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social enterprise west midlands

SOCIAL PURPOSE | BUSINESS SENSE

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It all adds up



iSE has 10 years' experience of delivering specialist no- or low-cost training and business support to social enterprises and voluntary and community organisations in the West Midlands.

We are a social firm, dedicated to developing the third sector.

To find out how we can help visit www.i-se.co.uk

An air of expectation



Sally Edwards | sallyaedwards@btopenworld.com

Photo: © Edward Moss Photography www.edwardmoss.co.uk

There's a definite air of expectation hanging around social enterprise at the moment. It seems there's so much opportunity out there for the business model. The question is, can it take advantage of the climate and realise its full potential? The talent and dedication of those working in the sector, as evidenced in the articles we have included in this second issue of **se**, should certainly ensure so. From taking the initiative to fill gaps in the market to tackling worklessness, from offering people a secure alternative to the banks for their money to influencing mental health policy and service delivery – everywhere you look, social enterprise is making a real difference. It's now on the agenda in schools and universities, starting to work hand in hand with private enterprise and coming of age, with the adoption of a mark that will clearly indicate its social values.

We approached this issue with some trepidation, knowing that second issues of anything can fail to live up to promise, but hope you will agree that, once again, it makes an interesting read. **se**



BIG NEW INVESTMENT

£1.5m new investment for social enterprise in the West Midlands.

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POLICY MATTERS

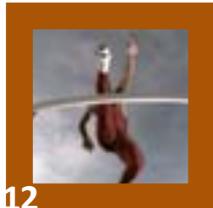
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Social Enterprise West Midlands is the regional strategic network and voice for social enterprise. The network is funded by Advantage West Midlands to advise on policy issues and promote the value and contribution of the sector across the region.

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IN THE NEWS

POLICY MATTERS

FINDINGS

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

BUSINESS MATTERS

SPECIAL FEATURES

DO IT RIGHT

Available in large print at www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk

Capacitybuilders projects to support

Ranjit Bansal | Social Enterprise West Midlands

Following a consultation process led by Social Enterprise West Midlands last year, over £500k has been approved by Capacitybuilders to fund five projects that will deliver services identified as being weak, underdeveloped or not available in the region.

These will directly benefit new, existing and emerging social enterprises in the West Midlands, strengthening existing support services and plugging gaps in provision. The projects, which include a social networking website, peer-to-peer mentoring, procurement training, enterprise readiness and knowledge exchange initiatives, are funded until March 2011 under Capacitybuilders' £6m Social Enterprise Programme for England. **se**

Knowing Me, Knowing You

A regional programme of peer-to-peer support

Lead body: brap

Project overview: Knowing me, knowing you will make the exchange of knowledge and expertise between social enterprises possible by facilitating peer mentoring. Over the next two years, brap will recruit and train peer-support providers, who will offer support to organisations with identified development needs.

Getting involved: brap would like to hear from anyone who would like to mentor others, as well as individuals interested in receiving support from those with a track record in running a successful social enterprise.

MAKING CONTACT

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UnLtdWorld WM

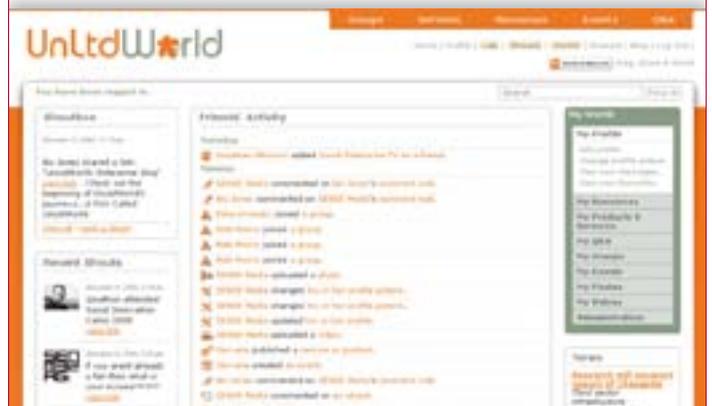
Lead body: FSE World Ltd (a subsidiary of UnLtd)

Project overview: UnLtdWorld is a social networking site for social entrepreneurs. Members can make indispensable connections, access information and insight, share resources, find and list services/products, share answers to key questions, create and join groups, and lots more. The Capacitybuilders funding is being used to create a West Midlands environment that will enable enterprises, advisors and others in the region to connect and learn from each other.

Getting involved: The site is open to everyone and is free to join at www.UnLtdWorld.com. A site tour is available on the home page where new members can view how the site works.

MAKING CONTACT

Nicola Jones | 020 7566 1118 / nicola@unltdworld.com



Communities of Practice

Lead body: Social Enterprise West Midlands

Project overview: Communities of Practice is a knowledge exchange project designed to identify, capture and share good practice in social enterprise development within and outside of the West Midlands. Twenty exemplar social enterprises will be recruited to participate in the project, benefitting from significant PR support and increased profile nationally. The project will develop a royalty free image library, structured study visits, thematic forums and workshops culminating in a Good Social Enterprise Practice conference in 2010.

Getting involved: Social enterprises based in the West Midlands, that have been incorporated for more than three years and generate over 50% of their income through trading, are eligible to apply to become one of 20 enterprises at the core of this project.

MAKING CONTACT

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Capacitybuilders

Capacitybuilders is a non-departmental public body set up in 2006 to take over the management of the ChangeUp programme and to work with other funders to build the capacity of the third sector. It exists to create a more effective third sector and does this by improving support for third sector organisations. www.capacitybuilders.org.uk

Background to the five projects

In June 2008, Capacitybuilders launched a three year programme to invest £6m in projects across England, which will transform support for social enterprises. In July 2008, Capacitybuilders contracted with Social Enterprise West Midlands to consult third sector stakeholders on how resources allocated for the West Midlands region should be used to strengthen support for social enterprise. Consultation meetings led to the development of five project proposals that were approved by Capacitybuilders in November 2008.

West Midlands social enterprise

Adding Value – Winning Contracts

Lead body: More Than Outputs

Project overview: Drawing on experience from around the UK, More than Outputs is offering a comprehensive package of training and support to help social enterprises successfully operate in the public sector marketplace. The package includes: intensive training to help social enterprises understand the public procurement environment; training in SROI (social return on investment) to help them identify and quantify the added value within their organisations; support with tender readiness, costing, pricing and building relationships with public sector buyers.

Getting involved: Social enterprises are being invited to register their interest in the programme, which can address specific issues through a tailored action plan and follow up support.

MAKING CONTACT

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Access to Enterprise

Lead body: iSE (Initiative for Social Entrepreneurs)

Project overview: iSE is equipping voluntary and community sector (VCS) advisers with the preliminary skills, knowledge and resources needed to enable them to advise third sector organisations wishing to explore the social enterprise option. The project aims to boost the expertise of advisers so that more organisations, especially those at community level, have access to the advice they need.

Getting involved: iSE is interested in hearing from VCS infrastructure organisations across the West Midlands that would benefit from training their advisers, providing them with resources that they can use with local organisations.

MAKING CONTACT

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SEWM board: Inset: Freer Spreckley (Chair) - *Local Livelihoods*. Main picture: Alison Lawson - *Advantage West Midlands (SEWM project sponsor)*; Sarah Crawley (Vice-Chair) - *Initiative for Social Entrepreneurs*; Steve Walker - *Aston Reinvestment Trust*; Jean Jarvis - *South Shropshire Furniture Scheme*; Paul Hanna - *Birmingham Chamber*; Tamy Matanky - *Coventry and Warwickshire CDA*; Liz Watkins-Young - *Partners for Social Enterprise*; John Mawson - *University of Warwick*; Graeme Perks - *Skillbuilders CIC*; Marie Greer - *Advantage West Midlands (not pictured)*.

