneers gasfill ltd.

Priority axis one:

Increasing productivity through innovation and sustainable business practice

Digital and technological

Broadway's **Digital Innovation and Creative Enterprise** project runs a six month 'Know-How' programme which provides support for companies right through from the conception of ideas to a final product. To date 16 companies have been through the programme, including Red Earth Theatre from Derbyshire, whose travelling photo booth experience will help deaf and disabled audience members interact with their performances. Following the programme companies can apply for a £5,000 grant to continue to develop their products.

ERDF funding has also enabled Broadway to create a dedicated space for collaboration, knowledge transfer, innovation, and enterprise activities. This space was unveiled in November 2014.



Broadband is an essential utility for businesses in today's world. Super-fast broadband can reduce costs for businesses, and make it easier for them to communicate with their customers and supply chains. However, businesses throughout Lincolnshire and Rutland are not currently able to easily realise these benefits.

To combat this **Business Connectivity in Lincolnshire and Rutland** extends super-fast broadband coverage for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) building on the existing Local Broadband Plans.

Over 6000 SMEs are now connected to Superfast Broadband, with 62 businesses having improved their performance to date.

Alongside infrastructure support the project also runs masterclasses through their onlincolnshire programme. Classes help businesses make the most of the internet and social media, allowing the project to provide a complete package of technological support.

Riky Ash started his stunt company, called Falling for You, with just £7 in his bank account, and has gone on to build an international career. He's worked on blockbuster hits such as Muppet Treasure Island, and was the Tango Man in national commercial ads, as well as starring in TV favourites like Casualty, The Bill and London's Burning.

Through a masterclass run by onlincolnshire Riky was able to take the next step, and promote his business online.

"At the workshop, I didn't just learn things from the tutor, the whole room was swapping tips and advice. We all asked questions, and helped answer queries each other had. Everyone brought a different bit of knowledge with them, which we openly shared with the room."

Priority axis one:

Increasing productivity through innovation and sustainable business practice

Food innovation

East Midlands Innovation are coordinating specialist support to increase competitiveness and sustainability in the food and drink industry through the three part **Food and Drink iNet** project. To date the project has created 81 jobs.

Since its launch in 2008 the project has worked with over 600 businesses, including partnerships to develop a method for detecting fake whisky through the bottle using space technology, and develop a bacteria-busting coating for kitchen surfaces.

They have helped many businesses collaborate on innovation projects, such as assisting Leicester company Just Egg Limited through a project with the University of Leicester and



Former chefs Jonny Bingham and David Jones have set up an innovative food consultation business.

Start-up company, Bingham & Jones, were able to develop their business ideas at the University of Nottingham's **Lipid and Starch Centre** which is part financed through ERDF. Since establishing their creative business within the incubation centre they have won a major contract with a European ready meal company. They estimate that their innovative approach to development of an increased shelf life product could save between £6 million and £10 million of food waste.

Through the project Bingham and Jones have also been able to collaborate with other small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) based at the centre. This has sparked further ideas for innovation in areas of common interest based on the use of new ingredients and novel processes.

Integrated Food Projects to recycle its egg shell waste into a new packaging material. East Midlands ice cream manufacturers have also worked with food experts at Nottingham Trent University to reformulate their products to use more local raw materials and ingredients (rather than costly imported mixes) whilst retaining the high quality of their ice-cream.



As a result Bluebell Dairy Ltd in Derbyshire reports that it has been able to cut production costs by approximately a quarter, while improving the quality of its ice cream.

Phase 3 builds on previous Food and Drink Innovation Network projects to work with businesses, universities and individuals.

Priority axis one:

Increasing productivity through innovation and sustainable business practice

Building creative workspaces

Leicester Innovation Workspace, otherwise known as Dock, is a £5.9 million project funded by ERDF and Leicester City Council. It provides office, light commercial and lab space for up to 54 high tech and low carbon businesses.

The building also houses meeting rooms and conference facilities.

The 33,000 square foot development received an excellent BREEAM rating and won the 2014 RICS Regeneration Project of the Year for the East Midlands. It opened in October 2013 and has already become home to 28 innovative knowledge economy companies in industries from pharmaceuticals to robotics.



