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Final Report for the Small Business Service:

Review of the Enterprise Promotion Fund

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Acknowledgements

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Executive summary

Most of the projects supported by the Enterprise Promotion Fund have been able to meet their stated objectives. The most successful projects have been particularly attuned to the needs and entrepreneurial potential of their target social groups, demonstrating aspects of good and effective practice that should be used to inform the development of policy in this area. Further EPF type initiatives that built on this good practice could contribute to achieving the government's enterprise objectives. Projects targeted at children, young people and engaging the wider community have demonstrated particular value and further potential. Future policy needs to find an appropriate balance between the rationalisation of business support, as set out in the Business Support Simplification Agenda, and making the best use of the knowledge and understanding of specialist providers.

Aims and objectives

1.   The aim of the research has been to assess the effectiveness of the Enterprise Promotion Fund, with a particular emphasis on capturing the lessons learned from both successful and unsuccessful projects and, in relation to individual projects, to determine:

- o   What were the outcomes of the projects in relation to project objectives;
- o   The benefits to participants in terms of stimulating awareness and understanding of enterprise;
- o   The extent to which projects have been successful in raising enterprise awareness amongst particular groups;
- o   The sustainability and further potential of individual projects, including complementarities with other relevant interventions.

Background

2.   The Enterprise Promotion Fund (EPF) was designed to test out innovative approaches to raising awareness of enterprise within the UK population and to encourage people to develop skills relevant to enterprise. It was also aimed at affording opportunities for new projects targeting sectors of the population receiving little or no attention from existing promotion activities.

3.   The aim of the EPF has therefore been to support experimentation in approaches to influencing the attitudes and behaviour of individuals with respect to enterprise in all its forms, including social enterprise, and involving the business and voluntary sectors as sources of expertise on enterprise.

4.   The total programme cost of the Fund was £1 million over a period of 18 months commencing from 1st April 2004, with £150,000 set aside for running costs and evaluation, and a top limit of about £40,000 set per project. Bids were invited from private and voluntary sector organisations, social enterprises and from public sector organisations which could demonstrate significant private or voluntary sector support for their projects. The criteria against which bids were assessed included: degree of creativity and innovation; awareness of existing provision and additionality; extent of coverage / reach; level of private / voluntary sector collaboration; sensitivity to inclusivity and relevance; and sustainability.

5.	SBS received 387 applications to the Fund; 81 of these survived the first stage of the selection process, which emphasised the criteria of relevance and creativity. A further sift resulted in 44 bids being considered by the EPF Project Board; 21 projects were finally selected for funding and 18 projects completed.

6.	The main social groups targeted were:

- o *School children and young people*, with 'young people' comprising university students and, in one case, 'disaffected young adults' (8 projects in total);
- o *Women* (5 projects);
- o *Older people, aged 40 or 50+* (4 projects);
- o *Ethnic minorities* (2 projects, one targeting refugees and one targeting Chinese women and established Chinese businesses);
- o *Homeless and other excluded people* (1).

7.	All of the projects were focused on city and sub-regional localities, except for one project which was targeted at homeless people in seven cities and spanning a number of English regions.

8.	Most projects utilised more than one approach, but can be roughly divided into those which:

- a.	Aimed at reaching large numbers of people within their target groups/communities through large-scale events, in some cases then signposting attendees to support providers.
- b.	Relied on more intensive approaches, aiming to access and assist relatively small numbers of specifically targeted individuals.
- c.	Were aimed at children and young people and were focused on both awareness raising and skills, but had the advantage of a 'captive audience' within the highly structured context of the educational system.

Key findings

The outcomes of the projects in relation to project objectives

9.	Most of the projects have been able to demonstrate success in terms of meeting their targeted outputs while some project managers have claimed, with justification, to have exceeded their original aims and expectations. The experience of those projects that were more focused and narrowly targeted on specific groups of individuals has been more mixed, with some projects demonstrating considerable (and in some cases ongoing) success and others having only reached small numbers, with the impact being very limited or difficult to gauge.

10.	A variety of mechanisms for engagement and delivery have been shown to be effective. Direct targeting, word of mouth and outreach have been particularly important for accessing 'hard to reach' groups, particularly given the limited scale of projects and associated lack of resources for more extensive marketing. Delivery based on creative theatre techniques, games and road shows appear to have been particularly successful, especially in terms of reaching larger numbers.

The impact on participants in terms of stimulating awareness and understanding of enterprise

11.   Examination of the characteristics and experiences of the project participants who were interviewed individually for this review shows that:

o   A significant proportion had profile characteristics typically associated with 'high entrepreneurial potential', even prior to their coming into contact with the EPF project, with 40 per cent already being self-employed or employed at the time of their involvement;

o   Cautious and, in some cases, negative attitudes towards self-employment/ enterprise are firmly rooted in actual experience, including proximity in many cases to what could be described as 'negative role models', i.e. individuals known to participants who were struggling in various respects to survive on a self-employed basis.

12.   Some projects demonstrate important potential with respect to social enterprise and community development. One in particular, based on a community theatre approach, provides strong evidence of the potential of initiatives based on a broader, more social conception of enterprise with respect to supporting community involvement in creative projects.

The extent to which projects have been successful in raising enterprise awareness amongst particular groups

13.   With regard to 'building an enterprise culture' in the target population groups, most project managers felt that their project had begun to make such a contribution although most were also cautious about making exaggerated claims, given the restricted scale of projects. Some responses from other stakeholders, however, were more sceptical of the potential for some projects to contribute to this aim.

14.   The findings suggest that projects targeted at children and younger people are more likely to have a fundamental impact on awareness and attitudes towards enterprise than are projects targeted at adults. Such projects also fit well with other relevant policies aimed at schools, and can involve introducing creative and enjoyable activities which can more fully engage less academic students in a way that the day to day curriculum may not.

15.   Some of the projects targeted at excluded/disadvantaged groups and those underrepresented in enterprise indicate something of the barriers to policy interventions such as the EPF programme which aim to influence the attitudes and behaviour of people who do not aspire to self-employment or starting their own business.

Sustainability and further potential of individual projects, including complementarities with other relevant interventions

16.   In most cases managers felt that their projects would not have gone ahead in any form without the EPF assistance. In the three cases where projects would have gone ahead, it was emphasised that the EPF grant had nevertheless been important in terms of adding value to projects.

17.   Thirteen projects had continued to operate at least some aspect of the activity supported by the EPF. Of these, just over half had been able to continue in a similar format, sometimes with increased scope, largely through having secured further funding or having been brought into the mainstream of support.

18.   Of the six projects which have not continued in any form, project managers attributed this to lack of funding, although also referring to legacies left by the EPF project, such as databases of local entrepreneurs, networking contacts and increased staff expertise.

19.   Another positive aspect in some cases has been the influence of EPF projects on other organisations (i.e. including Business Link, local enterprise agencies, community organisations, and local authorities), and the development of closer working links to support improved pre-start and on-going business assistance to the target population groups.

Lessons and recommendations

20.   Several of the EPF projects investigated in this review demonstrated aspects of good and effective practice that should be used to inform the development of policy in this area. Further EPF type initiatives that built on this good practice could contribute to achieving the government's enterprise objectives. Alternatively, key lessons should be incorporated into mainstream business support provision and other policies aimed at raising enterprise awareness and understanding.

Practical lessons: Success Factors

21.   In the most effective projects, lead organisations were particularly attuned and responsive to the needs and potentialities of their target groups, based on having prior relevant experience with the target group and/or research conducted in support of their application to the EPF. In some cases successful projects have also developed out of an appreciation of the specific failings of existing agencies to address the needs of target groups. Other factors underpinning successful project implementation and delivery are:

   o   Successful projects were often driven by key, committed individuals who are also able to enthuse and engage others and are sufficiently resourceful and adaptive to respond to any difficulties within a context of limited resources;

   o   The importance of the viability of the intervention model, with the most effective interventions being typically based on prior extensive experience and knowledge of 'what works' in terms of realising individual and collective potential; and/or more specific research, testing and refinement;

   o   Being able to recruit good entrepreneurial role models / business ambassadors and other voluntary contributions; professional delivery of the project may also require the need to hire key professionals with appropriate skills;

   o   Effective outreach strategy and implementation;

   o   Engagement with the target audience through sensitive and inspiring presentation;

   o   Effective networking / partnership working with other relevant support agencies and stakeholders.

22.   The main reasons for project under-performance can be summarised in terms of:
   o   Flawed intervention model, insufficient to engage with and meet the needs of the target group, also typically associated with over-ambitious expectations with respect to entrepreneurial potential;

   o   Ineffective promotion and outreach strategies, failing to attract the target population in sufficient numbers;

   o   Failure to form effective partnerships with other key support agencies and relevant stakeholders.

Assessing needs and potential

23.	The evidence of this review suggests that in any future similar initiative delivery organisations should be required to be clearer about the needs and entrepreneurial potential of the social groups targeted. In other words, better use needs to be made of existing knowledge and understanding of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial potential.

24.	For many individuals in situations of need, assistance with employment may be more appropriate than encouraging them into self-employment / new venture creation. People in situations of disadvantage face particular barriers, and often need a great deal of advice and support with regard to a range of issues even before matters relating more specifically to self-employment/enterprise can begin to be addressed.

The relationship of specialist providers to mainstream enterprise support

25.	Specialist providers involved in EPF have experienced various degrees of co-operation and 'buy in' from other agencies, and synergy with other relevant policies. Some projects experienced particular difficulty gaining the support and co-operation of other agencies. Concern was expressed by a number of interviewees about the future of specialist providers in a context of ongoing contraction/restructuring of existing business support.

26.	At the same time, enterprise/business support is in a process of transition and restructuring in a context following increasing concern about the overly-complex nature of the business support system, that there are too many different programmes and initiatives, and the recent drive to consolidate business support around a smaller number of providers, as set out in the government's Business Support Simplification Agenda.

27.	Future policy therefore needs to find an appropriate balance between rationalisation and using the resources of specialist organisations. Following from this, consideration might be given to integrating lessons from the EPF programme into existing provision, in a context where the aim is to develop fewer and more strategic interventions but using the experiences and resources of particular specialist organisations.

Awareness raising and community engagement

28.	Interventions focused on children and young people show the most promise in terms of making a fundamental impact on the enterprise awareness of significant numbers of people. Interventions which take a broad and inclusive approach to community engagement and enterprise have particular potential in terms of empowering local communities to move forward.

About this project

29.	This research was carried on behalf of the Small Business Service during 2006. The review has examined the experiences of the 18 EPF projects that have completed, with 11 of these being examined in greater depth, in order to identify the lessons learned and wider potential of project ideas.

30.	The emphasis in the case studies of selected EPF projects has been to look beyond the reported outputs to clarify how project activities have given rise to outcomes in their specific contexts. This has involved an examination of the available documentary evidence relating to project outputs and outcomes; and interviews conducted with project managers, selected

participants and key stakeholders. The evaluative framework focuses on the following interrelated elements:

1. The validity of the understanding held by the lead organisation of the needs and potential of the target group / locale (i.e. as gained through prior experience and/or specific research conducted in support of the EPF application);

2. The effectiveness of the specific approaches and mechanisms adopted for engaging, influencing and assisting the target group;

3. How well projects were managed and delivered on a day-to-day basis, including with respect to being sufficiently resourceful and adaptive to overcome obstacles and difficulties encountered;

4. Other contextual factors, including in particular the role of other agencies and the relationship of the EPF project / lead organisation to mainstream enterprise support and other relevant policy agendas.

1. Introduction and research methods

Background to the Enterprise Promotion Fund

Announced in the April 2003 Budget the Enterprise Promotion Fund (EPF) was designed to:

- Test out innovative approaches to raising 'awareness of enterprise' within the UK population.
- Encourage people to 'develop skills relevant to enterprise'.
- Afford opportunities for new projects targeting sectors of the population receiving little or no attention from existing promotion activities.

The Fund contributes to achieving the Government Action Plan under the theme 'building an enterprise culture' and ultimately to the achievement of DTI Public Service Agreement Targets 1 and 6:[1]

> **PSA 1:** Demonstrate further progress by 2008 on the Government's long-term objective of raising the rate of UK productivity growth over the economic cycle, improving competitiveness and narrowing the gap with our major industrial competitors.

> **PSA 6:** Build an enterprise society in which small firms of all kinds thrive and achieve their potential, with (i) an increase in the number of people considering going into business, (ii) an improvement in the overall productivity of small firms, and (iii) more enterprise in disadvantaged communities.