Photo: © Ian Cuthbert info@cuthbertdesign.com

New year, new funding, new board

Social Enterprise West Midlands is looking ahead with optimism as its funding is approved for a further three years.

Following an independent evaluation measuring the impact of the network's activities, Advantage West Midlands has approved an investment of £1m until 2011, enabling the network to expand its activities and launch a Social Enterprise Centre of Expertise. The Centre will work to improve the integration between social enterprise development activities, mainstream business support and economic regeneration activity in the region. The aim is to increase the number of social enterprises starting up or growing their businesses

and ensure they have access to high quality business advice and training. Taken together with the new Capacitybuilders funding (see page 4 and above), this represents £1.5m total new investment for social enterprise in the West Midlands.

The news has been welcomed by the newly elected board of Social Enterprise West Midlands (pictured above). Network Director Kevin Maton believes this announcement will generate a real buzz for new ways of doing business in the region. "We should be very proud of the social enterprises already trading in the West Midlands. This funding allows us to promote their achievements more widely and encourage more to join in the social enterprise revolution." **SE**

Evidence of impact

INDEPENDENT THIRD SECTOR RESEARCH CENTRE LAUNCHED | UNIVERSITIES RESEARCH EVIDENCE OF IMPACT



Photo: © David Devins 07717840593 daviddevins@googlemail.com

Finding the evidence: Professor Pete Alcock, Director, Third Sector Research Centre

“What is the impact of social enterprise on the economy?”

It’s a question increasingly being asked by, and of, policy makers as well as social enterprises themselves. At present there isn’t a large body of evidence that can be used to answer the question, but that’s set to change with the launch of a Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC), hosted by the University of Birmingham in partnership with the University of Southampton.

Officially opened in September 2008, TSRC has been established to produce world class research that analyses, maps and develops further understanding of the sector. It is funded, initially until 2013, by the Economic and Social Research Council, the Government’s Office of the Third Sector and the Barrow Cadbury Trust.

We asked the Centre’s Director, Professor Pete Alcock of the University of Birmingham, to tell us all about it. He began by explaining: “The core purpose of the Centre is to conduct independent academic research and develop a robust evidence base for the third sector, which includes social enterprise. There’s been relatively little independent research on the sector and research undertaken in the past has tended to look at very particular or short-term issues, whereas we’ll be looking at the bigger picture. Being an independent body means that we’ll be able to ask difficult questions

and, while the answers may not please everybody, accurate and unbiased findings will be the most helpful to the sector in the longer term.”

So, what does this mean for the average social enterprise? Pete said: “While the main aim of the Centre isn’t necessarily to directly benefit or support social enterprise, what it will do is provide evidence of the sector which is greatly in demand. It seems likely that this will create a better understanding of social enterprise for those inside and outside of the sector, and our partner organisations will be able to use our findings to develop appropriate support and be in a better position to influence policy.”

TSRC’s agenda and programme are rooted in close collaboration with key agencies representing the third sector, such as NCVO, ACEVO and the Social Enterprise Coalition. “Our activities will reflect priorities identified by these organisations,” says Pete. “The development of the research programme will take place with the full engagement of these partner organisations, who will play a strategic role in steering our activities.”

A website for the Centre is in the process of being developed, where a wide range of findings and resources will be published, along with blogs, news, DVDs, and discussion forums. The site currently features temporary information as the full website is under development. **se**

Planned research programmes include...

- Systematic reviews of the existing research evidence base for the third sector.
- Establishing collaborative links with cognate research centres in other countries across the world and links to comparative research data in these countries.
- Advancing theoretical and conceptual analysis of the third sector.
- Historical analysis of the development of policy within the UK, drawing on existing work in this field.
- Engaging policy makers and practitioners in critical evaluation of the policy making process, the implementation of policy and its implications for practice.
- Developing and maintaining a robust and comprehensive quantitative database on the sector in the UK.
- Developing and maintaining a qualitative sample of third sector organisations, which will be researched on a case study basis across the life of the Centre.
- Capturing the range of services delivered by third sector organisations and addressing the different dimensions of delivery including funding, organisation, accountability and user experiences.
- The Centre will also be co-ordinating its research with the Capacity Building Cluster on Social Enterprise led by Middlesex University.

MAKING CONTACT

Third Sector Research Centre | www.tsrc.ac.uk
Middlesex University | www.mdax.ac.uk

Meeting the challenges of the downturn



How is the economic downturn affecting your business? Social Enterprise West Midlands would like to hear about your immediate difficulties as well as your successes, so that we can ensure that regional measures are meeting the needs of social enterprises. E-mail k.maton@socialenterprisewm.org.uk.

As news about the economy seems to worsen every day, social entrepreneurs could be forgiven for feeling pessimistic about the year ahead. However, as **ALISON LAWSON**, Regeneration Policy Manager at Advantage West Midlands (AWM), explains, there is help available and there is cause for optimism.

Kevin Brennan, Minister for the Third Sector, has said recently that the social enterprise movement is showing the rest of the business community the way. He feels that in these tough times, people still want to see vibrant businesses contributing to the economy, but they also want those businesses to consider the communities and the environment in which they operate. This sentiment is backed by the findings of a 2008 YouGov poll, commissioned by the Social Enterprise Coalition. The poll reveals that the majority of people believe that the social and environmental values of business are as, or more, important than before the credit crunch. It also shows that people want more social enterprises in the UK to ensure a sustainable economy for the future.

This has to be good news for a growing sector, which AWM recognises is already contributing significantly to the regional economy - both financially and by providing employment and services for some of its most disadvantaged communities. However, we are only too aware that as the downturn starts to bite, social enterprises and their employees are being tested to new limits.

A lack of demand, coupled with a lack of finance, threatens all businesses.

Ian Austin, Regional Minister, has set up a West Midlands Taskforce to manage the consequences of the downturn for the region's people, businesses and communities. This Taskforce includes: AWM; Business Link; Jobcentre Plus; Government Office for the West Midlands; local authorities from across the region; Learning and Skills Council; unions and business representatives. One of its outputs is a leaflet - 'Advice and Guidance for Employers and their Workforce during the Economic Downturn' - which details the support services available. You can download a pdf version from our website www.advantagewm.co.uk.

Social enterprises and third sector businesses are also eligible to access the package of measures unveiled by Business Secretary Lord Mandelson in mid January, designed to address the cash flow, credit and investment needs of small and medium businesses. Again, details are available on our website. These measures complement other support available to the sector including: a new £2.5m Third Sector Skills Body; access to the £350m Train to Gain staff training scheme; and Business Link online resources.

To meet the challenges of the downturn, my advice is: take full advantage of the assistance available. Now is the time for social enterprises to sharpen up their performance and practices and demonstrate the value of their style of doing business. **se**

“Now is the time for social enterprises to sharpen up their performance and practices and demonstrate the value of their style of doing business.”

DO THE RIGHT THING

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Remain positive and true to your values – be ethical, but assertive in your dealings.
- Look ahead – anticipate and work around any threats and make the most of opportunities you spot.
- Keep communicating with employees and other stakeholders – give an honest picture of the situation, but think about the impact of what you say and choose your words carefully.
- Manage your finances – keep good records, reduce costs where you can, be proactive in relationships with your bank and other funders (they might be able to help in ways you haven't thought of), borrow money in plenty of time if you need it.
- Build good relationships with your customers – get them to sign longer contracts if possible.

SOURCES OF HELP

Finance

West Midlands Access to Finance | www.westmidlandsfinance.com
Fair Finance Consortium | www.fair-finance.net

Business Support

Business Link | 0845 113 1234 / www.businesslinkwm.co.uk
JobCentre Plus | www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Train to Gain | www.traintogain.gov.uk

Information

Social Enterprise West Midlands | www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk / 024 7663 3911

Social enterprise is expected to be given a 'mandate' to play a big role in tackling entrenched worklessness this year – if the findings of a new report are adopted. Here **SARAH CRAWLEY**, Chief Executive of ISE, outlines the issues and the opportunities.