Forming part of Airfield Business Park **Harborough Innovation Centre** offers self-contained, furnished office suites to small businesses in Market Harborough.



Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) can benefit from the supportive community within the centre, which is enhanced by a range of specialist business support. The business park itself has proven popular with small and medium-sized businesses looking for an accessible, edge-of-town development.

The centre is currently operating at 95% occupancy, with 17 companies created at the centre, alongside 12 existing companies which have been attracted to grow into the East Midlands.

In October 2014 Colin Bradford, whose businesses Guaranteed Grades and Magical Maths are based at the Innovation Centre was named the UK's 'Young Entrepreneur of the Year' at the National Entrepreneur Awards.

Priority axis one:

Increasing productivity through innovation and sustainable business practice

Support for innovation

Ingenuity Plus is an SME engagement platform for the University of Nottingham. It provides support for start-ups and SMEs including innovation vouchers and knowledge transfer partnerships. The project provides support through five technical centres in aerospace, chemistry, energy, satellite navigation and food and brewing.

Sustainable Computers became actively engaged with the university in early 2013. Since then, the business has had the opportunity to attend demonstrations and events, including the world sustainability conference in Hong Kong.

The company produces off-grid computing solutions for projects in Africa, India and the UK in the education, healthcare and financial sectors. Working with other organisations on campus has been invaluable. Earlier this year, Sustainable Computers initiated a partnership with the Institute of Physics and the University of Nottingham on a teacher training project in Ethiopia.

...the impact on the business through the relationship with the university has been immense. We have been hugely supported by people within the Ingenuity Programme as well as faculties and institutes across the campus. Tony Winfield, Managing Director



Networking for SMEs

The University of Leicester, with funding from ERDF, has invested over £1.1 million in supporting local small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) through **Innovation Partnerships**. The project works with companies to find innovative solutions to business challenges.

Over four years, Innovation Partnerships has engaged with 72 businesses, created 13 new jobs and set up 39 graduate internships. Many SMEs have gone on to acquire further collaborative funding through TSB grants and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.

Video Domain Technologies (VDT) is a technology-focused company offering security solutions. They worked with Innovation Partnerships to develop a revolutionary new crime detection product, WebEye CMS, generating record turnover, extra jobs and a new export market. WebEye is the first and only software of its kind allowing mobile security guards to monitor remote sites and receive video alarms whilst on the move.

Innovation Partnerships were able to provide new techniques and programming skills in order to improve the software design, allowing VDT to develop WebEye.



The Innovation Partnerships Team



Priority axis one:

Increasing productivity through innovation and sustainable business practice

Innovation through research

In order to help support innovation by SMEs the University of Leicester has set up the **Innovation through Research Support Accelerator**, otherwise known as the IRSA project. Over thirty businesses have already expressed an interest in working with the University on industrial research, with nine collaborations ongoing.



Graduate Nicholas Coombs carrying out research with the Welland Rivers Trust. The project will regenerate the River Welland through the town centre of Market Harborough.

Academics will work with small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to help accelerate the development and exploitation of new products, services, technologies and processes. This collaborative approach will allow aspiring and ambitious local businesses to access a level of expertise and resources otherwise not readily available.

Each SME will also work with a recent graduate, allowing them to work towards obtaining an MPhil on an Applied Research Project.

Businesses involved have crossed all disciplines. The Welland Rivers Trust Ltd are engaged with the project in order to research river restoration schemes post-implementation.

The research hopes to show that restoration is effective, as well as improving future river restoration design, to create optimum environments.



3DX-Ray Ltd are working with the project to increase performance of the portable x-ray system the FlatScan2.

Animal Rights Legal Centre Ltd are involved in an exciting cross-discipline study with a law basis.

With the help of academics Professor Jill Marshall and Dr Steven Cammiss, and graduate Victoria Beckett, they are carrying out research into undercover policing.



