



# The Melting Pot

## Members' Case Studies

**The Melting Pot**  
*inspiration at work*

### Introduction

To celebrate The Melting Pot's 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday in October 2009 we interviewed a few of our members. We asked them what brought them here, how they use the space and what it does for them. The 6 following case studies are an introduction to the diverse and interesting people who work here and to the benefits - both expected and unexpected - that membership can bring.

## David Roberts

### Introduction

David Roberts is a freelance consultant in economic and social development. He has managed projects in local economic development, economic strategy, regional policy, financial and economic appraisal and economic impact. He and his business are based on Islay in the Inner Hebrides. He joined The Melting Pot in May 2008 and is now a TMP50 Member.

[www.davidrobertsassociates.co.uk](http://www.davidrobertsassociates.co.uk)

### What was your motivation for joining TMP?

Most directly, David was standing on Rose Street, disappointed to find Marks and Spencer closed and wondering what to do about his lunch, when he spotted The Melting Pot A-board! His business was at the stage when he needed to move out of a home-based work environment to a place which would offer both office services and connections with other people.

### Why have you stayed?

Because of the pleasant working environment and the feel of the place. Because of the quality of service provided. Because of the other Members and the staff team.

### How does your company use TMP?

As he's based on Islay, David's use depends on what projects he's running. He might drop in for an hour or two between meetings, or be in Edinburgh for a couple of days and spend more time at TMP. David moved up to TMP50 from TMP25 because he found he wanted to spend more time at The Melting Pot after he realised it offered more than the hot desk office space he'd anticipated.

### Have you made any links (formal or informal) with other TMP Members?

David's worked with two other TMP Members since joining, neither of whom he knew before, so there's been an unexpected business benefit. However, he values just as much the informal chats with diverse people doing interesting things in Scotland and around the world.

**Has The Melting Pot "helped support and inspire you to realise your ideas for a better world"?** Yes, if only through being surrounded by an array of people who are doing good things rather than treading on others to get to the top and selling something dubious! TMP is more than a good office, it's a prompt to stay ambitious about what's possible.

### Is there anything else you'd like to say?

The challenge now for TMP is to build and sustain its community and its business - Good luck!

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## The Melting Pot Member's Case Study



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### László Máthé, WWF

#### Introduction

The WWF aims to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature. László specialises in forests and bioenergy with specific focus on the impact of EU renewable energy policies on European and worldwide forests. László is a TMP100 Member and joined in May 2009.

[www.panda.org](http://www.panda.org)

#### What was your motivation for joining TMP?

WWF's Scottish office is in Dunkeld, a 3 hour commute from Edinburgh. After working from home for 2 years, László was lonely and miserable. He needed to work with other people, in a non-commercial space. He liked The Melting Pot's central location and was happy with the price.

#### Why have you stayed?

László's stayed here because he found all of the above along with a good balance of focussed work environment and sociability.

#### How does your company use TMP?

László has 100 hours/month. Typically he's away travelling for 7-10 days each month and will then come to The Melting Pot for the rest of the time. When he's not travelling he works from home for 1 day each week to keep within his hours.

#### Have you made any links (formal or informal) with other TMP Members?

László's worked with Simon Armstrong, another member in the forest sector, on a lobbying project, and begun conversations with Charlie Henderson of Climate Futures.

Importantly, he's also just arranged a trip to the pub for all TMP Members.

#### Has The Melting Pot "helped support and inspire you to realise your ideas for a better world"?

László says "EU policy is not very inspiring!". Coming in to the office is a support and it's been good to connect with other Members. Maybe it's enough for The Melting Pot to be a friendly, professional shared space. To become a catalyst for social change The Melting Pot would have to target specific groups and invite them into the space.

#### Is there anything else you'd like to say?

László's looking forward to getting to know some more other Members and to finding out more about their work. He was delighted and a little bit surprised when an espresso machine appeared in the kitchen in response to his suggestions!

