REQUEST FOR TECHIES

We're on the hunt for technical talent to help us with the *Techies in Residence Programme* - an innovative new project to build links between the community sector and Northern Ireland's knowledge economy.

Digital Technology holds massive potential to solve problems in the voluntary and community sector (VCSE). Over the last 3 months we have recruited 6 innovation projects from the sector and we are now seeking to match them with high-quality technical staff from Northern Irish companies.

The project will take the form of a 10-week residency (Sept - Nov), where staff from NI tech companies will embed themselves in the VCSE organisation. The aim is to build a prototype solution in answer to one of the briefs outlined here.

A salary contribution of up to £6,000 is available to help offset your costs over the 10 weeks. In addition, each participating company will gain extensive exposure through the project and will, subject to agreement, be entitled to develop the solution commercially after the residency. It's also a significant opportunity to gain insight into a new marketplace, help meet CSR objectives and support the development of future managerial talent.

Our aim is to match interested companies with briefs that are relevant to their expertise and interests. We'd invite you to browse through the attached briefs and if you think that your organisation has the talent to help out with one or more, please get in touch via email to info@techinres.com and we can follow up with more detail.

About Aware:

Aware Defeat Depression is a regional voluntary organisation whose main aim is to deliver support to people with depression and their families and to prevent mental health problems through a number of clinically governed interventions. Their objective is to ensure that people can talk openly about their mental health and access services appropriate to their needs, as well as raising awareness of depression as a serious mental health illness and enabling people with depression or bipolar disorder to access support to help them with their condition.

About the problem:

Mood Matters is a programme delivered in schools across NI since the year 2000. It is delivered in a 1.5 hour course. In order to reach a larger audience, and they think that technology could help support this growth- reaching parents as well as the students that the course is delivered to. A second problem that they identified was a fundraising one- although this may be outside the scope of the problem.

A working solution to this will have impact beyond the organisation and Northern Ireland although the organisation don't quite know what the best way of delivering this solution may be.

The existing offline project is strong and has a good track record. There is a clear rationale for developing it further and this is addressable within TIR. Really good buy in. The organisation showed a good appreciation of the process and have appointed the CEO as the go-to person for the project.

Possible Solutions

One of the possible solutions to this is an app- also an e-learning, modular option that digitises the materials.

Likely Techie Requirements

App Building Strong Design Skills

The "what" is still ill defined so there will be some project design work required. They haven't done much homework on exemplars elsewhere.

About Colin Glen Trust:

 Colin Glen Trust is a charity to transform ground in an interface area of Belfast, which has gone on to be a thriving park which has won Green Flags. The park has one of the busiest education programmes in NI, with over 5,000 pupils taking part each year. The park also contains a 9 hole golf course, football pitches and other attractions. It also offers youth empowerment programmes, which has provided over 500 training qualifications to young people.

 The Trust realise that in order to keep increasing visitor numbers, they need to innovate, as well as giving people ownership over the park, and have earmarked an undeveloped area of the park that will act as a tourist draw for this area.

About the problem:

Developing a "Fairy Glen" for families that ties in with the folklore of the forest park, as well as engaging with digital technology. Although there is some history already exhibited in the park, this would help to "bring things to life" They have major issues with antisocial behaviour in the area, so a digital solution as opposed to a physical one could help to protect it.

Strong buy in from the CEO, as well as strong ideas and a development plan to make it work

Possible Solutions

This project has scope for imagination. What digital technology can be used to create an exciting attraction in keeping with the rest of the park?

Likely Techie Requirements

Someone with experience building augmented reality and gamification, as well as experience working with younger people.

About NICVA:

Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action is the umbrella organisation for the VCSE sector in NI. They lobby and campaign for their members interests.

NICVA have a membership of over 1,000 organisations that range from the largest charities in Northern Ireland to small, grass roots community groups. As a gateway to the sector, working with NICVA could provide a company with a large amount of opportunities in the sector.

About the problem:

To build a definitive database of NI VCSE sector and associated APIs - creating a foundation for new data-led projects to be built on top of.

Creating a directory that can be used by all of NICVA and the sector, which can feed into the work that NICVA are doing around Open Data. This needs to be easily shared and possibly crowdsourced information.

It is hoped that this recourse could be used by individuals, government, local support agencies, MLA's, academia and developers.