The rationale for EPF, as presented in the ROAMEF Statement for the Fund[2], emphasises in particular:

a. Shifts in the industrial make-up of the UK and Europe involving a decline in large corporations and public sector activity and a corresponding increase in small and new businesses, with most net new jobs being created by new and expanding firms. This justifies a pro-enterprise approach, since being economically active therefore is more likely to involve a need to be enterprising, which may mean 'forming or taking over a business, or being employed in an environment where there is more rapid change and a need and scope for individuals to take personal responsibility for business decisions.'

b. Evidence that 'cultural characteristics' have an impact on national levels of entrepreneurial activity (GEM Global, 2002) and a suggested twofold rationale for the relationship between national culture and entrepreneurship: first, that 'culture influences the supportiveness of non-entrepreneurs towards those who choose to pursue a career in enterprise and; second, that culture influences the psychological characteristics of individuals within the population so as to create a larger supply of potential entrepreneurs.'[3]

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[1] http://www.dti.gov.uk/about/strategy-objectives/PSA-Targets/page23502.html
[2] 'Appraisal and evaluation often form stages of a broad policy cycle that some departments and agencies formalise in the acronym ROAMEF (Rationale, Objectives, Appraisal, Monitoring, Evaluation and Feedback).' (HM Treasury, 2003, para. 2.2)
[3] It is stated that 'At present there is relatively little understanding of the effectiveness of schemes designed to raise awareness of enterprise. There is much to learn as to what brings about sustained changes in attitudes and perceptions of enterprise, and which aspects of such schemes are most effective with different target audiences.' (para. 2)

c. Market failure, i.e. that 'there is an asymmetry of information in that individuals find it easier to access information about a career which would involve various types of dependent employment as opposed to a career in enterprise' and that 'the acquisition of skills and attitudes required for enterprise is largely experiential.' Those already engaged in enterprise ('business ambassadors') are (it is hypothesised) in a better position to enthuse others by (a) 'sharing real experiences through dialogue; (b) illustrate how they have achieved mastery. (para. 10-22).

The aim of the EPF has therefore been to support experimentation in approaches to influencing the attitudes and behaviour of individuals with respect to 'enterprise in all its forms, including social enterprise', and involving the business and voluntary sectors as sources of expertise on enterprise.

Design of the Enterprise Promotion Fund
The total programme cost of the EPF was £1 million over a period of 18 months, with £150,000 set aside for running costs and evaluation, and a top limit of about £40,000 set per project. The criteria against which bids were assessed were:

* Degree of creativity and innovation;
* Awareness of existing provision & demonstrable additionality;
* Extent of coverage / reach;
* Proposals for wider dissemination of outcomes;
* Level of private / voluntary sector collaboration;
* Sensitivity to ensuring that "general" projects are nevertheless inclusive;
* Sensitivity to ensuring relevance of message;
* Sustainability (a desirable but not a necessary feature, as we are aiming to test out new ideas) (EPF ROAME Statement).

Detailed bidding guidance was issued on 3 August 2003 with bids invited by 31 October. Bids were invited from private and voluntary sector organisations, social enterprises and from public sector organisations which could demonstrate significant private or voluntary sector support for their projects. SBS received 387 applications to the Fund; 81 of these survived the first stage of the selection process, which emphasised the criteria of relevance and creativity. A further sift resulted in 44 bids being considered by the EPF Project Board; 21 projects were finally selected for funding and 19 had started by 1 April 2004.[4] Most of the projects had completed by March 2005, although in three cases overruns were agreed.

Overall approach to the research
The emphasis of this review has been on capturing the lessons learned. It was not appropriate or possible to undertake an economic impact assessment because of the small scale of the Fund and its focus on supporting demonstrator projects. Details of the research design and methods used are summarised below.

The nature of the Fund - supporting demonstrator projects and the diverse nature of the projects supported - has important implications for the research design and methodology. There was still the need to assess the Fund against quantifiable objectives and 'value for money', notably in terms of how effectively projects were implemented and also numbers of clients reached, take-up, outcomes for individuals participating in projects and (project) additionality, for example.

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[4] Two of the projects finally selected did not go ahead.

The review was designed to gain rich, contextualised insight into project experiences and to capture the lessons learned, taking into account the variety of the projects funded, including in terms of:

a. Their various modes of delivery (e.g. entrepreneurial gaming, theatre, intensive mentoring)
b. The social groups targeted (e.g. young people, older people, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, refugees, and homeless people),
c. Other contextual factors relating to:
   o The characteristics of the project leader and delivery organisation, influencing how effectively the project idea was implemented;
   o The relationship of the project/delivery organisation to other local stakeholders (e.g. business support agencies, the RDA), notably with respect to issues such as compatibility, co-operation, networking and effective sign-posting;
   o The socio-economic profile of target group, potentially affecting the responsiveness of individuals to the project and their entrepreneurial potential;
   o The socio-economic profile of the locality and any factors particularly affecting the possibilities for enterprise.

A key aim of this review has been to assess the extent to which projects have been successful in raising 'enterprise awareness' amongst targeted groups and which aspects were most effective with different targeted audiences. This has involved an intensive qualitative approach focused on project participants' pre-existing awareness and knowledge of enterprise and how projects have impacted on this.

Research design and methods

The research was conducted over the period from December 2005 to June 2006, and has involved four phases of activity, which are detailed below.

Phase 1: Preparation and desk research
This involved a brief review of the operation of the programme and a preliminary analysis of the 19 projects based on the available documentation, such as bidding documents, monitoring data, and final reports. The other key task for this stage was to develop and refine the telephone questionnaires used in Phases 2 and 3.

Phase 2: Interviews with project managers
Interviews were conducted with the project managers for all 19 projects that were finally approved. Two of the interviews were conducted face-to-face to enable refinement of the topic guide, while the remainder were conducted by telephone. The interviews gathered data on the following main issues:

- Profile characteristics/history of project manager;
- Origin and nature of project idea (particularly to clarify the intervention logic / underlying theory of change);
- Profile characteristics of delivery organisation (including strategic partners and 'human capital' prior to and during the project);
- How the idea was implemented, particularly in terms of accessing target groups (i.e. outreach strategies, broadcast to all or targeted, etc);
- Strategy for signposting participants (i.e. process, when and how signposted);
- Outcomes in relation to project objectives (including project manager's reflection on the appropriateness of the objectives and the mechanisms used to achieve them and any changes during process of enacting the project);
- 'Soft' indicators - views of project manager on reasons for success/failure etc;
- Contribution to the capacity of the delivery organisation;

- Role of other agencies/stakeholders, including relationship with any other initiatives in the locality or targeted at specific social group, any collaborative advantage achieved;
- Longer term viability and wider potential applicability of project idea;
- Experience of working with SBS;
- Contribution to 'building an enterprise culture' in the locality/target group.

A further key aim of the interviews was to assist in the final selection of the case studies by collecting information on the practicality of accessing participants and other stakeholders and the availability and willingness of project managers to assist in this respect.

Phase 3: Case study fieldwork
Follow-up case study research was conducted for 11 projects. These were selected in consultation with the Small Business Service, with a view to further investigating those projects from which most could be learned and also to represent different types of project in different locations. The case studies involved a number of in-depth face-to-face and/or extended telephone interviews with:

- *The project manager and others involved in delivering the project* – following up in greater depth on key issues identified in telephone interview;
- *Participants* (5 minimum, 10 maximum) – selected, as far as possible, to be representative of the variety of experiences of the project. Thirty five interviews were conducted in total. In addition, three focus groups involving a further 10 children/students and teachers were conducted for two of the projects;
- *Other local stakeholders*, including partners involved in delivery, local business support agencies and community groups representing the participants. Twenty three such interviews were conducted in total.

The number of interviews conducted varies per case study and many were conducted as was feasible given individual circumstances (see Table 1.1). Even where only a limited number of participants were interviewed they still provided rich insight by capturing individual case histories and how projects have influenced them in achieving their aspirations.

Table 1.1 - EPF Case Study projects and interviews conducted

Project title	Organisation	Interviews (additional to PM interviews)
DIY Café - Guess who's coming to dinner?	Business Link Tyne and Wear	Two focus groups: 3 students; 4 school pupils
Work experience for the life experienced	Business Solutions Bedale	3 stakeholders 1 participant
Business Skills 4 Care	Careconnect Learning Limited	1 stakeholder 5 participants
The Tonbridge Community Enterprise Play	Claque Theatre	6 stakeholders 3 participants
Enterprising Action	Groundswell UK	1 stakeholder 2 participants
The Enterprise Boat	Enterprise Island	3 teachers (focus group)
Enterprise Idol	Staffordshire University	4 stakeholders 7 participants

Women's Enterprise Rainbow	TNG	3 stakeholder 4 participants
Women Entrepreneurs Succeeding in the Business Game ('Elevator Pitch')	Train 2000 Limited	2 stakeholders 7 participants
Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project	Wai Yin Chinese Women's Society	2 stakeholders 1 participant
Women Like Us	Women Like Us	1 stakeholder 5 participants

A semi-structured interview approach was used to allow exploration of the following broad topic areas:

- Profile characteristics and brief personal history of participant
- How participant became aware of and involved in the project
- Experience and benefits (i.e. to self and community/social group)
- Influence of project on attitudes and behaviour of individual participants
- Experience of other support agencies, where relevant
- Reflections on project participants' current situation(s) and future potential
- Views with respect to the aim of 'building an enterprise culture'
- Views with respect to the aim of reducing social exclusion and inequality
- Views and recommendations with respect to the viability and further potential of project idea

Most of the face-to-face interviews were tape recorded and selectively transcribed to provide quotations to support the qualitative analysis where appropriate.

Phase 4: Final analysis
The aim of the analysis is to:
    a. Assess how efficiently projects were implemented and, as far as possible, the overall impact of the Fund, with particular reference to quantified indicators compatible with criteria identified in the EPF ROAME statement.

    b. Develop a context-sensitive analysis of the factors underlying the relative success or failure of individual projects.

    c. Identify any lessons for good practice, including the viability and potential for the wider application of project ideas.

Context-sensitive comparative analysis involves identifying the factors contributing to success/failure and clarifying the logical possibilities relating to the combination of factors necessary and sufficient for a given outcome (Pawson and Tilley, 2004; Ragin, 1987). The impact of the individual projects will therefore be crucially dependent on the extent to which a given project idea is matched to the needs and potential of the groups targeted and, potentially, any specific factors (positive or negative) particularly affecting the possibilities for enterprise activity in the immediate locale. Other contextual factors relate to the implementation and delivery of the concept, i.e.:

- characteristics of the project leaders, such as skills, motivation and prior experience;
- the competence and capabilities of the organisation and other individuals involved in delivering the project;
- degree of effective co-operation and synergy with other local stakeholders (i.e. business support agencies) and compatibility with other interventions to promote enterprise, both at a national and more localised level.

The findings reported in subsequent sections relate to all 19 of the funded projects, utilising the interviews with project managers, the available documentary evidence and also findings from the case studies on 11 selected projects. The case studies are used to illustrate and help explain key issues, how project activities have given rise to specific outcomes and achievements, and the lessons learned, particularly with respect to the further potential and transferability of project ideas. The 11 case studies are presented in full in the Appendix.

2. Background to EPF projects

This chapter provides the background and context to EPF projects, including with respect to their targeted social groups, the origins/rationale of project ideas, sources of funding and profile information on the delivery organisations and project managers.

Target groups

The EPF projects focused on sectors of the population 'receiving little or no attention from existing [enterprise] promotion activities.' Table 2.1 shows the main social groups at which projects were targeted and also their locations.