Worklessness – the term currently used by government agencies to describe unemployment in its widest sense – has been on the agenda for some time, but measures to tackle it are gaining momentum.

A report called 'Tackling Worklessness', commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), co-authored by Social Enterprise Coalition Chair Claire Dove, aims to discover how English local authorities and their partners can do more to help areas of high unemployment. Commenting on the interim findings, released in December 2008 – the final report is due out in March 2009 – Claire said: "I think this report gives us a mandate to take our work forward, to widen the scope and publicly acknowledge that we are a sector that can work with local authorities to have an impact."

The report suggests that local authorities should have more freedom and responsibility to tackle rising unemployment in their areas, but that this freedom should be matched by a greater degree of accountability, using initiatives such as social clauses in procurement contracts. In areas of greatest need, the report suggests radical innovations such as the creation of new temporary jobs and social enterprises, funded by a 'national challenge fund'.

With unemployment rising due to the recession and the government tightening up on the benefit rules, those typically furthest from the job market are going to find it harder than ever to get started in the coming years. So is social enterprise the answer?

As social enterprises and social firms¹ have traditionally been set up to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in society, the short answer has to be "yes". The sector is, however, still emerging and has some key issues of its own to overcome if it is to be in a position to take full advantage of the opportunities thrown up by the worklessness agenda.

Key issues for social enterprise

Defining and raising awareness of what social enterprise is

There remains low public awareness and confusion, even among those working within the sector, about what constitutes a social enterprise. There is a need to raise awareness and understanding of social enterprise as a business model – not just generically, but also of the variants within social enterprise and the differing implications of these approaches.

Building confidence in social enterprises as businesses and improving the skills of those running them

To appear credible to the public and private sector, social enterprises need to be, first and foremost, quality businesses. Those who run them need to hone their business skills and adopt best practice in terms of their approach to sales and marketing, managing finance and evidencing the impact of their work. They also need to become more adept at taking and managing risk if they are to seize the big opportunities.

Business support

Access to specialist social enterprise business support is still patchy and fragmented, with some regions and sub-regions much better served than others. Not only that, but awareness of what is available – especially from the regional Business Link service – is low. Social enterprises need to access, or invest in, professional support in order to grow, increase their reach and be able to service bigger contracts.

Evidencing Impact

While they share many things in common with conventional small businesses, social enterprises need to be able to demonstrate the value of their differences. More of them need to be testing and embedding impact assessment techniques. Awareness of the existing methodologies is extremely low at present – not just among social enterprises, but also among their supporters and support providers.

TACKLING WORKLESSNESS



Tailored solutions: A trainee at Textiles by St Anne's, a social enterprise run by BITA Pathways, Birmingham

Engaging effectively with public sector procurement and commissioning officers

There remains a gulf between the language and expectations of public sector procurement and commissioning officers and social enterprises. More work is needed to bridge this gap and establish an effective dialogue and good working relationships. Social enterprises need to be able to compete for contracts on a level playing field.

Working together to secure large contracts

Most social enterprises are too small and local in their approach to successfully bid for significant contracts. It is widely acknowledged that the sector needs to do more to develop clusters and consortia as one way of meeting such contract thresholds. Collaborative work of this kind also fits with public sector national, regional and local policy and is, therefore, likely to be of fundamental importance to the development of the social enterprise sector.

Access to finance and investment

Chasing grant funding risks deviating from your original objectives and such funding is becoming increasingly limited. But bidding for contracts is not the only alternative. There is loan and investment finance available for social enterprise from Community Development Finance Institutions among others, but again awareness of what's on offer remains

1. Social firms are social enterprises, which specifically aim to create good quality jobs for people severely disadvantaged in the open labour market.



Photo: © Ian Cuthbert info@cuthbertdesign.com

is social enterprise the answer?

too low. There is still a need for more innovative, tailored finance packages to support social enterprise start up as well as development and growth.

Defining the opportunities

The Annual Population Survey 2007 (published by the Office for National Statistics²) shows that the West Midlands has 27.6% of its working age population who are either unemployed or economically inactive (ie defined as being in a state of worklessness) compared to an average for England of 25.6%. Five of the English regions are higher than the average, with London being the highest at 30.2%. Within the West Midlands 14 sub-regions are identified, of which 7 have higher than the average percentage for the region. These are Birmingham, Sandwell, Wolverhampton, Stoke-on-Trent, Walsall, Telford & Wrekin and Coventry, with Birmingham being the highest at 35%. While the region has an average number of older people who are workless, it has a higher than average number of young, ethnic minority and disabled people who fall into the category.

Worklessness has many facets. Its dimensions and characteristics are changing rapidly, so the opportunities need to be systematically explored and defined before valid solutions

can be developed. It may be due to a variety of factors, including:

- Physical disabilities
- Mental health problems
- A lack of experience of work and how to behave
- A lack of engagement with employment or enterprise
- Homelessness

Clearly, each of these needs to be tackled differently.

Making a difference

Social enterprise cannot provide a magic bullet solution to worklessness. It is well positioned, however, to make a significant contribution to the outcome and opportunities for individuals, through a range of kinds and levels of assistance, including:

- Help with setting up an enterprise
- Full or part time employment
- Volunteering opportunities
- Skills development
- Other supportive interventions that lead an individual along the pathway to work

I believe that social enterprise needs to do more than just train then move people on to mainstream employment. It needs to retain people and skills in

order to grow, so that we can build a social economy that is capable of offering long-term employment prospects and career progression.

The current economic downturn presents a key opportunity for social enterprises and social firms to market the values and benefits of a more sustainable and people-centred approach to business. This is an opportunity that the sector, its supporters and public sector partners need to seize. Now is the time for social enterprise as a business model to come of age. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

ise | www.i-se.co.uk
Social Enterprise Coalition | www.socialenterprise.org.uk
West Midlands Regional Observatory | www.wmro.org

i *ise is a social enterprise and a social firm dedicated to developing the third sector in the West Midlands. Since 1998 it has been working to start, develop and sustain social enterprises, social firms, voluntary and community sector organisations. It is both a strategic organisation, which undertakes extensive research into the needs of and nature of the sector, and an operational organisation concerned with service delivery and capacity building.*

2. Statistics supplied by the West Midlands Regional Observatory

If you have a good idea for a social enterprise, how do you go about setting it up and getting noticed? Alan Garrec was a student at the University of Warwick when he spotted a gap in the market he thought he could fill – and he took rather drastic action to publicise his idea.

Why did you want to start a business?

It's worth pointing out one thing from the beginning, my degree was Psychology and I didn't have any business experience prior to setting up 118 TAXI, I just learnt everything as I went along. Like many business ideas that emerge from a dissatisfaction with current systems, 118 TAXI was established after an unfortunate incident involving a female friend of mine. After failing to get hold of an available taxi company through directory enquiries my friend hailed an unlicensed cab and on the journey home was sexually assaulted. A tragic incident and one that could perhaps have been avoided by having a taxi number to hand. Whilst at university we started a campaign to highlight the dangers of unlicensed taxis and this got me thinking, "What if there was a memorable number you could call to get a taxi anywhere in the UK?"

How did you go about setting it up?

With the help of my friends we researched the various different phone numbers around and found that 118 8294, the numbers that spell out 118 TAXI on a telephone's keypad, was available.

When we acquired the number the rest just snowballed from there. From setting up the limited company to meeting accountants and legal advisors. From speaking to designers and sorting out the website, right through to making sure the call centre could be staffed 24/7, 365 days a year. However, the hardest part was getting all the mobile networks onboard, as I didn't realise at the time, but 118 numbers have to be activated by each network individually. So the day we trialled a soft launch, I discovered the number didn't even work from my own mobile network.

Why did you choose to make it a social enterprise?

