

## Spotting opportunities in times of crisis

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What a trial this pandemic continues to be. As the new world emerges, it sometimes feels like COVID-19 is just the fourth in a series of apocalyptic horsemen of fire, flood, pestilence and plague. However, here at parENTrepreneurs, we have been so excited and inspired to see the flowering and flourishing of the entrepreneurial spirit in our families and communities.

New circumstances, new constraints and new imperatives have ignited incredible creativity and community action to address local needs and solve local problems. Even through tragedies, we have gained new insights, new perspectives and, crucially, time, to reconsider our personal and professional values and purposes. Whereas many lives were only previously driven by economic and financial value, we have all been forced to take stock, and to prioritise, what is most meaningful and impactful in our lives.

As traditional conventions, structures and institutions struggle to address and meet these unprecedented challenges, we are all called upon to imagine new possibilities. We believe that parENTrepreneur activities build the competences needed to build things with fresh eyes and develop strategies to be ready for whatever the future brings.

Early in the virus outbreak, **parents** and **key, essential workers** sprang into action, addressing the most immediate needs of shielding the vulnerable, ensuring supplies of medicine and food, and keeping us all safe. Spotting opportunities to meet these basic needs we all share, led people to work cooperatively to make calls, run errands, share resources, food and, perhaps most importantly of all, knowledge.

Blessed with unseasonably warm weather, those lucky enough to have outdoor space started planting – a land army of home gardeners appeared across Europe. Very quickly, groups and noticeboards sprouted on Facebook where families shared seedlings and surplus harvests. In Wales, people without gardens organised themselves into groups to create planting boxes from unwanted pallets. The group bought supplies with crowdfunding and planted the planter boxes with fruits and vegetables. The planters were shared between the local community, targeting the front yards of multiple occupancy rentals, or any spaces that had been neglected, or needed cheering up.

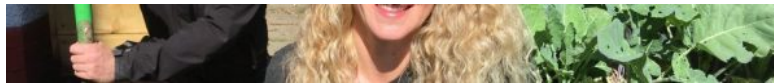
Dedicated volunteers tended the planters, dotted around the community and residents could help themselves to the fresh produce. It is proving to be a very productive project, providing company and constructive activity to promote wellbeing and community relationships. The neglected front yards, previously full of bins or abandoned refuse bags, now look beautiful and offer free fruit and vegetables to locals, who can help themselves and will hopefully become inspired to join in gardening.

Entrepreneurial parents know when and how to use their imagination and abilities to identify opportunities to create value. Taking on the additional role of primary educator was a challenge for many parents, many of whom were juggling full

time jobs with childcare and at home education, perhaps for the first time. Having established key entrepreneurial competences, parents will see these skills reflected in their children, and taking part in a hands on activity such as a community vegetable garden project is a fantastic opportunity to get little minds learning through doing, not just about the world around them but also the people in it. The ecological benefits of this activity are too numerous for this blog but maybe the idea can spark the initiative within you do take action in your local community.

Do you have an exciting project you would like to share with us? Why not head over to the parENTrepreneurs [Facebook page](#) and let us know!

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