Table 2.1: EPF project target groups and locations (case study projects are highlighted)

Project	Target group	Location
Enterprise Academy, 'Move IT'	Children and young people, mainly age 14-19	Redcar and Cleveland
Enterprise Boat	University Students, Children Year 10	Tyneside/Tynedale
Enterprise Idol	Children, University students	Staffordshire
Enterprise Theatre	School Children Year 10	Bedfordshire
DIY Café	University Students and Children / young people Age 15-30	Tyne & Wear
Raising the Game	Children, Parents, Teachers	West Midlands
Ending Exclusion through Entrepreneurship (3 E's')	Age 16-23 disaffected young adults	South London
Tonbridge Community Enterprise Play	School children and Tonbridge community inclusive	Tonbridge and Malling, Kent
Elevator Pitch	Women	Merseyside
Women Like Us	Women (returners/mothers in particular)	North London
Women's Enterprise Rainbow	Women	Nottingham
Work Experience for the Life Experienced	Women age 50+	Rural North Yorkshire
Prime Enterprise	Age 50+	South Tyneside
The Greying Entrepreneurs Roadshow	Age 40+	Rural Somerset
Play the Enterprise Game	Age 50+	North London
Business Skills 4 Care	Refugee Medical Professionals	West Yorkshire
Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project	Chinese women; Established Chinese businesses	Deprived Wards of Manchester
1st STEP	Rural community inclusive	Rural Devon
Enterprising Action	Homeless and other excluded people	Various locations across England

As can be seen, some projects were aimed at more than one group; for some projects the target group characteristics overlapped, and two projects in particular aimed to be inclusive of everybody living within their targeted locations. The main social groups targeted were:

- *School children and young people*, with 'young people' comprising university students and, in one case, 'disaffected young adults' who had been excluded from school (8 projects in total);
- *Women* (5 projects);
- *Older people, aged 40 or 50+* (4 projects);
- *Ethnic minorities* (2 projects, one targeting refugees and one targeting Chinese women as well as established Chinese businesses);
- *Homeless and other excluded people* (1).

All of the projects were focused on specific city and sub-regional localities, except for Groundswell's Enterprising Action project, targeted at homeless people in seven cities and spanning a number of English regions.

Origins and rationale for project ideas

In all 19 cases project managers claimed that the idea for their EPF project had originated from within their organisation, with the majority (15) also claiming that, to their knowledge, the idea was different from anything else which they or any other organisation had undertaken. In most cases, however, project ideas had clearly grown out of some direct experience, either in terms of the pre-existing work of the lead organisations with the target group or, in some cases, the experience of managers and other key individuals involved who were themselves members of the target group (e.g. in the case of *Women Like Us*). There were three cases where the project was a direct extension of pre-existing services. In one case (*1st Step* - Heart of Devon Enterprise), although the project idea was thought to be original, it was subsequently discovered that the local Business Link provider was offering a similar mobile enterprise show to that being proposed. In the event, however, the EPF project did not go ahead due to the departure of the person designated to be the project manager.

The prior level of understanding of the needs and/or potential of target groups is reflected in the proposals submitted during the bidding stage of the EPF programme. The authors' analysis found considerable variations in the evidence bases presented to support proposals. Project proposals tended, on the whole, to emphasise the needs of target groups (i.e. referring to measures of deprivation etc) rather than making a case with respect to their 'entrepreneurial potential' (although specific probing in the project manager interviews resulted in further justification being provided for the latter in a number of cases).

Examples of the origins of project ideas and how ideas were related to the needs/potential of the social groups targeted are provided in the box below.

Examples of origins and rationale of project ideas

- Education sector projects have, in general terms, been stimulated by the increasing policy emphasis given to enterprise education in schools and universities including, for instance, the Dfes National Strategy for Enterprise Education. Both the *DIY Café* and *Enterprise Boat* projects deployed methods that were derived from the practices and philosophies of the project managers and which had been tried and tested in previous experiences of educational projects.

- Women's projects have identified the gender gap in entrepreneurial activity, with men being around two and a half times more likely to be entrepreneurs than women (GEM, 2001; see also GEM, 2005); some projects also identifying the extent of female disadvantage in the labour market.

  o *Women Like Us* - the lead partners were directly aware through their own experience (i.e. as working mothers) of the difficulty that women with children experience in finding suitably flexible employment and of the failure of existing employment agencies and services to meet their needs in this respect. The proposal also refers to evidence of the extent of disadvantage faced by women in the labour market.

  o *Women's Enterprise Rainbow* - originated from the project managers commitment to breaking down barriers to women's access to enterprise support. Outreach work was seen as integral to extending the existing activities relating to enterprise support for women undertaken by TNG, the lead organisation.

- Projects targeted at older people (i.e. 40/50+) gave the following rationales:

  o *The Greying Entrepreneurs Show* - the large and growing proportion of the UK population in the 40-74 age group: evidence of declining value of pensions and resultant need to work longer; in rural Somerset a low salary culture and isolation; lack of suitable local employment and restricted access for older people to what opportunities that do exist. Application provides strong evidence of need.

  o *Prime Enterprise* - high levels of worklessness of people between 50 and state pension age in South Tyneside and a heavy dependence on benefits, this described as being 'a reflection of a generation of workers paying a disproportionate price for the industrial restructuring during the last two decades'. Application provides strong evidence of need.

  o *Play the Enterprise Game* - no evidence/rationale of need or potential was provided in the application. However, the two lead partners interviewed referred to their perception that young people appeared to be well catered for in terms of enterprise promotion and that both of them were at the age where most of their friends were either retired or semi-retired: 'So my start point was looking at a few people who were not unemployed specifically but were not within the employed categories. I thought of how we could look at people who had a lifetime of skills and knowledge and persuade them to apply those skills and knowledge in, ideally, the self-employment area, where they could then pick and choose when, how, and what hours they worked and possibly even worked in a life style business.'

- *Tonbridge Community Enterprise Play* - the community play concept originated in the late 1970s and has subsequently been developed and refined by Claque Theatre (the lead delivery organisation) since 1985, with 45 such plays having been produced across Britain and in America, Canada and Europe. The community play concept aims to explore the history of the particular locality and the contemporary concerns of local people (using 'community soundings'). The opportunity presented by the EPF appears to have encouraged Claque Theatre to articulate more explicitly what they had been practising for a number of years in terms of 'enterprise', as is suggested by the following comment from the project manager: '…we would not have thought about focusing our activities on enterprise and, until we looked into it, had not realised just how much of what we do is related to enterprising activity.'

- *Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project* - Wai Yin Chinese Women's Society had been receiving business support and enterprise training enquiries from individuals attending its pre-existing service aimed at supporting employment in the Chinese community in Manchester. Wai Yin's proposal to EPF also refers to evidence of the nature and needs of the target group and of the lack of take-up of existing enterprise agency services by Chinese users. The project was therefore aimed at overcoming this market failure by providing a more 'culturally appropriate' service.

- *Business Skills 4 Care* – the idea for the project appears to have followed from the overall purpose of the lead organisation (Careconnect Learning) to provide learning opportunities through learndirect for employees who already work (or who want to work) in health care. The project application refers to research carried out by the Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service (RETAS) which shows the lack of targeted business advice available for refugees to facilitate their entry into self-employment. The interview with the project manager clarifies that the expectation was that refugee healthcare professionals would develop businesses based on 'alternative therapies', such as acupuncture, homeopathy etc.

Projects employed a variety of mechanisms by which to engage, influence and/or support people in their target groups, although some of the most successful projects sought to engage target groups through activities designed to have broad appeal, notably theatre techniques.

About a quarter of project managers (5) referred to the influence of pre-existing models on the development of their project idea (see examples in box below). Notwithstanding such influences, however, all interviewees felt that their ideas represented, at least, 'a new slant', or a 'novel approach' compared to anything similar that may have gone before.

Examples of external influences on EPF project ideas
- Ideas taken from popular television game-shows (e.g. *Enterprise Idol*, which incorporated elements of two popular television programmes: 'Pop Idol' and 'The Dragons Den');

- Ideas based on other projects already operating in the UK of which project managers were aware through their affiliation to UK-wide support networks (i.e. PROWESS, the women's enterprise support network);

- *Elevator Pitch* was based on a similar project in the USA.

In just over half (10) of the projects, ideas had been developed in collaboration with other partner organisations, often driven by the need for expertise that was lacking within the lead organisation.

Examples of collaborative development of EPF projects

- In the case of *Raising the Game*, HTI - an organisation that provides CPD training for teachers - worked in partnership with Celemi (who already provided their training materials) to develop a training framework for teachers involved in delivering enterprise workshops to parents, aimed at supporting them to nurture 'enterprise' in their children.

- In the case of *Enterprise Theatre*, in Bedfordshire, a specialist organisation 'ImpAct on Learning' with many years of experience (established 1994) in delivering theatre projects in schools, were hired by Chamber Business Bedfordshire to deliver half day enterprise

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drama/play workshops for year 10 pupils in 23 Bedfordshire schools.

- In other cases, collaboration was driven by the experimental nature of projects and the desirability of drawing on expertise within University Business Schools. An example of this is the collaboration between People into Enterprise and Durham University Business School in Tyne and Wear. People into Enterprise developed the *DIY Café* project, a key element of which was the use of mentoring. The particular approach to Enterprise Learning had been developed by the Business School, whose expertise played an important part in the success of the Café within local schools.

Sources of funding and intended additionality

Funding
The 18 projects that went ahead received between £25,000 and £45,000 from the EPF and were required to raise at least one quarter of the overall project cost from alternative funding sources. The overall cost of projects generally ranged between £35,000 and £55,000, although there were two exceptions where the overall project cost was considerably greater: *Tonbridge Community Enterprise Play* (£116,000) and *Enterprise Idol* (£77,000). These were the most ambitious projects in terms of scale, encompassing as they did various activities and involving substantial input from multiple partner organisations.

Two projects did not make full use of their EPF grant:

- In the case of the *Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project*, a portion of the EPF grant was returned in order to avoid double funding when the delivery organisation, Wai Yin Chinese Women's Society, achieved the status of provider of business support services to the Chinese community for the Business Link Operator in Greater Manchester;

- Groundswell's *Enterprising Action* project was cut back when alternative matched funding sources ran out.

Sources of matched funding typically took the form of additional staff time and resources provided by the lead organisation, either through effectively undertaking voluntary additional work, or through alternative agency sources of funding. Most projects also benefited from matched in-kind staffing and resource provision from other partner organisations (see box for examples). The total predicted spend on EPF projects including matched funding was £1,686,233.

Examples of matched in-kind staffing and resources provided to EPF projects

- Staff were provided by banks, local authorities and local enterprise agencies who made contributions at enterprise events (e.g. *Elevator Pitch, Enterprising Action, Enterprise Boat*);

- Participation from schools, including Head Teachers (*Enterprise Theatre, Enterprise Boat, Tonbridge Community Enterprise Play, Women Like Us*);

- Local businesses and entrepreneurs providing role model examples, mentoring and work placement hosts (*DIY Café, Sustainable Communities* and *WELE*);

- Provision of room space for training and events by partner organisations (e.g. *Business Skills 4 Care* and *RETAS*).

- *Raising the Game* benefited considerably from the subsidised assistance it received from

Celemi, an organisation specialising in the design of teacher training materials.

- Several projects, including *Raising the Game* and *Elevator Pitch*, also benefited from 'free' academic input, through meetings and test applications with groups of university staff.

- Two projects had sponsorship provided by banks and local businesses in the form of enterprise competition prizes (*Greying Entrepreneurs* and *Women's Enterprise Rainbow*), whilst one project received considerable financial and staff support from Middlesbrough Football Club, including some player participation (*Move IT*).

- *Tonbridge Community Enterprise Play* was particularly dependent on the voluntary efforts of 230 people involved in producing the play, including a steering committee comprising local residents, most of whom were able to bring valuable skills and experience to the project.

Additionality

In most cases project managers felt that their projects would not have gone ahead in any form without the EPF assistance. In the three cases where projects would have gone ahead, it was emphasised that the EPF grant had nevertheless been important in terms of adding value to projects (see box).

Added value in the case of projects that would have gone ahead without EPF

- The community theatre aspect of the *Tonbridge Community Enterprise Play* project would have gone ahead without EPF, but would have been on a smaller scale and the project would not have included the enterprise awareness and training workshops in schools and also the shadow apprenticeship training in theatre skills.

- *Women Like Us* would have gone ahead, as it had been planned for three years, but EPF gave the project impetus and allowed the organisation to employ more staff and deliver the project on a wider scale.

- The *Enterprising Action* project would have gone ahead but at a later date; EPF effectively galvanised the project and enabled Groundswell to develop it on a national basis.

Project managers were asked about their knowledge of other local organisations promoting enterprise/entrepreneurship for their respective projects' target population groups and to what extent their projects were offering something different and complementary.

In all cases, the EPF projects were viewed as clearly different and complementary to existing services, with the sole exception of the *1st Step* project, which did not proceed due to the Business Link Operator already offering a similar mobile roadshow service to rural residents. In many cases complementarity was achieved through projects having been targeted at groups which mainstream business support providers often do not reach at all or only in limited numbers (e.g. disaffected youths, homeless people, certain ethnic minorities, women, older people) and where other special interest provider organisations (e.g. Age Concern, local community groups, education support services) did not see enterprise awareness and support as a priority.