Priority axis one:

Increasing productivity through innovation and sustainable business practice

Specialist industry support

Healthcare and Bioscience iNet Phase 3 is an innovation project delivered by Medilink East Midlands. It provides a network of contacts for businesses, as well as offering specialist advice to help define issues and develop strategies. Through three phases the iNet has broadened horizons by exposing innovators to new opportunities, and helps create links between relevant people. It supports activities that raise innovators' profiles.

Through the project The Ear Foundation received grant funding for the development of a web-based virtual learning environment – SoundSpace Online.



The site was designed to allow deaf people to fulfil their potential in school and work through keeping up to date with cutting edge technology and developments.

“[SoundSpace] will enable our organisation to become more efficient at keeping abreast of developments and enable us to offer increased support to those with hearing difficulties.”, The Ear Foundation

A prototype created through the project.



Throughout its three phases the iNet has helped companies develop prototypes and commercial products in industries such as medical devices, pharmaceuticals, veterinary products, orthotics, robotic assisted living, and plant health diagnostics.

The iNet also provides help identifying external sources of funding as well as managing two grant funds itself: Collaborative Research and Development (CRD) and Innovation Advice and Guidance (IAG).

Priority axis two:

Increasing sustainable economic and enterprise activity in disadvantaged communities

Working towards a sustainable future

£1.4 million of ERDF funding has been awarded to New College Nottingham to allow currently derelict land to be developed into an eco-friendly building providing facilities that will encourage innovation within business start-ups.

The **Sustainable Construction Innovation Centre** will be an example of best practice in eco-friendly building construction and operation. There will be particular focus on minimising the adverse effects of building on the environment and maximising the use of eco-friendly resources within the building's fabric and during its operation.

The centre will house twelve incubation units of varying sizes, providing flexible space where start-ups in the sustainable construction industry can develop their skills and build a market base.



Artist's impression of the completed centre.

The centre is being constructed alongside NCN's Basford Hall campus, which will specialise in construction training, creating a pipeline of future talent for enterprises based at the centre.

Carbon Management for Leicester SMEs is helping small businesses realise savings, whilst also becoming more energy efficient. Increased sustainability means businesses can increase productivity and utilise new technology.

Focusing in priority areas the project enables small and medium sized enterprises to receive a Leicester City Council "Climate Change What's Your Plan" survey with possible energy saving opportunities being identified. Small carbon saving grants of up to £1,000 can then help to implement opportunities found. SMEs are also signposted to other relevant support including other ERDF projects operating in the area. In particular the project complements the ERDF Improving Your Resource Efficiency (IYRE) EAMS scheme being run by the Leicester Energy Agency.

Midland Ventilation Supplies, based on the Troon Industrial Estate, are one of the companies who have benefited from the scheme so far. They received a grant of £1,000 to upgrade their lighting, reducing electricity usage and cost. The new lighting will result in an estimated annual saving of £2,900.



Nicola Holt promoting the project at the Leicester Business Event 2014

Priority axis two:

Increasing sustainable economic and enterprise activity in disadvantaged communities

Investment in Derby



Derby Lets Do Business is an enterprise support project primarily set up to support graduates of the University of Derby. It provides incubation space for people considering self-employment, and works with existing small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to create new skilled job opportunities within Derby, retaining the emerging graduate talent within the city.

The project offers support through masterclasses, networking and a free hot-desking area known as the 'launch pod'.

Through the project Derby mums Charlotte Rhoades and Kirstie Adamson have been able to realise their dream of opening an environmentally friendly art and craft multishop website, EcoCreate. After meeting as students at the University of Derby the pair decided the timing was right to launch into business. The creative entrepreneurs took advantage of the business support delivered through the project and are now members of Banks Mill Studios incubation centre.

Marketing Derby have been awarded £272,000 ERDF to attract business investment and create new jobs in the city.

Invest in Derby attracts potential SME investors through targeted investment, research and the development of new business support products and activities.

Funding has been used to raise the city's profile with new audiences, at specific events such as the Derby Property Summit (2013 and 2014), leading property exhibition MIPIM UK, and Embassy investor receptions at prestigious locations including Downing Street and the Institute of Directors in London.

The project is able to use its working and professional knowledge of Derby to offer a bespoke, red carpet, service to potential investors.