It was a group decision between my friends and I when we initially started on the project. I guess we kind of felt a responsibility to try and do something different and I think if we had gone into the project thinking, "How can we make as much money as possible," things wouldn't have been as successful. I also think it's very important from a business perspective to be motivated by something other than just money as it helps bring focus and direction when you're faced with a fork in the road.

What would your advice be to others wanting to start up a social enterprise?

The word social enterprise is often thrown around for no reason other than as another publicity stunt. Whilst the media are sometimes supportive of genuine social enterprises, it can



“In a moment of madness I filed to change my name by deed poll to 118 TAXI and what started as a publicity stunt soon began to take over my life.”

become tiresome for everyone reading about similar stories day in and day out. The key is doing something different as sometimes a good idea in itself isn't enough to get you noticed. Unfortunately I learnt this the hard way when doing a double page interview for a newspaper, all they wanted was the shock value behind the story. As it was a serious piece on the dangers of unlicensed taxis I thought it best not to give them any gimmicky kind of angles and instead focused on the heart of the matter. When I read the article in the paper I was extremely disappointed as they didn't print the number users needed to dial or even the company name, when they had included it in the final draft they sent me. This got me thinking – how could I publicise the service?

How did you publicise 118 TAXI?

To make the business viable we obviously wanted to let as many people know about it as we could and as quickly as possible. The problem we had though was money, so any publicity we did would have to be on a budget. After various interviews for local radio and newspapers we realised we weren't spreading the word fast enough and I decided to take some slightly more drastic action. In a moment of madness I filed to change my name by deed poll to 118 TAXI and what started as a publicity stunt soon began to take over my life as various documents needed changing. To raise the profile slightly more I managed to convince Derren Brown, the psychological illusionist, to be the witness on the deed poll documentation, effectively meaning he changed my name. It was perhaps

the craziest and yet smartest decision I've ever made, as the publicity off the back of it was phenomenal. I appeared in national newspapers and even on The Graham Norton Show. Whilst no one likes being teased for being crazy, you learn to bite your lip if it gets the company name out there. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

118 TAXI | 118 8294 / info@118-taxi.com / www.118-taxi.com

Alan, or rather 118 TAXI, is available as a young enterprise speaker at public events.



TAKING A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
**FROM CONCEPT
 TO CELEBRITY**

One thing that distinguished the London Olympic bid from its competitors was a commitment to ambitious environmental and social principles and the promise that the Games would leave a meaningful, long-term legacy for communities in London and the UK.

Social enterprises then, with their inherent social and environmental objectives, must surely be well placed to capitalise on the estimated 75,000 business opportunities that the Games will create.

The two main commissioning bodies that have been set up – the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA), responsible for land use and buildings, and the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG), responsible for planning of the Games – will be dealing with a limited number of what they are calling Tier 1 suppliers. These suppliers will create most of the opportunities through chains of sub-contractors around the UK.

There will be work needed in: construction, manufacturing, hospitality, tourism, merchandise, retail, business and financial services, media and creative industries. Contracts will be large and small and hugely diverse, covering everything from supplying seed sorters and cleaners for wild flowers to building a venue; from providing AV equipment to staging a cultural event. So it's worth having a look at what your enterprise might offer, either alone or through a consortium.

Getting involved

As a starting point you could look at www.london2012.com/get-involved to give you an overview of what is planned.

To view the tender opportunities you will need to register on the national website created to broker all available London 2012 contracts: www.CompeteFor.com.

For information about pre-Games Preparation and Training Camps and increasing participation in sport see www.sportengland.org.uk.

Support for social enterprise

To help social enterprises get the most from the opportunities available, the Office of the Third Sector has funded a project called Social Enterprise: Winning with 2012. This is a national initiative, being run by Social Enterprise London and the Social Enterprise Coalition in partnership. It aims to represent the voice of social enterprise to policy-makers and procurers, and to provide up-to-date information – particularly about business opportunities – from policy-makers and procurers to social enterprises.

The project strands include:

- Setting up a 2012 Information Hub, which provides information about the opportunities available to social enterprises across the country, as well links to news about the latest relevant developments.
- Running a series of events around the UK offering social enterprises the opportunity to build business partnerships and providing a forum for sharing best practice case studies and emerging 2012 developments.
- Setting up a Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) Olympic Network to provide an opportunity for BAME entrepreneurs to voice needs and priorities and exchange best practice.
- Carrying out research that will provide important data on the added value and impact of social enterprises that have the capacity to deliver services for 2012.
- Publication of policy updates, e-newsletters and organising a programme of policy meetings.

See www.sel.org.uk/2012 for more information.

Regional support

A Task Force has been set up to help businesses, including social enterprises, in the West Midlands maximise their tendering and procurement success. Its key members are Advantage West Midlands (AWM) – the regional development agency, The West Midlands Business Council – with the leadership of the Confederation of West Midlands Chambers of Commerce and West Midlands Business Link.

You can download a 52-page 'Business Guide to the London 2012 Games' from AWM's website as well as a range of 2012 Sector Reports, which are updated

monthly, giving relevant information by market sector as well as information about how to get involved. See www.advantagewm.co.uk/what-we-do/helping-business/London_2012.aspx

The specialist contact at AWM is Jim Johnston, Business Manager – 2012 Games. Telephone **0121 503 3299** or e-mail jimjohnston@advantagewm.co.uk

The West Midlands Business Council also has useful information on its website. See www.wmbusinesscouncil.org.uk/london2012. If you are interested in tendering opportunities, you can register to be kept in touch with developments. They will also let the public agencies running the Olympics know about your interest so they can let you know what's happening. And once the big contracts are let, you will be informed who won them so you can pitch for the sub-contracting work if you are interested.

You might also like to keep an eye on www.ready-for-business.co.uk, which has been produced thanks to the National B2B Centre at the University of Warwick as a 'Portal to Assist Firms at the Heart of Britain to Go for Business Gold'.

Cultural opportunities

Information about the Cultural Olympiad in the West Midlands is available at www.culturewm.org.uk.

Sport in the West Midlands

Villa Park in Birmingham is one of six football stadia chosen around the UK to jointly host the Olympic Football Tournament.

Regional Action West Midlands now has a London 2012 Sports Volunteer Coordinator – Matthew Kendall, funded by Sports England and Advantage West Midlands. You can contact him at matthewk@rawm.co.uk or on **0121 359 9100**.

Going for gold

You may have thought the London 2012 Games were too big to be relevant to your enterprise, but you could be surprised. There is clearly enormous potential for social enterprise, so it has to be worth having a look – if you haven't already – at how your organisation might be able to profit. **se**

JUMPING THE HURDLES

TO OLYMPIC OPPORTUNITIES



Photo: © Michael Chaloupka / Dreamstime.com

London 2012 Olympic Games 27 July to 12 August | London 2012 Paralympic Games 29 August to 9 September





The Social Enterprise Mark

The Social Enterprise Mark was launched in 2007 to improve public understanding and recognition of social enterprise and the values which underpin it. **LUCY FINDLAY**, Chief Executive of **RISE**, talks to **SE** about its take up and plans to launch it UK wide.

The Social Enterprise Mark is a label that social enterprises can use to show that they trade for a social or environmental benefit. We began working on the idea of a label or mark in 2006 because many established social enterprises said that customers struggled to grasp their identity as a business motivated by social or environmental objectives.

Work on the idea progressed using Big Lottery Basis funding which enabled us to consult with stakeholders, develop and launch the Social Enterprise Mark in November 2007 at the Eden Project. Since then, a wide variety of social enterprises have been approved to use the Mark. Until now, funding restrictions have meant that its reach has been limited to South West England, although plans for a UK roll out have started. Funding from Capacitybuilders is enabling us to work with the other English regions to undertake market research, training and determine a robust way to successfully deliver the Social Enterprise Mark across the country. There is also interest in rolling out the Mark in Scotland and Wales.