Delivery organisation profile

Most of the lead organisations for EPF projects had been established for more than five years and some for more than 10 years (e.g. Claque Theatre and a number of the Enterprise Agencies), or had existed in various forms for many years (e.g. the Business Link operators in Bedford and Somerset which were formed from local Chambers of

Commerce that had merged). The one exception was Women Like Us, specifically formed at the time of EPF; in this case, the two partners involved had acquired substantial relevant experience through their previous work in other organisations, being self-employed, and both as members of the project target group (i.e. as mothers wanting to return to work).

Lead organisations were fairly evenly split between charitable and not for profit organisations (e.g. PRIME and Wai Yin – charitable trusts, several Enterprise Agencies and Women Like Us – a social enterprise) and limited companies (e.g. some Enterprise Agencies and Chambers), with one notable exception being Staffordshire University – a public sector organisation.

Two existing organisations, Careconnect (*Business Skills 4 Care)* and HTI (*Raising the Game),* had no previous experience of work directly relevant to enterprise and a further two, Groundswell *(Enterprising Action)* and Entrepreneurs in Action (*Ending Exclusion through Entrepreneurship)*, were new to this type of activity, having developed their EPF projects from other projects undertaken immediately prior to EPF. In some cases, being new to enterprise support appears to have contributed, in part at least, to difficulties experienced in project delivery, including with respect to enlisting the support of other agencies.

Examples of difficulties experienced in enlisting the support of other agencies

- *Enterprising Action* - Whilst important lessons had been learned from Groundswell's previous enterprise-related work, the organisation encountered particular difficulties around establishing appropriate partnerships with business support organisations in parts of the country where they had not previously operated.

- *Tonbridge Community Enterprise Play* - Claque Theatre experienced initial difficulties in establishing a good working partnership with the local Education Business Partnership; a key agency in assisting them in their delivery strategy to schools and to getting local business participation in the project.

Project manager profile

The 18 managers for the projects which went ahead[5] were asked about the relevance of their experience and backgrounds. All had a minimum of two years previous experience with the lead organisation and frequently many more years (10 or more years in some cases). All had some previous project management experience and also direct experience of working with the project's target population. Only in two cases (Claque Theatre and HTI) did the project manager and agency have no previous experience directly relevant to enterprise support. In both of these cases the managers indicated that the project was a new departure for the organisation, but felt that the EPF had been a '…positive experience' and that they were able to successfully use their project delivery experience with the organisation and '…adapt to the needs of an enterprise focused project.'

Project managers were also asked about their qualifications and the extent to which these were relevant to the EPF project. More than half (11) had degree qualifications and several of these also held Masters degrees. Most of these qualifications were not directly

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[5] Note that in five cases the project manager could not be contacted and another senior member of staff at the lead organisation was interviewed.

relevant to managing the EPF project; the exceptions being three project managers who had Masters degrees in enterprise and entrepreneurship, which they had found to be useful preparation for their involvement in the EPF. Five managers had professional qualifications, which ranged from banking and teaching qualifications to business advisor/counselling qualifications (e.g. for staff in Business Links and Enterprise Agencies). Three managers had previously owned and managed their own businesses, whilst two respondents were currently the CEOs of the lead organisation.

3. Project implementation

Project delivery and management

In just over half of cases (10) the delivery of the project was the sole responsibility of the lead organisation. In the remaining (8) cases, responsibility for delivery was shared with other organisations, or was sub-contracted entirely to other specialist organisations (e.g. the Impact Theatre Group were sub-contracted to deliver a series of school 'enterprise plays' for Chamber Business, Bedfordshire). Partnership delivery took a variety of forms, often depending on the depth and range of outreach and delivery activities undertaken. For example, *Enterprise Idol* (managed by the Staffordshire University Research and Enterprise Department) included enterprise competition events for students at Staffordshire University and also a contribution to the local schools Enterprise Week in collaboration with the Student Union volunteers (who delivered this element) and the Business Education Partnership who organised the event and invited the university to participate.

Project managers were typically involved in day to day management and oversight of the project and its promotion networking and co-ordination of partner organisations, and recruiting voluntary contributions from local agencies (e.g. staff participation and event locations) and businesses (e.g. local entrepreneurial role models and business mentors).

In some cases, project managers were also involved in outreach activities and delivering project events/activities. Typically, projects involved small project teams of between 2-6 staff, with two projects drawing on larger staffing resources; Train 2000's *Elevator Pitch* project utilised 15 local business advisors and Claque Theatre utilised 14 theatre professionals to assist with the *Tonbridge Community Enterprise Play*.

Methods used to raise awareness of projects and engage target groups

The need for some effective means of raising awareness of the project and stimulating interest amongst the target group was clearly crucial for all projects. Most projects utilised more than one approach, but can be roughly divided into those which:

a. aimed at reaching wider target audiences in their target groups/communities through large-scale events, in some cases then signposting attendees to support providers.

b. relied on more intensive approaches (9 projects), aiming to access and assist relatively small numbers of specifically targeted individuals.

c. aimed at children and young people and were focused on both awareness raising and skills, but had the advantage of a 'captive' audience' within the highly structured context of the educational system.

In categories (a) and (b), the six main methods of information dissemination and engagement utilised were:

- Referrals through contact and networking with other local organisations and agencies - examples include:

- *Enterprising Action* - Groundswell's homeless people project worked in partnership with local area homeless people's agencies.

- *Women Like Us* worked closely with a local school in order to reach mothers who potentially wanted to return to flexible employment but were lacking in confidence and awareness of opportunities.

- *Women's Enterprise Rainbow* – many referrals came via managers of other projects within the lead organisation (TNG) for JobCentre Plus.

- *WELE* were supplied with referrals through the Business Link Gateway, specialist women's groups and also Age Concern;

(B) **Word of mouth** – using existing networks and contacts:

- *Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project* - relied mainly on word of mouth and contacts between family and friends in particular, since, in the words of the project manager 'no other way would have worked'. Wai Yin already having over 1,000 members using its services facilitated both word of mouth and email promotion.

- *Play the Enterprise Game* – experimented with a number of approaches early on (i.e. website, adverts and leaflets in Jobcentres) but to little effect and found that personal recommendations and word of mouth via the lead organisations membership base worked best.

(C) **Outreach workers** - in three projects the use of outreach workers was felt to be the only effective means of engaging with the target group as well as a means of delivering support:

- *Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project* - found it imperative to employ Chinese staff in order to be able to gain the trust of individuals and businesses in the Chinese community in Manchester.

- *PRIME Enterprise* where a Key Enterprise Worker, 'combining the skills of enabler, advisor, informer, trainer and inspirer,' was recruited specifically to reach the target group - older people in South Tyneside - by visiting social clubs, community centres, pubs and so on; in the words of the project manager: 'It was hard graft…..but could not have worked without this.'

- *Enterprise Idol* employed a placement marketing student to help promote the project and this was thought to be a highly successful example of a 'peer-to-peer' contact approach, which the University is likely to continue using in the future.

(D) **Flyers and leaflet distribution** - typically at strategic locations such as libraries, community centres, schools, banks, doctors surgeries etc, but with varying degrees of success.

- One particularly innovative approach adopted by *Elevator Pitch* involved producing 8000 postcards inviting entry to a prize winning enterprise competition. These leaflets, which were designed to attract women HE/FE students were placed in cafes and bars around Liverpool's university/FE College campuses.

- *Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project* - some information was provided in the form of leaflets provided to China Town restaurants but with a very limited / mixed response.

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(E)   Local media, such as television, radio and newspaper coverage - Several projects attracted considerable local media coverage, although there is little evidence of positive impact in these cases. One project manager noted that local newspaper advertising had been '…utterly unresponsive' although it was also suggested that this type of coverage might be most effective in giving projects greater credibility with potential partner organisations, rather than in generating participants for the project. One manager, however, felt that advertising in local papers could have been effective but would have been prohibitively expensive for a small project (*Play the Enterprise Game).*

(F)   Websites and e-mail promotion - several projects established websites, although again these tended to be to publicise projects amongst the agency networks and research communities and appear to have had relatively little impact in terms of reaching potential participants.

- *Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project* - Email was particularly used as a communication tool to give notification of events and to target women.

- Staffordshire University's *Enterprise Idol* project made effective use of university e-mail to promote the project directly at specific university students. Whilst this method was in its infancy at the time of the EPF, this approach has subsequently been developed by the University's Careers Service to promote and inform students about self-employment options and support/training services.

Delivery methods

There was considerable variety in the forms of the delivery methods used, although the main activities fall broadly into the following five categories:

(A)   Road shows and mobile exhibitions - roadshows were the central delivery method for the rural projects and were particularly aimed at engaging the target group on 'familiar and neutral territory' *(Move IT, Greying Entrepreneurs Roadshow, Women's Rainbow* and potentially *1ˢᵗ STEP*). Examples:

- The approach adopted by the *Move IT* was particularly aimed at engaging young people and 'hard to reach adults'. The project operated a mobile unit which visited rural villages and schools and was sponsored by Middlesbrough Football Club. The unit delivered a short presentation using the football club as a business case study, ran competitions, and ran short computer-based training tasters.

- The *Women's Enterprise Rainbow* Roadshow events were organised in a way that a variety of accessible locations were used such as supermarkets, churches, community centres, libraries, sport centres and shops. It was organised on an area by area basis and large posters were distributed in the areas where the Roadshow was planning to go. One important element was that it was 'child friendly' and attractions were provided for children so that they could be entertained giving opportunities for mothers to engage with the Roadshow.

(B)   Events and enterprise competitions - the central approach for several projects (*Elevator Pitch, Enterprise Idol*) described by one manager as 'very exciting, vibrant and enthralling for young people to attend and really challenged them to participate in enterprising activities.' Such activities involved participants working in teams to develop a business idea, market and sell the product in a simulated 'marketplace', ending the game by presenting the business idea to a panel, and with award presentations for the best ideas. Two examples, both in the North East, were:

- *Enterprise Boat* invited school pupils and undergraduates to attend a four hour boat journey along the River Tyne, during which enterprise games were held.

- *DIY Café*, which invited young people (year 10 school pupils and university student groups) to organise and deliver a dinner event to which local entrepreneurs were invited to attend and then provide feedback to short business 'pitches' during the dinner event.

(C)   A variety of training session approaches - adopted with varying degrees of success:

- The *3 E's* project provided a one day per week 12 week training course for disaffected young adults and ex-offenders. The trainers were particularly skilled at engaging with young people and the course included the practical aspects of enterprise development, such as product, planning and finance, and concluded with graduation awards and an opportunity to pitch ideas on Capital FM and to Lennox Lewis (former World Heavyweight Champion). Of the 15 participants who started the course, 12 completed.

- HTI's *Raising the Game* project was novel, in that it provided teachers with a method for engaging with parents, through evening sessions, to effectively raise their awareness of and develop a disposition towards enterprise in their children. This was felt to be most effective with parents of junior, rather than senior school children.

- Less successful was the *Business Skills 4 Care* refugee training programme, which required attendance for half a day per week over a several months and suffered from high drop-out rates.

(D)   Theatre techniques and productions - two projects:

- The *Tonbridge Community Enterprise Play*, delivered by Claque Theatre, was centred around a community theatre production aimed at an inclusive approach to the promotion of 'community enterprise values'. Theatrical techniques were also applied in a series of enterprise awareness workshops delivered in local schools and also aimed at local businesses.

- The *Enterprise Theatre* project involved a drama enterprise show aimed at school pupils aged between 13-18 and designed to engage pupils in enterprise activities/games (a similar approach was also adopted by the Enterprise Idol Staffordshire University Student Volunteers, as part of their contribution to 'Enterprise Week', but this was presented as a half hour event to junior school pupils).

(E)   Work placements - central to two projects, but with somewhat contrasting results:

- *WELE* was based on the principal of providing potential entrepreneurs with relevant work placements of several weeks duration, operating under the wing of local business owner-managers or key host company staff. In practice very few clients wanted to take up such lengthy work placements and the project idea has subsequently been refined to offer a variety of short 'work tasters' as part of Business Solutions Bedale's pre-start service.

- *Women Like Us* provided 'work tasters' to mothers and women returners to work and has been very successful in turning these placements into flexible employment opportunities for their clients.