One of the businesses helped through the project is Medartis, a Swiss medical technology company, specialising in high-precision implants for surgical fixation of bone fractures, which has set up its UK office in Derby. Attracted by the city's high-tech credentials, Medartis drew on Marketing Derby's bespoke support to find premises in the city, recruit new staff and promote its arrival in the city.

Priority axis two:

Increasing sustainable economic and enterprise activity in disadvantaged communities

Social enterprise

Working in Social Enterprise (WISE), started in summer 2011 and offers people who live in Leicester a free package of training, advice and support to start and grow social enterprises. The support includes access to expert advisers, training sessions covering different aspects of business management, such as marketing and bookkeeping, and tailor made business registration services.

This specialised training provided the members of Saffron Lane Neighbourhood Council with the confidence and skills needed to set up and develop the Saffron Acres project. WISE assisted Saffron Acres to establish through access to a personalised programme of training, mentoring and support. In 2013 the group partnered with Central England Co-operative to produce jam and chutney from fruit grown on the Saffron Acres allotments, working with a team of disabled young people from the Learning for Living project run by Leicester College to turn the produce into a delicious chutneys and jams. Their strawberry jam is now a staple within all Central England Co-operative shops where it achieves the second best sales after the Co-op's own brand jam.



The Social Enterprise Network (SEn) is a network for local entrepreneurs, charities and voluntary organisations who want to increase their services through independent trading and winning contracts, rather than reliance on grant funding.

The project is delivered through a series of business network meetings and workshops, building a network of support amongst those taking part.

The areas the project has worked in are diverse. Vita Snowden decided to set up her own business Creative Carers CIC after having to give up employment to care for her elderly mother. She noticed a lack of opportunities for carers to develop their skills. After securing funding through the Big Lottery she utilised the SEn for help with setting up her social enterprise.

Impact Derby also received support through the SEn, despite being established since 2009. Through project workshops they have developed the tools to actively bid for public sector contracts, and are no longer reliant on grant funding.

Priority axis two:

Increasing sustainable economic and enterprise activity in disadvantaged communities

Enterprise coaching for local business

NBV Enterprise Solutions Limited have set up **Grow your own Enterprise** as a bespoke package of business support, specifically targeting Oadby and Wigston, Nottingham City, North Nottinghamshire and North Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Derby.

The project offers support at pre-start up, to existing businesses, and with account management. It seeks the low business start-up and survival rates of businesses in the East Midlands, particularly in the most disadvantaged areas

To date 57% of individuals engaged have gone on to start a business with 92% feeling that they will continue accessing business support going forward.

Award-winning trainer Tim Stevenson, world record-holding Paralympic athlete Richard Whitehead, professional rugby player David Jackson and sports physiotherapist Gemma Telford came to the project with their idea for a Paralympic sports performance support company.

Business adviser Suhail Hashmi was able to help them develop their unique idea and create a realistic business plan.

Since their launch in 2013, Tim and the oneathlete team have been in high demand, initially supporting Richard Whiteheads '40 marathons in 40 days' from Land's End to John O'Groats last year.

Helen Jones had 20 years of dance instructor experience, working at Go Dance, when the studio's owner Michelle Cooper invited her to be part of a business expansion.

Having left her previous career in banking when she became a mum in 2001, Helen contacted NBV Enterprise Solutions for help and advice through Grow your own Enterprise.

Business Advisor Natasha helped Helen and Michelle navigate their way through the legalities of forging a partnership agreement, while suggesting ways to develop their marketing plan.



Priority axis two:

Increasing sustainable economic and enterprise activity in disadvantaged communities

Arts and creativity



Housed in the heart of Chesterfield College the **Chesterfield School of Arts and Creative Enterprise** project will provide sustainability for the sector by influencing and inspiring students studying at the College through mentoring and work shadowing. This will plant the seeds of entrepreneurial and provide the creative business start ups of the future.

West Studios (formerly Chesterfield School of Arts and Creative Enterprise) provides a flexible, purpose built, space within the heart of Chesterfield encouraging the creation, development and support of small creative businesses. £626,485 of ERDF capital funding has generated free shared studio space for up to 15 small creative businesses; a meeting room; a serviced reception area; drop-in studio and exhibition space.