Why adopt the Mark?

To be successful, any business must make very clear to its customers what it offers, what its values are and how it differs from its competitors. Those working within the sector are convinced that social enterprise has a lot to offer to both consumers and the UK economy, yet a recent wide-ranging Government survey¹ found that there is still considerable confusion surrounding social enterprise and what exactly it is. It concluded 'there has to be a recognisable identity' for social enterprise. These findings mirror our own.

Reasons given by holders of the Social Enterprise Mark for signing up include: "to help our customers and other stakeholders understand that we are not a charity", "we want to ensure our credibility as a social enterprise", "we want to differentiate the way we work from Corporate Social Responsibility and Greenwash", "we want customers and other stakeholders to have confidence in us as a social enterprise", "we want all customers to know what being a social enterprise means".

Qualifying for the Mark

Agreeing how a social enterprise is defined stimulates huge debate. But this is where the Mark really stands up to the test. Applicants have to meet eligibility criteria based on the DTI's definition of a social enterprise. These include: 50% of income from trading; profits and assets principally

re-invested for social aims; and evidence of social or environmental delivery. These eligibility criteria are really important and are reflected in the strapline 'trading for people and planet'. Organisations applying for the Social Enterprise Mark are assessed through an independently assured process. This is crucial to ensure the Mark has credibility.

Your views

Would availability of the Social Enterprise Mark benefit you? E-mail comments to Kevin Maton, Social Enterprise West Midlands: k.maton@socialenterprisewm.org.uk. To show your support for the scheme at a national level, you can sign a petition at www.socialenterprisemark.co.uk **SE**

MAKING CONTACT

Kat Lee | 01392 456 535 / info@socialenterprisemark.co.uk / www.socialenterprisemark.co.uk
RISE | www.rise-sw.co.uk

i **RISE** is the voice for social enterprise in South West England. It is a membership organisation that delivers training, events and a range of other services to ensure that social enterprises receive high quality business advice, in an environment where they can thrive and grow.

Web 2.0 technologies

“Web 2.0 sites are a great way to tell your story – a quick, far reaching and free way to promote what you are all about, allowing you to project your style and values easily.”

Since its inception the internet has been adapting to user needs, trends and developments, making the world a smaller place. We are currently in what is called a Web 2.0 environment, in which internet usage is becoming increasingly based on creative communication, information sharing and collaboration. In this article, **NICOLA JONES** of **UnLtdWorld.com** describes for **SE** what the opportunities are and how social enterprises can make use of them.

It used to be that the internet was composed of mainly static websites, updated by specialists, with little opportunity to get feedback on what people thought of them. In the age of Web 2.0, we can all comment on things, edit information and connect with other likeminded users.

Ofcom research shows that just over one fifth (22%) of adult internet users aged 16+ and almost half (49%) of children aged 8-17 who use the internet have set up their own profile on a social networking site¹ and the number of Britons joining a social network is expected to treble from 9.6m to 27m by 2012, according to Datamonitor².

So how can social enterprises make good use of Web 2.0 sites? Well, firstly by recognising that they are a great way to tell your story. They offer a quick, far reaching and free way to promote what you are all about. They allow you to project your style and values easily – by uploading pictures and videos and regularly updating written content, in an informal way, with what you've been doing. They also give you access to information and people you may never have had the chance to connect with before.

Secondly, using Web 2.0 sites is a great way to keep yourself up-to-date

with what your clients or customers think, what they want and what is going in your marketplace. By following blogs addressing subjects that interest you, it's easy to keep informed.

The more you put in to Web 2.0 sites, the more you'll get out. You need to explore what's available and find a way to maintain, update and view the sites that interest you in the way that best suits your needs.

Top tips

Top tips for getting the most from social networks are:

- **Don't limit yourself to one** – there are thousands out there, catering for different niches. Creating accounts on several of them will help you to reach more people who are interested in

your social enterprise and connect with people who are useful to you. It may be that you want to join one for social entrepreneurs (eg UnLtdWorld.com) and one focusing on environmental issues (eg Greenity.net, Change.org).

- **Experiment** – social networks usually have some form of advisor online to help you get started: follow their lead, but try the site out. Spending time online will help you tap into the community present on the platform and engage with the core users.
- **Be yourself** – social networks and blogs are a great way for you to showcase not just your organisation but also its personality – make it a fun way to communicate with your audience. **se**

Web 2.0 in a nutshell...

The main types of Web 2.0 site are:

Blogs – where an individual or organisation regularly writes entries about their lives, company news, or commentary – they can also include pictures and videos. Other internet users can subscribe to blogs, to get updates every time a new blog is posted and can comment on blog articles (blogger.com).

RSS feeds (Really Simple Syndication) – a way for you to keep up-to-date with your favourite websites without having to continuously visit them. Changes on those websites are delivered directly to you either by email or in an RSS reader. Most websites have feeds that you can subscribe to and the RSS symbol can often be found on their homepage.

Sharing sites – places where you can share photos (Flickr.com), videos (YouTube.com) and bookmarks (Delicious.com).

Social networks – online platforms where you can communicate with friends, family, colleagues or people you don't know. They allow users to set up a profile with information about themselves or their organisation, join groups, and interact via comment walls or private messages. The most popular social networking sites are: MySpace, Facebook, Bebo – for connecting with the people you know, Twitter – a platform for sending short updates on what you are doing, and LinkedIn – for managing professional relationships.

Social enterprises in rural areas often have differing needs and challenges from those in urban settings, not least because many are physically isolated and so it can be difficult for them to access specialist business support, training, or even network with their peers.

Partners for Social Enterprise (PSE) was established in 2004, with funding from Advantage West Midlands, to address this issue across Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire. Today the partnership organisation has members including three county councils, social enterprises, voluntary and community organisations, and private sector businesses, who work together to foster a culture of social enterprise across the three counties, ensure availability of advice and information for social enterprises, enable access to appropriate finance, and enable social enterprises to work with government.

Importantly, particularly for its more remote members, PSE holds regular meetings and events enabling them to share knowledge, best practice, and look at ways they can work together. Pat Buchanan of Herefordshire Council, who offers advice and support to PSE members as part of her role as Community Finance & Enterprise Officer, says: "PSE holds quarterly meetings and at least one event each year, and we always alternate the locations to ensure that we're accessible to members far and wide and can engage as many rural social enterprises as possible. As well as providing excellent networking opportunities, the meetings and events also include sector-relevant presentations and aim to offer valuable advice and information to all who attend."

The opening of the Mortimer Country Stores, with members of the local community and actor John Challis (who played Boycie in *Only Fools and Horses*).



countdown

Partners for Social Enterprise

PSE has also created a cluster group for social enterprises in waste and recycling, entitled SEWAR, which since 2005 has been working in partnership to prevent waste and improve individuals' and communities' quality of life. It comprises social enterprises and other voluntary organisations, local authorities, statutory bodies and businesses within Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The forum has been a vehicle for consultation and partnership working, helping to produce a local directory of re-use organisations for the public. It has also facilitated the introduction of re-use credits and been successful in securing Defra funding.

More recently, PSE was awarded funding from the Illuminate programme – run by Social Enterprise West Midlands – enabling it to put together a booklet entitled *Unlocking Enterprise*, which aims to give some initial insight into the concept of social enterprise, the challenges that rural organisations face, and some valuable examples of organisations that have followed the social enterprise path. The funding is also being used to develop a new

website for the partnership, which will feature useful resources and act as an online base for its members.

Pat says: "Things are really moving forward for the partnership now, largely thanks to the goodwill and efforts of its members. As with any network, it can take a long time to get going, but we're currently in the process of securing funding to appoint a full-time co-ordinator, which will really push things forward and help us to further meet our aims."