Delivery problems experienced

Not surprisingly given the experimental nature of many projects for the organisations concerned, most project managers (14) referred to having experienced difficulties of some sort around the delivery of projects. The main difficulties experienced related to engaging with target groups, partnership working, and issues relating to staffing (see box).

Difficulties experienced in delivering projects

Around one third of projects reported difficulties experienced in engaging with target groups, examples of these included:

- Some of the projects that involved schools experienced difficulties in accommodating project activities within an already overcrowded curriculum (despite the national requirement for several days per year to be allocated to enterprise development in secondary schools). *Raising the Game* also experienced difficulties in getting parents of secondary pupils to take part in evening sessions to raise awareness in how to develop their children's interest in enterprising activities;

- The four projects targeted at older people found it difficult to recruit participants. *Prime Enterprise*, for instance, was reliant on in-depth outreach work (a key enterprise worker) in social and community clubs to penetrate the age 50 plus population in South Tyneside;

- Timetabling training courses was also an issue for some projects, since these required delivery times that were convenient for the target population, which might already be in some form of employment. Conversely, employing trainers to deliver evening classes was not always easily achievable.

Two projects in particular appear to have misunderstood their target groups and to have overestimated the level of interest in what was being offered:

- *Business Skills 4 Care*, (Careconnect Ltd) which found that asylum seekers with foreign medical qualifications were seeking foundation course training for entry into NHS employment, rather than assistance with self-employment which was largely impractical for these people;

- *WELE* (Business Solutions Bedale Ltd) found that work placements of several weeks duration for pre-starts were too long and difficult to organise for the target age 50 plus population and take-up was disappointingly lower than expected.

As previously mentioned, three projects in particular experienced problems in developing effective partnerships with other organisations:

- *Enterprise Action* (Groundswell) experienced difficulties with comprehending and engaging with different business assistance networks in parts of the England where they have not regularly worked before, the project manager referring to '…a need for greater understanding of local business support networks and greater coherency of their delivery.'

- *Tonbridge Community Play* (Claque Theatre) did not achieve the level of support from local businesses that had been hoped for, and also experienced early difficulties in gaining the co-operation of the local Business Education Partnership, although this situation subsequently improved following a change of leadership.

- *Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project* (Wai Yin) experienced initial difficulties in gaining acceptance by other Chinese community groups in Manchester.

Four projects suffered from staffing difficulties, a serious problem given the short time-span of EPF pilot projects:

- *1st Step* did not go ahead because of the departure of the project manager, although this could be judged to be fortuitous in that it was subsequently discovered that the local Business Link was offering a similar service to that proposed by Heart of Devon Enterprise.

- *Business Skills 4 Care* was severely disrupted by the departure half way through the project of the specialist trainer delivering the course.

- *Enterprising Action* lost staff through a shortfall of matching funding which led to a reduction in the scale of the project.

- *Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project* - during the first 3-4 months the project manager was directly involved in service delivery but experienced some difficulty in this respect. She felt that, as an English woman, she had not been able to gain the trust of, and engage with, Chinese businesses, even without the language barrier. This problem was overcome, however, by recruiting two Chinese business advisors.

Working with the SBS

Project managers were asked what their overall experience of EPF had been in terms of the application process, administration and monitoring requirements. The general consensus was that the EPF had been relatively easy to operate compared to other funding streams, that the application process had been clear and speedy enough (although, of course, these were successful applicants) and that management and monitoring requirements had been reasonable and not too onerous. A couple of managers indicated that there were some minor issues around funding claims and accounting. A few were also slightly critical that SBS had not made more effort to visit their project and show an interest in what they were achieving and how. In the words of one manager: 'We feel very positive about the project, but had little contact with the SBS and gained nothing from other EPF projects.' Further to this, some interviewees, felt it important that supporters/funders are not too detached from the projects they are supporting - that they should visit projects where possible in order to develop a better understanding of the aims of projects and what they were achieving.

At least two respondents mentioned that they had felt a little 'isolated and distanced' from the EPF 'project community' and that they would have appreciated more feedback from SBS and that there might have been some value in holding some form of dissemination meetings, both during and after the projects, at which lessons and good practice could be shared. It should also be stressed, however, that in many of the cases where SBS staff had visited projects, there was considerable appreciation of this and the encouragement that had been given.

Monitoring

Project managers were responsible for monitoring their projects and organising regular project meetings (a voluntary steering committee in the case of the *Tonbridge Community Play)*. Whilst co-ordination of project delivery was generally successful, there was some inconsistency in the extent to which projects collected data for monitoring purposes. Hence a number of projects did not retain records of participants which could be used for tracking purposes.

A few projects, such as HTI's *Raising the Game* collected feedback sheets from participants which were helpful in appraising and refining the service being offered. Some projects made use of participant self-completion forms, for example in the cases of *Elevator Pitch* and *Enterprise Idol* where prizes were awarded for the best enterprise ideas received. Projects that were more focused on providing more intensive support to selected individuals were also more able to provide specific output data.

Some projects also developed databases that have provided a project legacy of relevant support organisation and business and mentoring contacts (e.g. Business Solutions Bedale's *Work Experience for the Life Experienced* and Business Link Tyne & Wear's *DIY Café* projects).

4. Achievements and wider potential of projects

This chapter begins by summarising the reported outputs of EPF projects and developments following the cessation of EPF funding. It then goes on to examine the contribution of projects to the wider aims of the EPF, drawing on the views of interviewees and a more detailed analysis of the experiences of selected participants interviewed. It concludes with a summary of the achievements of EPF projects, using examples to illustrate what sort of projects have been particularly successful and which less so (and why).

Outputs reported by EPF projects

When considering the outcomes and achievements of EPF projects it is important to bear in mind:

- The varied nature of projects, including with respect to their different target groups, different approaches, and other contextual factors and difficulties experienced;

- The objective of the EPF programme to influence awareness and attitudes and the impossibility of quantifying the full extent of project impacts, particularly given the limited scope of this review.

Applicants to the EPF were required to identify the outputs from their proposed projects which, in practice, mainly took the form of (a) the number and type of events held and numbers of individuals attending and (b) the numbers of individuals directly assisted.[6]

In seven cases end of project reports were produced which, as well as reporting project outputs, provide further detail on the operation of projects and achievements, including the further potential of the project idea and subsequent developments.

The main outputs reported for each project are summarised in Table 4.1.

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[6] Established businesses in the case of one project – Sustainable Communities / Wai Yin.

Table 4.1: Main outputs achieved and subsequent developments reported by EPF projects (case study projects are highlighted)

Project name	Outputs achieved	Subsequent developments
Enterprise Academy, Move IT	Large numbers (not specified), met targets	Further funding (Middlesbrough FC, Local Authorities, ONE regeneration funds) to provide focus on school pupils aged 14+ as part of Enterprise for Schools.
Enterprise Boat	3 boat trips involving 100+ people	Assisted 4 schools in Tynedale to implement course related to their DFES Enterprise Pathfinder Status
Enterprise Idol	3 events: 2 university, 1 with 200 school pupils in Enterprise Week	Created Student Enterprise Co-ordinator with HEFCE funds, developing social enterprise competition, set-up SU Enterprise Society, piloting 20 self-employed student work placements at University Business Village
Enterprise Theatre	30 drama plays at 23 schools discovered 29% parents self-employed	Luton Neighbourhood Renewal Fund has enabled the project to continue, albeit on a smaller scale
DIY Café	60 people assisted	Further funding from LA + part of Enterprise Development in School curriculum
Raising the Game	2 pilots with 12 parents, 2 educationalist pilots, 1 conference	Project on-going, developing links with schools nationally
Ending Exclusion through Entrepreneurship	15 took courses, 12 completed	No further funding received, still exploring options
Elevator Pitch	70 entered for the 2 'pitch' events	Continued on a smaller scale, locally, with LA support
Women Like Us	Registered 30 women, over 500 responses, Created 10 jobs	Further funding from two London Boroughs, Esme Fairburn Foundation, ALG/ESF and London Development Agency
Women's Enterprise Rainbow	17 start-ups from 4,000 attendees	Failed to get Emda funding – rival project, with less outreach, now operated by InBiz in East Midlands

Work Experience Life Experienced	12 work placements, 6 start-ups	Proposed 'WELE2' refinement of pilot with short work placements – as yet unfunded
Prime Enterprise	60 people: 40% started business, 30% still thinking, 30% unsuitable	Developing mentoring projects with Prince's Trust, local EAs and Newcastle University
The Greying Entrepreneurs Roadshow	17 events, 1500 attended, 1200 leaflets, 70 assisted to self-employment	No further funding – legacy of database and contact network
Play the Enterprise Game	30 people attended 4 or more sessions	Application for further funding to EU fund in process
Business Skills 4 Care	9 assisted, 45% completed	No current project with RETAS in West Yorkshire. However, a similar improved project operates in Tower Hamlets
Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project	6 events involving 100 people, 105 Chinese businesses visited, 30 people trained in food hygiene, 15 mentors, 4 developing enterprises assisted	Achieved referred contractor status with BLO but this terminated after 3 months due to severe cutbacks in funding
Enterprise Action	170 attended 8 events	Funding from Esme Fairburn Foundation for a further 3 years

In purely quantitative terms the *Tonbridge Community Enterprise Play* (over 800 volunteers involved and audience numbers in the region of 3,000) and *Women's Enterprise Rainbow* (4,000 attendees at stalls based at supermarkets and shopping centres around Nottingham) appear to have 'reached' (in some manner) the largest numbers of people. A number of projects provided outreach to large numbers of school pupils through drama related events. Although in some cases the numbers of attendees was recorded and some feedback gathered it is clearly not possible to fully assess what the lasting influence of such events might be.

Contribution to skills and capacity building in delivery organisation and partners

In most (15) cases, managers were of the view that the EPF project had contributed to increased skills and capacity in their organisations, and two thirds (12) felt that their own skills had developed as a result of the project. The most frequently mentioned skills acquired/developed by project managers were: a better understanding of the target population (4); project management and event management skills (3); partnership working and network development (3); marketing (3); a better understanding of how to support enterprise (2).

Improvements in the skills and capacity of staff similarly related to: improved understanding of the target population group (3 cases); marketing, promotional and networking skills (3); event organisation (2); confidence raising (2); enterprise skills (1) and human resources skills (1). In some cases, staff and project managers who gained skills from the EPF project were able to use these for career progression by subsequently moving to other organisations (hence these skills were not necessarily retained within the organisation).

In several cases, temporary staff were specifically employed to assist with project delivery, including an outreach worker for *Prime Enterprise* in South Tyneside; and a marketing student in a work placement role to assist with promoting *Enterprise Idol*. Although these were only temporary roles, for the duration of the EPF project, and the staff had subsequently left, these people had nevertheless benefited from skills development. Only two managers referred to their staff receiving organised training: At *Enterprise Idol* health and safety training was received, in relation to event staging, while in the case of *Women's Enterprise Rainbow* staff received training in service delivery to women from PROWESS.

Subsequent experience and further potential of project ideas

Project managers were asked what the influence of the project experience had been on other stakeholder organisations and whether projects had been able to continue, in some form, after EPF resources had been exhausted (Table 4.1). Most project managers (16) felt that their projects had exerted some positive influence, although only 13 projects had continued to operate at least some aspect of the activity supported by the EPF. Of these, just over half (7) had been able to continue in a similar format, sometimes with increased scope, largely through having secured further funding or having been brought into the mainstream of BL support (see examples in box).

> **EPF projects that have continued in some form**
>
> - *DIY Café* gained mainstream recognition and local authority funding and also became part of Durham University Business School's enterprise teaching programme.
>
> - Other key sources of funding secured included two projects gaining substantial grants from the Esmee Fairburn Foundation (*Women Like Us* and *Enterprising Action*), and one project gaining support from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (*Enterprise Theatre*).
>
> - Three projects had continued in a considerably scaled down manner, due to popular local demand and small amounts of local sponsorship and in-kind staff assistance from other organisations (e.g. *Elevator Pitch*) and three projects had continued to deliver elements of the original project (e.g. *Enterprise Idol* supplied student union volunteers to present an enterprise event at the local schools Enterprise Week).
>
> - In the case of the *Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project,* Wai Yin Chinese Women's Society achieved a contract giving them preferred supplier status to provide enterprise support to the Chinese community in Greater Manchester, also leading to the project ending early in order to avoid conflict with new funding. Unfortunately, however, funding cutbacks within the Business Link operator (ChamberLink) have led to this being abruptly terminated after just 3 months.
>
> - The *Tonbridge Community Enterprise Play* appears to have inspired a high level of ongoing activity and plans for further community activity in the locality, including the establishment of a new community enterprise theatre group. The latter was founded by individuals who only came together as a result of the play, and has recently involved 60 people in staging its first major production.