Enterprises are supported as they develop their business and their skills.

Gwin Kerry creates copper and enamel jewellery, and had been working from home before applying to West Studios. She now shares a studio with Sarah Pasley, a silversmith, Deb Langner, a ceramicist and Miriam Griffiths, a knitwear designer.



'Sharing a space with like-minded women is both supportive and inspiring. We are lucky enough to all get on with each other and have a great working ethos where we can freely ask each other for advice. With the support we have from West Studios it's a powerful thing knowing that you aren't alone in what you are doing, even though your business is solely your responsibility.' - Gwin Kerry



Priority axis two:

Increasing sustainable economic and enterprise activity in disadvantaged communities

Unlocking business potential

£190,000 of ERDF funding is being used for the renovation of 528 square meters of redundant farm buildings at Welbeck Estate into six start-up units. The units will be utilised by micro-enterprises in the artisan food and drink industry.

The estate is already home to an award winning farm shop, as well as several other creative food businesses. With fibre-optic broadband throughout, as well as good transport links, the project allows small enterprises and start-ups access to a unique setting and culture.

The **Welbeck Estate Infrastructure for Enterprise** project also has the benefit of having renovated 0.19 ha of brownfield land within Sherwood Forest.



Lincoln Castle is currently providing a barrier to growth. The project aims to promote the castle, and simplify movement in the uphill area.



The **Heritage Working for Business** project is a business connectivity project aimed at increasing sustainable enterprise in the uphill area of Lincoln, through a package of infrastructure connectivity enhancements. It is closely linked to the regeneration of Lincoln Castle, seeking to maximise the benefits of the Castle development by changing the way that people move about in the uphill area.

Currently the limited pedestrian flow between the eastern and western areas provide a barrier to growth. The project aims to significantly increase footfall in the area, encouraging development and enterprise. At the same time it will also open up new employment opportunities for the residents of the adjacent disadvantaged communities, who will benefit from improved physical linkages and connectivity to the uphill business community.

Priority axis two:

Increasing sustainable economic and enterprise activity in disadvantaged communities

Community business support



Leicester for Business offers 'Meet and Mingle' networking events, for people thinking about starting up a business or in the early stages of trading, alongside workshops and seminars.

Leicester For Business is a collaboration of seven partner agencies. Each agency contributes its own funding to match the £791,000 ERDF which enables clients from Leicester city businesses to receive support for free.

Networking events and development workshops run by experienced business coaches help promote business start-up and self employment as a viable career option.

The project is also working to introduce the 'lean' concept to potential entrepreneurs and enterprises through one day, weekend or month long programmes.

Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU) in Lincoln set up the **Futures for All** project in order to fill a gap in local provision for people wanting to set up a new business. They utilised £1.1 million ERDF to construct a multi-function business incubator and enterprise hub – BG Futures.

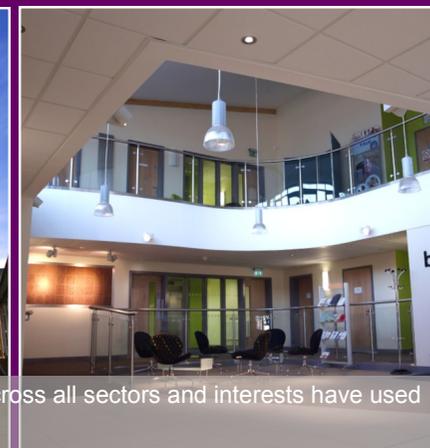
Based on the BGU campus the project works closely with students interested in starting a micro-enterprise alone or in groups. However they also target other underrepresented groups from the local community such as migrant workers, women and the disabled.

BG Futures provides 15 business incubator units of various sizes, in-house enterprise development staff, support facilities such as reprographics and IT and a range of meeting and exhibition rooms.

The project is now working to enhance the relationship between the centre and the university, setting up placements for graduates with small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).