It is important that this is not simply a replication of another data source, and using the data that NICVA possess, as well as harnessing open data sources.

Possible Solutions

Building a directory that uses NICVA's own data, as well as open data, and possibly using API's from other sources to create a live, developing data source.

Likely Techie Requirements

Someone who can manipulate the data sets and build a new directory, understanding the problem, working with NICVA's original data as well as working out sources of new sources of data to feed into the directory.

About T.A.M.H.I:

Tackling Awareness of Mental Health Issues is a mental health awareness charity working with sports and community organisations to promote positive mental fitness in North & West Belfast. They have a hands-on support approach working with a range of age groups from 8-50+.

TAMHI is a very small organisation working in a very small area. The project manager will lead the support for TiR, along with the support organisations centred in the Ashton Centre

About the problem:

TAMHI work with a number of volunteer led organisations and have recurring issues around collecting and reporting relevant data. Currently data is being collected on paper, and not being sufficiently entered into systems. When it is formally entered, it is collected in 3 different systems who don't communicate with each other. This collected data can be compared with existing data to benchmark for future funding reports and help with gaps in the service

There are existing tools that do help with data, but needs to be less time consuming for volunteers. A data set that was referenced was the NISRA statistics, which can have an impact on other groups.

Possible Solutions

Creating a community "gym card" that can be used to access services across different services across the community, as well as offering the requisite data that is presentable to funders and stakeholders.

Likely Techie Requirements

This is a design challenge as opposed to a hard tech challenge

Work needs done to clean and establish what data is needed for TAMHI, as well as working to see how to tie it to other off the shelf products that are available.

About NOW Project:

Now Group is a social enterprise that supports people with barriers to gain life/work experience and qualifications, promoting employment opportunities and inclusion of this often isolated group within society and the workforce.

NOW Group's work is about social and community inclusion, learning to the people they work with having better health, education and a brighter future. Their services are evolving as a result of co-design, participant feedback and learning.
The organisation are willing to share findings and solutions with others (having identified the Alzheimers Society as someone who could benefit from their project).

About the problem:

The JAM (Just a minute) Card is a plastic card that acts as a discreet way of letting people know that they need "just a minute" in situations using services. Whilst the card has been successful- a few issues have been identified- including getting it out to a large number of users/measure the impact that it can have and gather data to prove the value of the card to service providers.

Problem as specified is very wide in scope- potential app that has a front end, as well as data collection- does the solution have a tech result, or does the card work efficiently without the need for tech? What added benefit can tech bring?

Possible Solutions

This could potentially be an app but this is an open brief- the Just A Minute card is very successful, but how can the problem be addressed using technology?

Likely Techie Requirements

Design Challenge, but one that could also bring ideas to the JAM card and what can be built into the app.

About DTNI & Place:

Developments Trust NI are a member led organisation that help encourage asset transfer among community groups, highlighting the benefits and risks, and disseminating learning from other parts of the UK. Development Trusts is a model for community asset ownership to promote the revitalisation of areas that have experienced massive economic decline. DTNI help communities establish these, as well as point out to VCSE organisations what government owned assets could be available for repurpose. Place (Planning, Landscape, Architecture, Community Environment) is dedicated to the making of great places in Northern Ireland. A multi-disciplined team is responsible for architecture, town planning, visual arts, education, community engagement and event management. Place has previously delivered the somewhereto_ programme in NI, and DTNI were one of the SI Camp projects. It is anticipated that Place would bring more public engagement opportunities.

It is expected that PLACE will lead on this project, but both organisations will share the learning and outcomes.

About the problem:

Both organisations want to have a register and map developed that can hep to aggregate available property. Place had proposed a demand tool that would allow people to map their area and also map how people move through space. This fits with the DTNI issue which would be a mapping issue, and would like a geo-coded resource to help interested parties identify what could be available in their areas- especially one targeted at VCSE organisations. DTNI are already developing digital resources that can be fed into a solution.

These two profiles could sit on top of each, with the beneficiaries being residents, communities, small businesses & local & central government.

Possible Solutions

Inspiration for the project could come from
Tokyo Void
Cultural Mapping Valetta
Opportunity Space

Likely Techie Requirements

Someone who can visualise mapping and data in a creative and usable way.