Of the six projects that have not continued in any form, project managers attributed this to lack of funding, although also referring to legacies left by the EPF project, such as databases of local entrepreneurs, networking contacts and increased staff expertise. Another positive aspect in some cases has been the influence of EPF projects and lead organisations in terms of encouraging mainstream business support organisations such as BL, Enterprise Agencies and Local Authorities to work more closely with the EPF organisation and to provide improved pre-start and on-going business assistance to the target population groups, as well as a host of specialist business support agencies such as the Prince's Trust and Youth Enterprise. There was also reference to improved links and working relationships with specialist community organisations (e.g. Chinese community groups in Manchester), Business Education Partnerships, schools, HE/FE institutions and LEAs (e.g. Mersia in the West Midlands), local businesses and entrepreneurs (notably with regard to mentoring, work placement and role model schemes) and specific (non government organisation) interest groups such as Age Concern, Boyhood to Manhood Foundation.

Views on the contribution of projects to 'building an enterprise culture' and the entrepreneurial potential of target groups

This section draws broadly on the findings from interviews with project managers, stakeholders and participants in order to:

   (a) Provide further insight into how projects have contributed to the aims of the EPF programme and the entrepreneurial potential of the social groups targeted;

(b) Explore respondents' views on the broader policy aim of 'building an enterprise culture', including measures that could be taken to further this aim within the target social groups.

There is no absolute agreement as to what the pursuit of entrepreneurship and the enterprise culture means[7]; this being reflected to an extent in the different approaches adopted by EPF projects. The main objective of the government in building an enterprise culture 'is to provide people with sufficient understanding to enable them to make an informed choice between employment and enterprise' (SBS, 2003, para. 1). The intention is that choices relating to enterprise should 'be based on full information and a rational appraisal of the opportunities, risks and rewards of enterprise'. In this regard, information relating to careers involving employment is more easily available and there is some evidence of a greater focus on the risks of enterprise than on its potential rewards (e.g. GEM Global, 2002).

Project managers were asked:

To what extent they thought their projects had contributed to 'building an enterprise culture' in the target population group. Most (16) respondents felt that their project had begun to make such a contribution although most of these were also cautious about making exaggerated claims given the restricted scale of projects. Responses ranged from those who emphasised the quantified outputs reported for their projects to more qualitative feedback received from individuals on whom the project had had an impact.

Whether their projects had contributed to 'reducing social exclusion and inequality' in their project target population group. Again, many of the respondents were cautious about attributing too much emphasis in this respect although most (16) felt that their projects had made some contribution.

Whether the experience of undertaking the project had altered their views about the entrepreneurial potential that exists within the target group populations. Most (14) indicated that the project had 'confirmed' their existing view that there was considerable untapped potential amongst the target group and in one case *(Women Like Us)* the project manager felt that the project had exceeded her expectations (but this related to the willingness of women with children to find flexible employment, rather than to become self-employed). The project manager in this case further emphasised the importance of locality for women in particular and in relation to enterprise:

> 'Some of what we are doing is trying to create - and this is really in the plans for next year - a local market. Because the local issue, which is really important to women, is the idea of working locally, living locally, and shopping locally. And one of the things we are trying to do is to try and create a network of women who have set up their own businesses and use our website to promote their businesses to other women in the network, and they might be local garden designers.'

Other examples of how projects could be said to have made contributions to these wider (and difficult to quantify) aims are given in the box below.

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[7] See Gibb (2002) for a review of such debates.

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Examples of contributions to 'building an enterprise culture'

- In Tynedale, Northumberland, the EPF projects have contributed towards developing an enterprise culture within the schools as part of the DfES Enterprise Pathfinder Project:
  - With regard to *Enterprise Boat,* the case study shows how this project has opened up a wider perspective on what enterprise means for both school pupil and teacher participants. At the early stages of the project, one school teacher who was appointed as one of the champions stated that there was a strong negative reaction by parents against the Pathfinder Project because they thought it was 'about teaching pupils about setting up their own businesses.' This forced teachers to convey the message about what enterprise means in terms of building confidence and skills rather than setting up a business or being entrepreneurial in the traditional sense.
  - The *DIY Café*, similarly, through the use of innovative methods and building in the role of mentoring has conveyed a message to school pupils in one Comprehensive School which generally has a catchment area of a predominantly low income working class community. Enterprise activity has been used to develop both the curriculum and a social and fair trade enterprise business where the goods sold provide aid and support to a School in Africa.

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A number of project managers expressed disappointment, to varying degrees, at the level of difficulty they had experienced in engaging participants, these tending to be projects targeted at older people, homeless/excluded people and refugees (see box).

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Examples of difficulties experienced in engaging target groups

Projects targeting older people:

- *Play the Enterprise Game* (targeted at age 50 plus) – the project manager commented:

  'You start off a project and you have all the dreams about how it will change the world - we thought that people would go away from these programmes, totally enthusiastic, and start their own business the following day. But that did not happen. […] the people we were targeting are not going to rush out and do things, they are going to make sure that all the building blocks are in place. Older people in particular are, understandably, more cautious than younger people and are not going to rush into anything new.'

- In the case of *Prime Enterprise*, on the other hand, a realistic understanding of the difficulties involved appears to have been factored into the project conception; hence the project manager described it as having been 'very tough work' to find and assist older people (aged 50 plus) in South Tyneside, but that this had been expected and the project had achieved the modest level of success anticipated.

Homeless and excluded people:

- *Enterprising Action* - a key point to emerge from Groundswell's end of project report was that only a small minority of homeless and excluded people (Groundswell's target constituency) are likely to be able to adopt 'enterprise as a solution to social exclusion'. The comment of one participant appears to support that the entrepreneurial potential of the target group is limited: 'Most people in the state of homelessness are not ambitious to do things, so to find ones that are who want to pull themselves out – you have to search them out.'

Refugee/asylum seekers:

- *Business Skills 4 Care* were disappointed with the response to the project in that none of the targeted refugee/asylum seeker medical professionals showed any inclination towards self-employment / new venture creation, preferring to find employment in the NHS.

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It was also explained to both participant and stakeholder interviewees that *the EPF project was part of a wider programme in support of the government's strategy of 'building an enterprise culture' which is also aimed at helping reduce inequality and social exclusion.* Interviewees were then asked *what had been the contribution of the project, if any, on the particular locality / target group and what further measures might be needed to further the aims behind the EPF programme?* Responses here were more varied and, in many ways, more interesting and revealing than those of the project managers. Examples of the more positive responses are given in the box below.

Views of participants on achievements of EPF projects

- With *Enterprise Idol* (targeted at children/university students) there was general consensus amongst the seven respondents that the project had successfully addressed the 'enterprise culture' objective, but that there was a need for further work with young people as this is a process which needs to be repeated annually during schools enterprise week and also at University – if anything there was a call for even more to be done, with more regular awareness raising events to stimulate interest amongst young people.

- For *Elevator Pitch* (targeted at women in Merseyside) again all seven respondents were very positive with regard to the impact of the project on raising enterprise awareness – again there was a concerted argument for holding regular events, at least annually to continue to support and develop entrepreneurial activity amongst the target women's group in Merseyside. Most respondents felt that the EI and EP projects provided plenty of additional support and links to appropriate assistance, so it was a case of making sure that the 'good work' continues.

With regard to projects targeted more specifically at disadvantaged/excluded groups, many respondents were of the view that the EPF project had broadly been 'a good thing' and a positive step in the right direction, although tending to emphasise the need for much better support for people in positions of particular disadvantage if 'enterprise' (i.e. in the narrow sense of self-employment/small business) was to be a genuine alternative for them.

Views on building an enterprise culture (1)

'I think the enterprise culture is already there in the UK [….] but I think when you are in a situation when you are trying to set yourself up as a business person - self employed working from home - there should be more help with the income tax […] we should be entitled to some kind of relief because, in my situation now […] not having worked for a while, you need to pay childcare, need money for bills and stuff like that. I think it would be great to have council tax relief if you work from home and have tax deduction - just to help you because you are not going to have a return straight away.' (Participant)

Other respondents who tended to favour a broader definition of 'enterprise', emphasised social concerns and community values, helping individuals to make links with others and realise their potential, i.e. through encouraging self-awareness, confidence and improvements in skills, with a view to helping people to improve their life situations irrespective of whether this ultimately led to self-employment / creating a new business venture. Such views were particularly expressed by those involved in the *Tonbridge Community Enterprise Play.*

A number of stakeholder and participant interviewees, however, were more questioning of the aims of the EPF programme and of the government's agenda with respect to enterprise. Criticisms ranged from those who questioned the meaning and desirability of 'an enterprise culture' from a more philosophical stance, associating enterprise with a political ideology that emphasised individualism and private gain, to those who were more pragmatic in their questioning, in a few cases on the basis of extensive experience with respect to business support.

Practitioner respondents particularly emphasised that not everybody has the interest or potential to be successfully self-employed and the potential danger of encouraging people into positions involving financial and psychological risk. One such interviewee, for instance, referred to a specific example of a client of his organisation who had many of the classic 'entrepreneurial' attributes and qualities but who was currently £20,000 in debt as a result of pursuing her business idea. The range of cautious / sceptical views on 'building an enterprise culture' is represented by the following quotations.

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Views on building an enterprise culture (4)

'I'm not too sure about the whole 'entrepreneurship' push coming from government and tend to be rather sceptical about it. I think there is a need to focus more on the general development of young people's potential and preparing them for the world of work, but not sure we should be pushing enterprise down people's throats, because I'm not sure that everybody is interested or has the potential to be self-employed or start-up a business.' (Stakeholder - Business Education Partnership project co-ordination)

'The problem with all this talk about the enterprise culture is that it is difficult to define what it is all about […] people are to continually view enterprise/self employment as an option […] but I don't see how this particular project or any other such project could turn around a culture […] Just getting people to jump on board is not sustainable – that's not a culture.' (Stakeholder – Business Link senior manager)

'I think there's an issue of the expectations the government has – can the government really influence people to start businesses? Should public funding really go into supporting people to set up business? […] maybe more support should go to enabling the growth of those businesses which have more impact on productivity and on the economy. I'm questioning whether public funding is best utilised at the front end or whether you should concentrate on working with the existing business stock. A lot of businesses actually set up are replacement income either from benefit, which is good, or replacement from an employed income, so if it's this why should public funding support it? […] So many start-ups are displacements or substitution which is similar – another café on the same street – why? […] how do you decide who to support and who not to support? […] there are very few effective valuations of how enterprise contributes to local and regional economic development.' (Stakeholder - regeneration consultant)

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It could be concluded that policy to support awareness and understanding of enterprise is on stronger ground with respect to children/young people, given:

- that young people are at a stage in their lives when they are particularly impressionable and responsive to influence;

- the dominant highly prescriptive and structured approach to education which, leaves insufficient scope for creativity and which, potentially, disadvantages less academic students in particular.

Hence a number of interviewees gave strong reasons for their view that efforts to support 'enterprise awareness' and an 'enterprise culture' are best targeted at young people and that less academically able students are more likely to be engaged with such activities.

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Views on building an enterprise culture (5)

'Effort should go into schools – the government ploughs large amounts of money into Enterprise Week every year, but if you are going to change culture you need to start at an early age […] my wife is a teacher and she laughs when I talk about enterprise in schools …. Most teachers don't see it - they are focused on maths and English etc…' (Stakeholder – Business Link senior manager)

'People tend to have a low opinion of youth generally […] but comments from teachers suggest that many normally uncooperative and difficult students were engaged by the events. The value of such events is that they do capture the interest of less academic pupils and convey the message that everybody has the potential to succeed.' (Stakeholder - Business Education Partnership)

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While EPF projects have provided some further evidence of the potential of people in disadvantaged groups, there is also clearly a need for realism and to avoid efforts that might be wasted and/or which encourage individuals to take steps which they might later regret.