"In the future the partnership will update its social enterprise strategy and aim to ensure that it's part of the economic development policies for the three county councils involved. We also want to build on what we're already doing, and reach out to even more disadvantaged communities as well as voluntary networks that may also benefit from social enterprise."

Brother and sister, Ben and Charlotte Hollins, run Ford Hall Organic Farm in Shropshire, as tenant farmers of Ford Hall Farm Community Land Initiative, which is bringing wider community benefits from the land.



Country life

PSE social enterprise members include:

Just Credit Union

Based in Shropshire since 2001, Just Credit has five dedicated branches in Craven Arms, Ludlow, Market Drayton, Oswestry and Shrewsbury, and offers financial services including bank accounts, affordable loans, and insurance products.

Supported by Shropshire County Council and a host of employers, the scheme has more than 1,600 active members, including 200 junior savers from five local schools.

In December 2008, the credit union was the first organisation to receive a special visit from Will Aston, the new rural financial inclusion champion for England, who emphasised the importance of credit unions in remote rural areas that are often faced with post office and bank closures.

Mortimer Country Stores

Located in Wigmore, Mortimer Country Stores officially opened in May 2008. It is a community co-operative owned and managed by local residents who

raised enough funding via a community share issue to purchase premises and set up the store following the closure of the only shop in the village.

The store provides vital services in a very remote area, and also creates a community focal point for the village which lost its Post Office in November 2008.

Fordhall Farm Community Land Initiative

An Industrial and Provident Society that was established in 2005 to save Fordhall Organic Farm in North Shropshire from development, which it was successful in doing after raising over £800,000, mostly from a community share issue. The Initiative hopes to reaffirm the relationship between the landscape and the way it shapes the prosperity of rural communities. As the landowner, Fordhall Community Land Initiative utilises the land for community benefit through events, volunteering and educational visits, whilst the tenant farmers manage the farm. It is an organisation that is growing and developing all the time and invites anyone who wishes to get involved.

South Shropshire Furniture Scheme

The Scheme was established in 1994 to find a way to reuse and recycle unwanted household items, and became a social enterprise in 1999. Since it was set up more than 12,000 people have donated household items, and around 2,500 families and individuals have received help from its scheme via the supply of refurbished items. The enterprise delivers a contract on behalf of Veolia Environmental Service Ltd to collect bulky waste from the households in south Shropshire – a sparsely populated area with pockets of rural isolation. It runs a carpentry workshop to restore the collected items and a retail outlet in Ludlow to sell them. It also has a contract with the probation service to provide training opportunities for people serving community orders. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

Partners for Social Enterprise | www.partnersforsocialenterprise.org.uk
Just Credit Union | www.justcreditunion.org
Fordhall Farm Community Land Initiative | www.fordhallfarm.com
South Shropshire Furniture Scheme | www.furniturescheme.co.uk

Lessons in social enterprise

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ON THE CURRICULUM | BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS

Social enterprise became part of the curriculum for pupils aged 11-18 in September 2008. **DR CHRIS NEWIS** of the Robert Owen Society talked to SE about the work the society has been doing to help schools develop their understanding and teaching of social enterprise.

The Robert Owen Society is a co-operative of around 500 schools, colleges and social enterprises and each year trains over 300 graduate teachers in schools in England and Wales. We have been working to encourage the integration of social enterprise into the curriculum since 2002 when we partnered with The Co-operative College to produce and pilot the 'Not [just] for Profit' toolkit aimed at secondary school teachers.

Like others across the movement, we welcomed the announcement made by the Department for Education and Skills (now the Department for Children, Families and Schools) that social enterprise would become part of the secondary curriculum framework from 2008 – a major step towards promoting the concept among young people, particularly as a desirable career option. However, our research and experience locally revealed that curriculum leaders within schools were unsure of how to introduce social enterprise within the classroom. Business studies and humanities teachers lacked access to relevant materials and examples.

To address these issues in a practical way, we formed a partnership between local schools and social enterprises and successfully bid for funding from Social Enterprise West Midlands (SEWM) to develop and test a range of materials with teaching professionals. These included a short film about locally based rural social enterprises which was produced by and features students from local schools. We also used Focusing on Success – a DVD produced by SEWM, which has been well received in schools.

Key lessons learnt from the project were that social enterprise:

Is cross curricular – The seminar materials highlighted the breadth of subjects and topics that social enterprise can cover in

“In medieval times we built communities around the manor house. In the nineteenth century we built communities around the factory. In the twenty first century we will build communities around schools.”

Cabinet Office Minister Lyam Burn, interviewed in the Guardian, 8 December, 2008.

the curriculum – geography, international development, etc, not only business studies.

Connects schools with local communities

– Social enterprise has influenced schools to get involved in local communities and businesses. Providing real life examples gives students an understanding of the problems social enterprises are set up to tackle, as well as of business issues.

Needs to be championed – In many situations social enterprise has been championed by an enthusiastic teacher. We have been able to get different subject specialists to share social enterprise across the curriculum.

Should link to curriculum development

– Social enterprise has led to new areas of study such as vocational learning. It is also proposed that the delivery for diplomas in the Marches area should be through a social enterprise structure.

Can support 'whole school' development

– In some areas, such as Queen Elizabeth Humanities College, Bromyard – which has acquired its own wind turbine – social enterprise has been used to develop the whole school rather than just subject areas. We're increasingly finding that schools are not only engaging pupils in starting social enterprises, but are also looking at the model in the context of their own operating structures.

Improves links to 'Every Child Matters'

– Social enterprise can drive the multi-agency approach to child development, but there is a need for a link worker between schools and social enterprises.

The link between social enterprise and young people is now well established in rural schools in the Marches area.

The schools are increasingly interested in social enterprise not only within the curriculum but also as a partnership structure for delivering learning to wider rural communities. We are now focusing on the 14+ vocational and diploma agenda and hoping to pilot a social enterprise NVQ in the spring term. **SE**

Did you know?

Last year the Social Enterprise Coalition introduced a new award - 'Social Enterprise in Schools' – to its national Enterprising Solutions Awards, which celebrate the UK's best and most innovative social enterprises. The award was won by Fyndoune Community College, Durham, which runs a social enterprise called Water Works that funded a well in Ghana through the sale of bottled water.

Values make a difference

Find out about the changes underway in the governance and curriculum of schools and how the co-operative movement is responding, at an event being held at the National Motorcycle Museum, Solihull on Saturday, 7 March. Details: www.co-op.ac.uk/downloads/12434scho_ex_leaflet.pdf

RESOURCES

Integrating Social Enterprise into the Curriculum DVD | www.robertowen.org (ALPS project/ALPS video)

Not [Just] for Profit toolkit | Available from The Co-operative College: www.co-op.ac.uk

Focusing on Success DVD | Available from SEWM: 024 7663 3911

Guidance and resources for implementing social enterprise education in schools | www.teachernet.gov.uk
National Education Business Partnership Network | www.nebpn.org

MAKING CONTACT

Dr Chris Newis | 01568 615510 / www.robertowen.org



Mutual appreciation

As the credit crunch continues to bite, more and more people across the West Midlands are choosing the social enterprise option when it comes to saving and borrowing. Many of the region's credit unions – community co-operatives that offer financial services to their members – have reported an increase in membership as people are seeking alternatives to high street banks and loan sharks.

Harby Sondhi, Marketing Officer of Citysave Credit Union in Birmingham, says: "Our membership has grown by around 10% in the last six months, which we believe is partly due to the current economic downturn. A lot of people are turning to credit unions because they believe that they can rely on them – they're safe and secure, local, ethical and not-for-profit. Credit unions are about members saving together, which in turn is regenerated back into the community via low cost loans."