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### Children of Songea Trust

#### Introduction

The Children of Songea Trust is a small Scottish charity that works to improve the life chances of children and families affected by poverty and HIV/AIDS in the Songea district of Tanzania. They joined The Melting Pot in September 2008. The Administrator, Sharon Robertson, has her own special TMP level - 50+15!, and Neil Mathers, the CEO, is a TMP 25 Member.

[www.childrenofsongea.org.uk](http://www.childrenofsongea.org.uk)

#### What was your motivation for joining TMP?

Sharon is Children of Songea's only paid employee. She works 16.5 hours over three days each week. By joining The Melting Pot, Children of Songea could offer Sharon a centrally located sociable working space, with a registered address for the charity and without the costs of a full-time office. Neil had heard about shared working spaces and was delighted when he found one in Edinburgh.

#### Why have you stayed?

Sharon says "I would be gutted if I couldn't come here!" She likes the shared, open and airy space and having someone to call on if something goes wrong with the printer. The central location makes it easy for Neil and Sharon to meet up here and for other people to come in for meetings or to drop things off.

#### How does your company use TMP?

Sharon works here regularly, 3 days a week, Neil comes in to catch up with Sharon and Children of Songea also use the space for other meetings.

#### Have you made any links (formal or informal) with other TMP Members?

Children of Songea have collaborated with the Nepal Trust to run stalls at events and are discussing video conferencing with Tanzania with Tom Paine of Prescience Communications. Other members have supported their fundraising events after hearing about them via the TMP members' e-mailing list.

#### Has The Melting Pot "helped support and inspire you to realise your ideas for a better world"?

Sharon says, "Working here has re-connected me with political activism. It reminds me of the 80s (in a good way!); a time when people talked about more than house prices. It's inspiring to share a space with like-minded, passionate people."

#### Is there anything else you'd like to say?

The food's great!

## The Melting Pot Member's Case Study



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### New Caledonian Woodlands

#### Introduction

New Caledonian Woodlands is a not-for-profit organisation which works to improve local environmental community assets and help create new ones through involving people to bring about environmental improvements in a hands-on way. TMP Members Andy Ross and Donald McPhillimy are the only two paid staff. Andy joined when The Melting Pot first opened in October 2007, and Donald in September 2008. They're now both TMP25 Members.

[www.newcaledonianwoodlands.org](http://www.newcaledonianwoodlands.org)

#### What was your motivation for joining TMP?

Andy had planned to work from home for the first year of his new business, but after a house move left him without telephone, internet or mobile reception he had to accelerate his plans to find a workspace! He wanted somewhere affordable, sociable and more business-like than his kitchen table.

#### Why have you stayed?

Andy has benefited from the flexibility of being able to move up and down levels, having gone from 50 to 100 to 25 hours. The location is perfect, and Andy likes TMP's 'unexpectedness'; shared curved tables instead of rows of desks, and a sense of space. Andy also says that in spite of not being at all sociable, he enjoys the company!

#### How does your company use TMP?

When he first set up the business Andy was much more office-based at TMP100. Now it's more established he's likely to be spending 2 or 3 days each week running projects and both he and Donald are TMP25 members. As well as using it as their registered office address, Andy and Donald use TMP to meet up and catch up with each other - one lives in Perthshire and one in the Borders.

#### Have you made any links (formal or informal) with other TMP Members?

It's valuable to be in the position of knowing or knowing of people who work in areas such as climate change, fair trade or carbon footprinting; connections which could be developed when they're needed in the future.

#### Has The Melting Pot "helped support and inspire you to realise your ideas for a better world"?

It's good to feel you're not alone, that there are other people working too hard for not enough money! Andy feels more supported at The Melting Pot than when he was an employee of a big organisation - in the early stages of setting up the business it was really important to him that someone asked how things were going.

#### Is there anything else you'd like to say?

It's been good to see The Melting Pot develop so that it's now running smoothly. It's important to keep animating the networking and community side.