Different social groups face different potentialities, opportunity structures and risks in relation to enterprise.[8] As well as the long recognised nature of the individual risks (financial and psychological) involved in entrepreneurial efforts, there are also potential wider social and institutional risks incurred by the public sector and specifically business support practitioners, particularly when they are being encouraged to support individuals in positions of disadvantage, some of whom could be considered 'high risk' in terms of their potential to succeed in creating new ventures. Hence, although the EPF bidding guidance emphasises enterprise promotion, one of the key aims identified – to develop 'risk assessment' as an 'enterprise skill' – suggests that individuals particularly unsuited to self-employment could be deterred as part of the support process.[9] Many business support advisors have long performed such a gatekeeper/ deterrent role with respect to some clients.

Analysis of selected EPF project participants

Further important insight is provided by focusing on the characteristics and experiences of the 35 participants who were interviewed individually for this review.[10] The sample is inevitably biased towards adult participants who have had more ongoing contact and intensive support from projects/lead organisations and cannot possibly, therefore, adequately represent the wider impact of larger scale 'one off' events and on local communities and on school children in particular. Previous studies of venture creation programmes (Greene and Storey, 2004; Kouriloff, 2000) suggest that individuals can be classified into four categories according to whether they:

1. do not consider entrepreneurship to be appropriate for them *(no wish);*

2. would potentially consider entrepreneurship as an option in the future *(potentials);*

3. those currently attempting to become entrepreneurs *(nascents)*;

4. and those who already are entrepreneurs *(actuals).*

This framework is useful in terms of capturing entrepreneurship (i.e. new venture creation) as a process, despite its limitations with respect to broader and more social conceptions of enterprise adopted by some projects.

Characteristics and attitudes of participants prior to contact with the EPF project
Of the 35 participants that were individually interviewed from nine projects (see Table 1.1 for details):

- 63 per cent were female and 37 per cent male (five of the nine projects from which the sample was drawn were targeted at women);

- 74 per cent were White British with the 26 per cent ethnic minority cohort being very mixed (i.e. including Afghan, Asian British, Black British, Black French, Chinese, Iranian, Russian, Ukrainian);

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[8] For further comment on the entrepreneurial of particular social groups see, for instance, Curran and Blackburn (2001) in relation to older people; Rouse and Kitchen (2006) in relation to women with childcare responsibilities; and Blackburn and Ram (2006) with respect to the 'socially excluded' as a general category.
[9] In this respect at least one of the projects focused on targeted individual assistance appears to have taken particular care in matching the needs and potential of their clients to flexible work opportunities (*Women Like Us*).
[10] The following analysis does not include individuals from the three focus groups involving young people and teachers. Feedback from participants which is more specific to particular projects is reported in the individual case studies, including a number of individual case histories.

- 46 per cent were aged between 35-54, with only two cases being over the age of 55 (reflecting that case studies were not conducted on the projects aimed at older people, this also being in part a reflection of the difficulty that project managers in these cases said they would have in finding participants to interview). Nobody younger than 19 was interviewed;

- Most (74 per cent) were educated to degree level or above, with only one respondent having no qualifications, having left school early;

- The main areas in which respondents were qualified (including professional qualifications) were: arts/design/media (7 cases); medicine/pharmacy (6 cases); business (5); education / caring/social service professions (4); and IT/engineering (3).

- In terms of previous/recent employment history and enterprise related activity, 8 had a history as practicing artists/artisans (i.e. where self-employment is the norm); 8 had managerial/admin positions in large companies or in the public sector; 5 were students; 3 were refugees who had been involved in voluntary work; one was retired; and one had a history of occasional work, mainly in the building trade, and criminal activity.

- At the time of the EPF project 26 per cent described themselves as unemployed (though some of these were also carers/homemakers); 20 per cent were employed; 20 per cent were self-employed; 14 per cent were homemakers; and 6 per cent were refugee voluntary workers.

It is clear that most respondents were relatively highly qualified and/or experienced, often in areas conducive to self-employment, and with a significant proportion (40 per cent) already being self-employed or employed at the time of their involvement with the EPF project.[11] Although the sample, therefore, is representative to a degree of the social groups targeted by projects, it is even more representative of individuals possessing characteristics which are conventionally associated with entrepreneurial potential in the wider population. Further to this, most participants had benefited from a high degree of involvement and/or intensive support from the EPF project / lead organisation, and, in a few cases the support relationship had been established prior to the EPF project.

Participant interviewees were asked about their views with respect to self-employment/enterprise activity as a potential career option prior to coming into contact with the project and also any factors that had influenced these, including contacts with other individuals involved in enterprise. The responses suggest that 46 per cent could, in general terms, be said to be positively disposed towards enterprise as a career option, although a number of these also referred to their experience of the disadvantages of self-employment. Thirty four per cent held views that could be said to be 'mixed' or 'indifferent', while 31 per cent had largely negative perceptions. Of the 46 per cent holding a more positive disposition towards enterprise, a proportion of these already had prior experience of self-employment, often in arts-related areas (e.g. crafts and design, writer, musician) where self-employment is often a necessity. Some respondents in this group also valued the freedom and flexibility they had experienced being self-employed (see box).

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[11] Strictly speaking, this appears to go against the stipulation that the Fund is not aimed at supporting individual new or existing enterprises, including pre-starts (paragraph 4 of ROAMEF Statement).

Of the 34 per cent that had more negative perceptions, most referred to the downside of self-employment/small business, i.e. the financial and psychological risks involved (including social isolation) of which some already had experience of, mainly through family members, partners or friends involved in enterprise or, in some cases, their own previous experience of being self-employed.

Most of those holding a more positive attitude towards self-employment also referred to the downsides, with some expressing that it 'wouldn't suit everybody' (one of these, in fact, had been a self-employed writer for many years, but planned to seek employment in the publishing industry in order to be more financially secure and less isolated).

Cautious and, in some cases, negative attitudes to self-employment therefore appear to be firmly rooted in actual experience, including proximity in many cases to what could be described as 'negative role models', i.e. individuals known to interviewees who were clearly struggling in various respects to survive on a self-employed basis. These findings suggest something of the barriers to policies aimed at positively influencing attitudes and behaviour towards enterprise.

The impact of the EPF project on participants

Most (94 per cent) had experienced the EPF project as 'very helpful' (69 per cent) or 'quite helpful' (27 per cent), with only two cases not finding the project helpful at all. Many emphasised the value and importance to them of the practical help and advice they had received, the positive impact on their confidence and also having made important contacts, including meeting others in similar situations to themselves. Table 4.2 compares the status of the sample at the time of the EPF project and at the time respondents were interviewed (i.e. at least a year later). As can be seen, the trends indicate a general improvement in respondents positions, with fewer in the unemployed and homemaker categories (change from 40 per cent to 11 per cent) and more in employment or self-employment (change from 40 per cent to 72 per cent).

Table 4.2: Employment status: at time of project and after project

	Employment status – At time of project		Employment status – After project		Change
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Per cent
Unemployed	9	26	4	11	-56
Employed	7	20	15	43	114
Self-employed	7	20	10	29	43
Student	4	11	4	11	0
Homemaker	5	14			-100
Retired	1	3	1	3	0
Other	2	6	1	3	-50
Total	35	100	35	100	

The statistics do not give the full picture of 'before and after', particularly in that change processes are often not instantaneous nor do they necessarily follow a linear pattern; hence a number were still in the process of developing their business ideas, including while in part-time employment. Further details of participant's employment status and enterprise activity are shown in Table 1 in the Appendix.

Respondents were asked what would have happened if they had not had the contact with the EPF project / lead organisation. It is not possible to be definitive about additionality, but of those who had improved their status or made progress in this respect, as many as half felt that they would have made the changes anyway, often through necessity, but that progress without the support would quite likely have been slower and more difficult.

Interviewees were also asked if there was anything else they needed in order to fully realise their aspirations. Of those involved in business start-ups, most referred to a need for capital, this often being related to specific needs (often marketing related). Other needs related to advice on specific aspects of their business and the need to further develop their own skills and capabilities.

Complementarities with other interventions to promote enterprise

A key consideration is the relationship of EPF projects to other interventions to promote enterprise, wider business support infrastructure and non-business support at both national and more localised levels for individual projects.

With regard to business support, most projects have needed to involve and work with other business support providers. Some project managers and stakeholder interviewees raised concerns about the complex nature of local business support agency structures and the difficulties that they, as specialised providers, experienced in relation to this.

Examples of difficulties experienced in relating to other business support

One project manager commented:

> 'There is so much business support provision. It is a lot of effort to review this provision … and there are so many providers such as Business Link, Young Enterprise, Business and Voluntary Mentoring Scheme etc… There is a desperate need to co-ordinate this at grass roots level and address real needs.' [PM].

Groundswell UK experienced considerable difficulties in trying to establish effective networking links to the mainstream of business support in regions and locations where they did not have a pre-established network. The manager complained about the 'complex, fragmented and varied nature of business support in different locations' and the difficulties experienced in finding agencies that they could work with who were both committed to assisting disadvantaged people and with the requisite competencies. Hence in practice some partner agencies (e.g. Community Enterprise Exeter and Bootstrap Enterprise Hackney) were shown to be more attuned to the in-depth support requirements of homeless people than others in the regions.

> 'There needs to be mapping of business support nationally. We need more work at a national policy level to get business support more involved in assisting socially excluded groups … and we would benefit from being clear as to which agencies can actually offer the business assistance required for these groups, before commencing on projects.' (PM).

With regard to non-business support, projects targeting schools, as previously noted, fit well with the requirement since 2005 that all schools must incorporate 'entrepreneurship education' into the curriculum. Case study evidence indicates that enterprise awareness, as well as potentially introducing creativity in the curriculum for all children/students, has particular potential for engaging less academic students. One project (*Women Like Us)* also appeared to fit well with other aspects of the government's developing policy agenda for schools, namely to offer extended facilities and increase their role as a focus for local communities (e.g. providing or facilitating access to childcare, breakfast clubs, social services, health services, security information etc). This is intended to make it easier for parents to go back to the workplace with these accessible childcare facilities in the actual school.

Summary of the achievements of EPF projects

Project managers' success ratings

Project managers were asked to assess the achievements of their projects according to whether they had been 'Very successful – exceeding aims and expectations'; 'Successful – achieved original aims and targets'; 'Successful to a degree – did not fully achieve aims'; or 'Unsuccessful'. In half of the 18 EPF projects (50 per cent) project managers judged that their project had been 'very successful', exceeding their expectations, whilst a further third (33 per cent) indicated that their project had been 'successful' in achieving their original aims and targets. Only three respondents (17 per cent) indicated that their

projects had not fully achieved their original aims, however, these managers still stated that these projects were 'successful to a degree'. These findings are supported by the authors' analysis of the documented outputs and achievements of projects and, with regard to the 11 case study projects, are generally corroborated by the interviews with participants and other stakeholders.

Greater insight into how projects achieved their particular impacts and the lessons learned is provided by the 11 case studies of selected projects, which involved interviews with participants and other stakeholders (see Appendix II). The emphasis in the case studies has been to look beyond the reported outputs and outcomes (and the inevitable limitations of some of the measures used) to better identify the underlying mechanisms and processes which have given rise to outcomes in their specific contexts. The conceptual framework, as suggested in the methodology, can therefore be summarised in terms of the following interrelated explanatory elements:

1. The validity of the understanding held by the lead organisation of the needs and potential of the target group / locale (i.e. as gained through prior experience and/or specific research conducted in support of the EPF application);

2. The effectiveness of the specific approaches and mechanisms adopted for engaging, influencing and assisting the target group;

3. How well projects were managed and delivered on a day-to-day basis, including with respect to being sufficiently resourceful and adaptive to overcome obstacles and difficulties encountered;

4. Other contextual factors, including in particular the role of other agencies and the relationship of the EPF project / lead organisation to mainstream enterprise support and other relevant policy agendas; in this regard projects have experienced various degrees of co-operation and 'buy in' from other agencies, and synergy with other relevant policies.

This review shows that most projects have been able to demonstrate success, with some exceeding their expectations. Particular examples of successful projects which have exceeded expectations are:

The *Tonbridge Community Enterprise Play* was particularly ambitious in terms of the variety of its activities aimed at engaging as many people as possible within its target locality. Factors underlying the success of the project relate to the nature of the project idea itself (particularly the tried and tested concept of the community play), the enthusing and empowering leadership role played by the project manager and Claque Theatre professionals which, in turn, effectively engaged the skills and energy of other individuals in the community. The project therefore demonstrates many of the key ingredients needed in order to be able to engage people in local activism and social creativity, both in terms of the skills and personal qualities needed and also the sort of contexts which are most likely to be supportive/responsive. With regard to the latter point, although the community play approach appears to have been applied with some success in communities that are more deprived than Tonbridge, it is suggested that the availability of resources, skills and also the propensity of people to become involved could vary considerably according to the nature of localities. The project has left legacy of further activities, including a newly established theatre group and plans to develop a new venue.