Coventry and Warwickshire Co-operative Development Agency (CWCD), which works closely as part of a forum with its eight local credit unions, has also witnessed an increase in popularity. Mike Hoyland of CWCD says: "There's been a lot of national public attention on credit unions recently as the current financial situation has focused people's minds on mutuality which, at last, is back in fashion! Of course, we're very pleased about this and we're not only working with the credit unions in our area to extend membership and current services, but we're also developing

collaboration and new services. We've recently introduced a bill payment service, for example, which enables credit union members to spread the cost of their main household costs, such as utility bills. Some of our local credit unions also now offer budgeting services which support the main aim of helping people with their finances before they get into real difficulty."

Credit unions across the rest of the UK are also enjoying a rise in popularity. Mark Lyonette, Chief Executive of ABCUL – the Association of British Credit Unions, explains: "Credit unions are sheltered from the current economic turmoil because of the unique way they are set up. Since most of the funds come from members they are not reliant on the money markets. In recent weeks many credit unions have reported that they are attracting large numbers of new savers as people recognise the attraction of local, mutual financial services providers that are not caught up in the global situation."

It's anticipated that credit unions will continue to increase their size and scope and, according to ABCUL, they are at the forefront of government plans to tackle financial exclusion. Around 100 credit unions across the country – including those in the West Midlands – deliver the Department of Work and Pensions' Growth Fund which makes affordable lending available to those on low incomes, and new legislation to be implemented during 2009 will enable credit unions to pay interest on their members' savings and lend to community groups rather than solely individuals.

Mark Lyonette says: "The credit union sector has been gaining in popularity lately and I am sure the new legislation will improve it even further – making credit unions as important in the UK as they already are in other parts of the world." **se**

Did you know?

- Credit unions have been around in Britain since the 1960s – there are now around 540 credit unions in England, Scotland and Wales.
- All credit unions have a 'common bond' which determines who can join. A common bond may be for people who live or work in a certain area, for people who work for the same employer or group of employers or for people who belong to the same association.
- One in four credit unions now has more than 2,000 members compared to 3 per cent 10 years ago, according to a new report from ABCUL and The Co-operative Bank.
- Credit unions exist in 92 countries around the world.
- Any profit a credit union makes is reinvested into the credit union or distributed to members as a dividend.

MAKING CONTACT

Citysave Credit Union | www.citysave.org.uk
 ABCUL | www.abcul.org
 CWCD | www.cwcd.co.uk

No enterprise is an island

In the UK, it's reported that African Caribbean people face disproportionate discrimination and disadvantage in the mental health system.

The African Caribbean Community Initiative (ACCI), based in Wolverhampton, was established in 1987 to both tackle this, by providing a range of person-centred, culturally appropriate services to individuals and families experiencing or recovering from mental ill-health, and to actively influence local, regional and national mental health policy development and service delivery.

ACCI is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity, with around 30 members of staff and 42 registered volunteers that support its work. Its range of services includes:

- Providing supported accommodation for African Caribbean people experiencing or recovering from mental ill-health
- Running a daily resource centre where people can go to take part in a range of enjoyable activities including: learning how to cook healthy food on a budget; sewing classes; a gym; or access computers
- Providing assertive outreach services: a team of staff offering support to members - ACCI's preferred term for its service users - in their homes, in prisons, hospitals or wherever they are residing
- Running a women's group that meets every week to socialise and offer creative writing sessions
- Running a men's group that meets monthly to enjoy music and debate
- Running the ABBO Gardening project at Dunstall allotments where produce is grown organically and distributed among members.

Alicia Spence, ACCI service director, says: "Whatever we do, humanity underpins it - we work with people, not their diagnosis. We want our members to be empowered to regain control of their lives. Support plans are developed in conjunction with members, staff and other stakeholders to promote stability and recovery of mental health. It is important that these plans reflect members' future hopes, dreams and aspirations."

A range of partners

Part of ACCI's longevity in a difficult sector can be attributed to the partnerships it's forged with a range of statutory, third sector and private sector organisations locally, regionally and nationally to influence and improve specialist and mainstream services for African Caribbean people facing mental ill-health. It partners with, and delivers its services on behalf of:

- Heanton Housing Association, a registered social landlord
- Wolverhampton City Council
- Wolverhampton Primary Care Trust
- The Llankelley Chase Foundation

- The Government's Supporting People Programme
- Local and regional universities and other educational institutions - providing training placements for mental health nursing degrees and BA social work students.

Speaking on the recent 21st anniversary of ACCI, Jon Crockett, chief executive of Wolverhampton Primary Care Trust, said: "ACCI has played an important part in delivering high quality mental health services to the local African Caribbean community for many years and this complements mainstream NHS mental health services provided by Wolverhampton Primary Care Trust. The PCT greatly values the work of charities such as ACCI and works in partnership with them to improve and develop services for the people of Wolverhampton."

'Whose Story?'

In 2008 ACCI also became a community partner of the National Trust as part of its 'Whose Story?' programme, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund over a four year period within the West Midlands region. The programme aims to uncover hidden histories and stories within National Trust properties and involves developing links with cultural heritage, researching new interpretations and programming a range of events to attract diverse audiences.

ACCI has worked with the programme to develop a community healing herb garden at Wightwick Manor in Wolverhampton, and explore similarities between a Caribbean kitchen garden and the newly developed Victorian kitchen garden at Wightwick Manor. A booklet sharing traditional African Caribbean healing remedies, entitled Wightwick Manor Caribbean Herbal, has also been produced as part of the project.

Glenis Williams, Outreach Officer for the Whose Story? programme, said: "Wightwick Manor Caribbean Herbal is a collective learning resource, sharing traditional methods of healing and recipes. This project has given individuals a chance to get out in green spaces and grow herbs and vegetables that they would use at home. All produce is local and organically grown and is also used in the tea room at Wightwick Manor and Gardens."

Looking Ahead

In the future ACCI plans to implement an income-generation and diversification strategy, aiming to move the organisation towards a more sustainable and balanced income base, while continuing to deliver its much-valued services and partner with other organisations to broaden its impact.

Alicia says: "We're very pro-active in seeking working partnerships, and belong to a number of care and community networks. When people fail to work together then the victims are those who the services are supposed to provide for - it's important to remember that no man, or enterprise, is an island." **se**

As part of a series of case studies highlighting successful social enterprises in the West Midlands, we look at the African Caribbean Community Initiative (ACCI) and find out how successful partnering has kept it operating for over 21 years.



MAKING CONTACT

Alicia Spence, ACCI | 01902 571231

Perfect partnering: tips for success

- **BE PRO-ACTIVE** – don't wait for partnering opportunities to land on your doorstep, make the first move and approach other organisations with ideas.
- **CONFIRM COMMITMENT** – all partners must be committed to both the process and the outcome of a project.
- **HAVE CLEAR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** – in any partnering situation, it's crucial that all parties involved understand exactly what's expected of them, and what they're accountable for.
- **SYNCHRONISE YOUR GOALS** – partner organisations may work in different ways and in different sectors, but it's important that you share the same goals when working together on a project or programme.
- **HONESTY (AND TRANSPARENCY) IS THE BEST POLICY** – partners need to be able to share information, work openly with each other, and trust each other
- **COMMUNICATION IS KEY** – keep your partners as up-to-date as possible and find ways to communicate that enable regular, and convenient, contact.
- **ENSURE INTERDEPENDENCE** – partner with organisations that offer complementary skills. The purpose of a partnership is usually to achieve something together than can't be done as individual enterprises.



“We’re very interested in partnering with established social enterprises – particularly in Wolverhampton and Solihull.”

PRIVATE PARTNERS

Working in partnership with the private sector may not seem like the most obvious route to delivering social goals, but Economic Development Service (EDS) is demonstrating the ongoing benefits and is now looking for social enterprises in the West Midlands to get involved with its venture. PAT DONOGHUE, Chief Executive of EDS, talks to SE.