## The Melting Pot Member's Case Study



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### **CRNS** **(Community Recycling Network Scotland)**

#### **Introduction**

The Community Recycling Network Scotland is a membership body for community recycling organisations throughout Scotland. CRNS is based in Stirling and now has three members of staff working out of The Melting Pot. Lorraine McCauley is Development Officer for the East and Borders area, Vicky Geddes is Development Officer for Housing Associations and new Member Susan Wright is Media and Communications Manager. All three are TMP50 Members.

[www.crns.org.uk](http://www.crns.org.uk)

#### **What was your motivation for joining TMP?**

Lorraine and Vicky both live in Edinburgh and travel a lot for work. Lorraine works across the East of Scotland and Vicky covers the whole of the country. They joined CRNS in April 2009 and became TMP Members at the same time, to provide a part-time office base in Edinburgh.

#### **Why have you stayed?**

The space is really lovely and it's a nice place to work for people who'd otherwise be isolated. Lorraine's worked from home before and found it de-motivating. She reckons it's important just to get out of the house and to have other people to make cups of tea for - and she makes a lovely cup of tea! The social and environmental focus of The Melting Pot connects CRNS into a like-minded network.

#### **How does your company use TMP?**

Both Lorraine and Vicky spend about 1.5 days at TMP each week, with the rest of their time spent travelling and perhaps half a day or so working from home. They try to meet up with each other at TMP but their roles are quite separate.

#### **Have you made any links (formal or informal) with other TMP Members?**

In Lorraine's voluntary role with Take One Action films she's been able to find speakers to introduce films and to advertise events to other TMP Members through the emailing list. She feels part of an active network with connections ready to be drawn on and developed as needed.

#### **Has The Melting Pot "helped support and inspire you to realise your ideas for a better world"?**

The whiteboards in the loo can be inspiring! The magazines, resources, library and people all help keep up motivation. It's good that the skill-sharing events and lunches happen even though it's hard to find the time to come to everything.

#### **Is there anything else you'd like to say?**

Keep up the great work!

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### The Sorted Project

#### Introduction

Sorted is a charity offering access to stable and quality drug and alcohol recovery reintegration, motivation and life skills services for men, women and young people from the wider Edinburgh area. Co-directors Karen Bradford and Maddie Stark joined TMP in October 2008.

#### What was your motivation for joining TMP?

As a brand new and very small charity Sorted had very little money and wanted city centre premises to give a good impression to new and potential funders. They wanted value for money and with all the facilities of a top notch office and somewhere to work alongside other people, to avoid the isolation of working from home. Maddie says, "More importantly to us, we have a very new, innovative and cost effective approach to work in our field and we wanted an office space that reflected this. We wanted to be a part of something equally as innovative and inspirational. TMP is just that."

#### Why have you stayed?

TMP continues to meet these needs.

#### How does your company use TMP?

Sorted value TMP's flexibility, sometimes using all their hours in one week, sometimes not coming in at all for a few weeks. Maddie says, "It's a good inspirational space to use. You get a buzz off the other people and you tend to get loads done as it seems that everyone is passionate about what they are doing or at least want to be there doing it!"

#### Have you made any links (formal or informal) with other TMP Members?

Maddie has met up with some old colleagues that she had lost touch with and was trying to find! The links were made over the desk and outside at the bike rack! It has led to inspiring and motivating a colleague to pursue his dream with greater pace, and has led Sorted to find an excellent volunteer.

#### Has The Melting Pot "helped support and inspire you to realise your ideas for a better world"?

"Being a part of TMP has helped enable Sorted to establish itself as a real contender in the voluntary sector drug and alcohol field. We are taken seriously and are well respected. Other people felt strongly that we were taking a huge risk in setting up on our own and in a recession and that we would fail. Being part of TMP has kept our spirits up and our motivation strong.

There are so many people out there doing it for themselves and not for profit but for the good of others or the environment. I found being my own boss one of the most liberating experiences I have ever had, it is good to be able to share this with people who have some kind of understanding. I would not have been able to do that if we had rented space within the council."