Since December 2011 more than 4000 visitors from across all sectors and interests have used the BG Futures facilities



Priority axis two:

Increasing sustainable economic and enterprise activity in disadvantaged communities

Supporting creative entrepreneurs



Supported by £2.8million of ERDF funding, the **Nottingham Pre Start Community Enterprise Centre**, also known as the NBV Enterprise Centre, officially launched in Nottingham on 22nd October 2014. The high specification, eco-friendly building has been designed to accommodate new and growing businesses.

This includes a new cafe, which businesses, members of the public and community groups are able to access for leisure and networking activities. The café can also be hired by community groups, helping promote the local area.

In addition businesses can use the centre's media suite to produce audio and video programmes for websites, radio and TV.

The **Creative and Digital Entrepreneurs Programme**, known as projector, is an intensive programme of support focused on creating new sustainable creative and digital businesses, particularly in disadvantaged areas of the city. The project aims to work closely with young people within digital industries, offering them support and opportunities to develop their skills and enable them to turn their technical and digital talents into successful businesses.

Eligible applicants receive free one to one coaching, as well as the chance to attend industry specific events and workshops. This includes a live-streamed Global Craft conversation between Nottingham and New York in partnership with Creative Twinning.

Recently they have established partnerships with Nottingham Women's Centre in order to support vulnerable women in overcoming barriers to starting and running a business.



Set up by Ali Stenton-Groves in 2005, Gifted Scribble is a small and friendly graphic design studio based in Nottingham. The project helped Ali increase her confidence and refine her skills.

The business support from NBV, combined with the state-of-the-art facilities at the Enterprise Centre, has allowed creative agency Affari to grow in numbers and to develop a unique dynamic. Specialising in digital media projects such as online publications, graphic design, video production and photography Affari has grown to a team of 6 creative and driven individuals. The agency was recently shortlisted for the Business-2-Business Marketing Awards 2014, for the 'Most Commercially Successful Campaign' category.

Priority axis two:

Increasing sustainable economic and enterprise activity in disadvantaged communities

Promoting entrepreneurship in young people

Sustainable Enterprise With The Prince's Trust (SEWTPT) was set up to encourage enterprise and business start-up amongst young people. In particular it aims to support and sustain an entrepreneurial culture amongst disadvantage communities in Nottingham, targeting young people not in employment, education or training.

So far the project has worked with a huge variety of businesses, including electricians, eco-friendly inventors, architects, agriculturalists, beauticians and buffalo farmers.



31 year old Lindsay Gardner was made redundant in 2012. Struggling to find employment she decided to look into realising her dream of setting up a chocolate

company. She enrolled in the Trust's enterprise programme after spotting the information at the Job Centre.

Now Lindsay trades in a number of local outlets as well as through her own website. She is also working on the launch of her own high street shop.

Rachel Wood from Corby decided she wanted to set up her own business after generating loyal clients as a freelance beautician. However she had no business experience, and desperately needed advice.

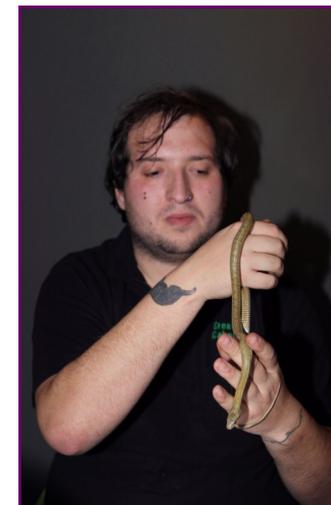


Rachel won Corby's best Hair and Beauty Salon in 2014.

She got in touch with the Prince's Trust after seeing an advert on television. Through the project she was given a business mentor, who helped her open her business in 2014.

Sam, 26, from Retford, had been unemployed on and off for several years when he approached The Prince's Trust with an idea that his passion for exotic animals could be turned into a start-up business.

Working with the project allowed Sam to develop his confidence, and he is now successfully trading as 'Creature Caboodle'.



More information

Any enquires regarding the East Midlands European Regional Development Fund Programme contact the Growth Delivery Team in Nottingham on:

EM.ERDFenquiries@communities.gsi.gov.uk