From 1984, operating as Lancashire Co-operative Development Agency, we provided support to co-operatives and social enterprises on behalf of local authorities and the EU. By 2003, however, the funding had dried up – we found ourselves in a changing market and unable to tender for large region-wide business support contracts. Our local authority service level agreement came to an end and so to survive we had to radically rethink what we were doing, and how we were doing it.

Like many other co-operative development agencies in the same situation at the time, while sticking to our social principles, we found ourselves on a treadmill trying to find new sources of income as many of the community-based organisations we had traditionally supported didn’t have the funding to pay directly for our services.

We re-evaluated the market and found that in order to remain sustainable we would have to target our services at large private sector companies seeking to fulfil their corporate social responsibility goals.

Since then we have worked with several private companies, helping them to develop support for local communities through their activities, and in particular we have forged a strong relationship

with Enterprise plc – a large nationwide company with over 50 major offices throughout the UK and Ireland. Enterprise plc is a support services company that provides infrastructure maintenance services – such as street cleansing, social housing repairs, grounds maintenance work and infrastructure renewal – for the public sector, the utilities industry and other large organisations. As part of its contract agreements, Enterprise plc is committed to put something back into local communities, and this is where our expertise comes into play.

Working with Enterprise plc, we developed a programme enabling the company to provide training and employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups as an integral part of its service delivery contracts. We also created links between the company and community-based training and education providers.

It became clear that the relationship between ourselves and Enterprise plc was a symbiotic one, with each of us achieving our social goals, and so we took the partnership a stage further in 2007 when we jointly formed the Enterprise Foundation – a national not-for-profit company that works in partnership with public sector agencies and social landlords with the aim of delivering a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits to local communities.

The Foundation aims to maximise the social and economic impact of Enterprise plc contracts on the communities which they serve, develop innovative approaches to adding value to mainstream service provision, and provide a clear economic and social focus for Enterprise plc’s corporate social responsibility.

One of the Foundation’s key achievements has been a pilot scheme in Liverpool, developed in partnership with local authorities, Job Centre Plus and community-based employment training agencies and initiatives. This Transitional Employment Programme created 12-month environmental apprenticeships for 20 long-term unemployed individuals, with a view to securing full-time employment. Fifteen apprentices secured full-time jobs on completion, ten with Enterprise plc. The scheme continues on an annual basis.

Following this success, a similar programme was developed in Haringey, this time targeted at ex-offenders. It was undertaken in partnership with a number of organisations including Haringey Council, Job Centre Plus and London & Quadrant – a national housing association.

We are now seeking similar opportunities in the West Midlands, looking at ways that we can create training and potentially employment in the region. We’re very interested in partnering with established social enterprises – particularly in Wolverhampton or Solihull – that can provide employability training, become sub-contractors for Enterprise plc, or work with us to develop community-based schemes and businesses.” **se**

More case studies of West Midlands based social enterprises that are successfully working with the private sector are illustrated in a special Birmingham Post supplement that was sponsored by SEWM. Available to download from www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk/resources.

MAKING CONTACT

EDS | www.edsnw.co.uk
Enterprise Foundation | www.enterprise-foundation.net

JARGONBUSTER

An essential guide for complete novices

We thought that SE readers who are new to social enterprise would appreciate this glossary of terms to make reading every issue a little easier...

ASSET BASED DEVELOPMENT: A development strategy that recognises the possession of tangible assets – land, buildings or a dedicated income – is key to achieving the goals of self-sufficiency, independence and sustainability which underpin community-based regeneration organisations.

ASSET TRANSFER: A term used to describe the process of the transfer of the ownership (or leasehold) of property or land from one party to another. Currently, the term is being used in the context of the transfer of public sector assets to third parties – including social enterprises and the voluntary and community sector.

CAPACITY BUILDING: The provision of support to ensure that organisations, individuals or networks have the skills, knowledge, structures and resources to realise their full potential. Capacity building support can take many forms, including direct facilitation and training, transferring knowledge and expertise, financial investment or any combination of these.

COMMUNITY BUSINESS/ENTERPRISE: A trading organisation which is set up, owned and controlled by the local community and which aims to create self supporting employment for local people and also act as a focus for local development. The terms community business or community enterprise are often used by social enterprises that focus on local markets and services.

COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY (CIC): A CIC is a legal form created specifically for social enterprises. It has a social objective that is "regulated" ensuring that the organisation cannot deviate from its social mission and that its assets are protected.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCE INSTITUTIONS (CDFIS): CDFIs lend and invest in deprived areas and underserved markets, such as social enterprise, that cannot access mainstream finance. Most aim to generate social returns, strengthening the communities in which they operate.

CO-OPERATIVE: An organisation owned and controlled by its members who are also the beneficiaries of the activities of the business. There are many types of co-operative, each serving their members' economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations in different ways. Another popular form for social enterprise.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR): A wide ranging set of concepts that relate to businesses conducting their activities responsibly. Factors include environmental impacts, employee and customer health and safety issues, participation in local communities (being a good neighbour), good corporate governance, other social issues, ethical and fair trading.

CREDIT UNION: A financial co-operative, which is owned and controlled by its members. As well as being a good savings option, with successful credit unions paying an annual dividend of up to 8%, the money saved can be used to make low interest loans to other credit union members. Only people who come within the common bond of the credit union can join it and make use of its services.

DEVELOPMENT TRUSTS: Development trusts are defined as organisations that are:

- Engaged in the economic, environmental and social regeneration of a defined area or community
- Independent and aiming for self sufficiency
- Not for private profit
- Community-based and owned
- Actively involved in partnerships between the community, voluntary, private and public sectors.

ETHICAL BUSINESS: An ethical business tries to achieve its financial goals while minimising any negative impact on society or the environment.

FAIR TRADE: Fair Trade is an internationally-recognised approach to trading which aims to ensure that producers in poor countries get a fair deal. A fair deal includes a fair price for goods and services, decent working conditions, and a commitment from buyers so that there is reasonable security for the producers.

NON PROFIT OR NOT-FOR-PROFIT: Terms used to describe companies which may well make a profit, but do not distribute their profits to shareholders, instead using them for social or community benefit or reinvestment in fulfilling their social aims.

SOCIAL ACCOUNTING AND SOCIAL AUDITING: Social Accounting is a process that enables organisations to measure their social and environmental performances against their aims and objectives and gauge the true impact of their activities

on their stakeholders. Social Auditing takes place when an organisation's activities are audited by an independent auditor or social accounting panel.

SOCIAL CAPITAL: A term used to describe the non-financial resources – such as trust, partnership, shared values – which enable a community to thrive and function more effectively.

SOCIAL ECONOMY: Sometimes also called the 'third sector', this part of the economy exists between the private and public sectors and includes social enterprises, voluntary organisations, foundations, trade unions, religious bodies and housing associations.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: Social enterprises are businesses set up to tackle a social or environmental need. Many commercial businesses would consider themselves to have social objectives, but social enterprises are distinctive because their social and/or environmental purpose is absolutely central to what they do - their profits are reinvested to sustain and further their mission for positive change.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR: Somebody who identifies and brings to life new business opportunities but who is motivated by public and social good rather than the need for personal profit.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION: Where people or groups find themselves excluded from society and from opportunity for reasons such as poverty, ethnic origin, age, lack of skills, bad health, low income, criminal record or gender.

SOCIAL FIRM: A business created to provide integrated employment and training to people with a disability or other disadvantage in the labour market.

SOCIAL INCLUSION: The ability to access and benefit from the opportunities available to members of society.

SURPLUS: The profit in many social enterprises is referred to as a surplus, to reflect their 'not-for-profit' status.

SUSTAINABILITY: This term can refer both to the financial stability of an organisation and to the adoption of environmental policies and practices which minimise the impact of the enterprise on the environment.

THIRD SECTOR: The overarching term for organisations and groups that operate other than for private profit. The term encompasses voluntary and community organisations, charities, social enterprises, cooperatives and mutuals both large and small.



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