Women Like Us have been very successful in linking the needs of skilled women parents for flexible work and the needs of employers in London (mainly in the public and voluntary sector) who were offering such work and were experiencing difficulties

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in recruitment. The key challenge would seem to be the extent to which this success can be replicated in more deprived areas, where the skills base of the target group is likely to be less strong and where flexible employment and opportunities for enterprise are less in evidence than in more affluent locations. The organisation has subsequently gained further funding from two London boroughs, the Esmee Fairburn Foundation and London Development Agency.

Women's Enterprise Rainbow   Has through outreach work reached a large number of women through the Roadshows. According to the organisers 15 businesses have started as a result of the Roadshow. The idea of the Roadshow has been to disseminate information and develop intervention strategies for those women who are interested in the idea of Enterprise and staring their own business. Its success in fact related to its integrated approach to increasing awareness. First is to 'spread the word' in terms of using local venues to advertise the Rainbow events. Second is to capture interest through the organisation of workshops providing a range of advice about business development. Third is to actually follow up interest in terms of intensive counselling and support. WER has highlighted the need for a coordinated response and has been inspirational for Emda's recent drive to promote women's enterprise in the East Midlands.

Two of the case study projects appear to demonstrate more mixed outcomes, although both have demonstrated further potential:

Enterprising Action - this was perhaps the most challenging of the projects to be funded, given its national spread and the nature of the situations confronting people in its target group (homeless and disadvantaged). In spite of the operational difficulties experienced and the limited numbers reached, the project can be judged a success insofar as the available feedback from participants and stakeholders has been highly positive. Groundswell have also been successful in securing funding from the Esmee Fairburn Foundation to continue the programme, in a similar format, for a further three years. A number of organisation/delivery issues have been identified as a result of the experience, although the key issues appear to boil down to (a) how best in future to maximise the participation of people who can potentially benefit from the support offered; and (b) the need to provide an integrated package of support for disadvantaged people. Self-employment/business start-up is a considerable challenge for anybody, even in the best of circumstances, with many obstacles to be surmounted. People in situations of disadvantage face extra barriers on top of this, and often need a great deal of advice and support with regard to a range of issues even before issues relating more specifically to self-employment/enterprise can begin to be addressed. The challenge is therefore how best to build in continuity and progression in support provision

Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project - the achievements of this project have been based on the case presented by Wai Yin of a need for a 'culturally appropriate' enterprise support service targeted at the Chinese community in Greater Manchester and which could address the 'market failure' of existing mainstream services. A number of difficulties were experienced during the early stages of the project, although these were largely overcome through recruiting staff more suited to delivering services to Chinese businesses. Mainstream recognition of the need for and potential of such a service appeared to be confirmed when Wai Yin were successful in their bid to deliver enterprise support services for the Business Link Operator for Manchester. Unfortunately, subsequent funding cutbacks have meant that the work started by Wai Yin has ended abruptly, with the organisation now only being able to deliver further support on an ad hoc and unfunded basis. The case study particularly illustrates the policy tension that can emerge between 'peripheral

providers' targeting support at niche groups and the interests of mainstream business support providers to streamline services, particularly during a recent period of transition.

Two projects appear to have had particularly disappointing outcomes, *Business Skills 4 Care* and *Work Experience for the Life Experienced.*

Business Skills 4 Care aimed to assist up to 12 refugees/asylum seekers, aged 24 plus, from foreign healthcare backgrounds to achieve self-employment in health associated activities. Nine refugees were assisted. Whilst around half achieved some form of certification for completing specific course modules, only two refugees completed the full six month course. Only one participant is believed to have become employed in the health sector and none of the participants interviewed (5) had gone on to work in the health sector or become self-employed. Whilst the project attempted to address social exclusion criteria, participants were not appropriately qualified to, or interested in, setting up businesses based on 'alternative therapies' (acupuncture, homeopathy etc) but were primarily motivated and qualified to gain employment in the NHS. Better collaboration and pre project planning with the partner organisation and the refugee community could have led to more appropriate course delivery and content. The project was, however, viewed as partially successful by the project manager, mainly because lessons learned from this pilot have been applied to other on-going project work in London.

Work Experience for the Life Experienced – The experience of this project was that work placements of several weeks duration for pre-starts were too long and difficult to organise for the target age 50 plus population and take-up was disappointingly lower than expected. The main factors contributing to this disappointing outcome appear to be:
o problems with the basic concept of placements in small businesses, including that people who were on the verge of starting-up, tend to be more motivated to devote time directly to their new ventures than on somebody else's business. The view of the lead organisation, however, is that the problems could be overcome with some modification in how the service is delivered;
o the nature of the rural location, combined with the more general difficulty of engaging older people in entrepreneurship (also experienced by other EPF projects targeted at this group);
o the lack of early involvement of key relevant stakeholders and of research to clarify the needs and entrepreneurial potential of the target group.

A summary and concluding discussion of the key findings reported in this chapter follows in chapter 5, together with lessons and recommendations.

5. Conclusions

Summary of the achievements of EPF projects

This review has examined the experiences of 18 projects which have been funded by the EPF programme, with 11 of these being examined in greater depth, in order to identify the lessons learned and wider potential of project ideas. The emphasis in the case studies has been to attempt to look beyond the reported outputs (and the inevitable limitations of some of the measures used) to clarify how project activities have given rise to outcomes in their specific contexts, drawing on the experiences and views of project managers, selected participants and key stakeholders. The three levels of outcomes relate to the impact of projects on (i) participants, (ii) EPF lead organisations and other stakeholders and (iii) lessons for policy makers, given that these are pilot projects. The evaluative framework has focused on the following interrelated elements:

1. the validity of the understanding held by the lead organisation of the needs and potential of the target group / locale (i.e. as gained through prior experience and/or specific research conducted in support of the EPF application);

2. the effectiveness of the specific approaches and mechanisms adopted for engaging, influencing and assisting the target group;

3. how well projects were managed and delivered on a day-to-day basis, including with respect to being sufficiently resourceful and adaptive to overcome obstacles and difficulties encountered;

4. other contextual factors, including in particular the role of other agencies and the relationship of the EPF project / lead organisation to mainstream enterprise support and other relevant policy agendas.

Effective delivery

Crucial to all projects has been the need for some effective means of raising awareness of the project and stimulating interest amongst the target group. Most projects used more than one approach, but can be roughly divided into those which:

a. Aimed at maximising participation in their target groups/communities through large-scale events, in some cases then signposting attendees to support providers;
b. Relied on more intensive approaches (9 projects), aiming to access and assist relatively small numbers of specifically targeted individuals;

c. Aimed at children and young people and were focused on both awareness raising and skills, but had the advantage of a 'captive audience' within the highly structured context of the educational system.

A variety of mechanisms for engagement and delivery have been shown to be effective. Direct targeting, word of mouth and outreach have been particularly important for accessing 'hard to reach' groups, particularly given the limited scale of projects and associated lack of resources for more extensive marketing.

Delivery based on creative theatre techniques, games and roadshows appear to have been particularly successful, especially in terms of reaching larger numbers of people. The experience of projects based on more focused and targeted approaches has been more mixed, with some projects demonstrating considerable (and in some cases ongoing)

success and others having only reached small numbers, with the impact being very limited or difficult to gauge. With regard to the latter point, for instance, in at least one project where numbers reached have been limited, participant and stakeholder interviewees nevertheless spoke highly of the contribution made by the project in terms of understanding and assisting the target group.

Outcomes and achievements
Most of the projects have been able to demonstrate success in terms of meeting their targeted outputs while some project managers have claimed, with justification, to have exceeded their original aims and expectations. In most cases managers felt that their projects would not have gone ahead in any form without the EPF assistance. In the three cases where projects would have gone ahead, managers emphasised that the EPF grant had nevertheless been important in terms of adding value to projects.

More than half of the projects have left a legacy of ongoing activity. Of the six projects which have not managed to continue in any form, project managers attributed this to lack of funding, although also referring to useful legacies left by the EPF project, such as databases of local entrepreneurs, networking contacts and increased staff expertise. Another positive aspect in some cases has been the influence of EPF projects on other organisations (i.e. including Business Link, enterprise agencies, specialist community organisations, and local authorities), and the development of closer working links to support improved pre-start and on-going business assistance to the target population groups.

With respect to the broader potential of such projects to contribute to the government's aim of 'building enterprise culture', the findings suggest that interventions targeted at children and younger people are more likely to have a fundamental impact on awareness and attitudes towards enterprise than those targeted at adults. Interventions targeted at children and young people also fit well with other relevant policies within the education sector, and can involve introducing creative and enjoyable activities which can more fully engage less academic students in a way that the day to day curriculum may not.

Some projects demonstrate important potential with respect to the social enterprise and community development. One in particular, based on a community theatre approach, provides strong evidence of the potential of initiatives based on a broader, more social conception of enterprise supportive of community-based creativity and high levels of involvement and voluntary activity.

Some of the projects targeted at excluded/disadvantaged groups and those underrepresented in enterprise experienced disappointing outcomes (e.g. the projects targeted at older people, refugees and homeless/excluded people in particular). Further important insight is provided by interviews with selected project participants, which indicate that a significant proportion had profile characteristics typically associated with 'high entrepreneurial potential', even prior to their coming into contact with the EPF project, with 40 per cent already being self employed or employed at the time of their involvement. Interviews with participants also show that cautious and, in some cases, negative attitudes towards self-employment are firmly rooted in actual experience, including proximity in many cases to what could be described as 'negative role models', i.e. individuals known to the interviewee who were experiencing difficulties around being self-employed. These findings indicate something of the barriers to policy interventions such as the EPF programme which aim to influence the attitudes and behaviour of people who do not aspire to self-employment or starting their own business.

The difficulties experienced by some projects accord with insights from the academic literature relating to the potential for self-employment / new venture creation in particular

social groups (e.g. Curran and Blackburn 2001 in relation to older people; Rouse and Kitchen 2006 in relation to women with childcare responsibilities) and also more general debates relating to the limitations of entrepreneurship as a means of combating social exclusion (e.g. see Blackburn and Ram, 2006).

Lessons and recommendations

Several of the EPF projects investigated in this review demonstrated aspects of good and effective practice that should be used to inform the development of policy in this area. Further EPF type initiatives that built on this good practice could contribute to achieving the government's enterprise objectives. Alternatively, key lessons should be incorporated into mainstream provision and other policies aimed at raising enterprise awareness and understanding.

Practical lessons

If there could be said to be one key factor underlying the success or otherwise of projects it is ***how well they have understood the needs and potential of target groups*** which, in turn, is shown to be dependent on ***prior relevant experience with the target group and/or research*** conducted in support of the lead organisation's application to the EPF. In some cases successful projects have also developed out of their appreciation of the specific failings of existing agencies to address the needs of target groups (or, at least, to be able to access them). Other factors underpinning successful project implementation and delivery are:

- Successful projects are often driven by key, committed individuals who are also able to enthuse and engage others and are sufficiently resourceful and adaptive to respond to any difficulties within a context of limited resources;
- The importance of the viability of the intervention model, with the most effective interventions typically being based on prior extensive experience and knowledge of 'what works' in terms of realising individual and collective potential; or more specific research, testing and refinement;
- Being able to enrol good entrepreneurial role models / business ambassadors and other voluntary contributions; professional delivery of the project may also require the need to hire key professionals with appropriate skills;
- Effective outreach strategy and implementation;
- Engagement with the target audience through sensitive and inspiring presentation;
- Effective networking / partnership working with other relevant support agencies and stakeholders.

Conversely, the main reasons for project under-performance can be summarised in terms of:

- Flawed concept, insufficient to engage with and meet the needs of the target group, typically associated with over-ambitious expectations and target setting with respect to entrepreneurial potential;
- Ineffective promotion and outreach strategies, failing to attract the target population in sufficient numbers;
- Difficulty in forming effective partnerships with other key support agencies and relevant stakeholders (although failings on this dimension in particular are not necessarily attributable to failings on the part of project managers).

Assessing needs and potential

Project managers, on the whole, stated that the experiences had confirmed their previously held view that there exists considerable untapped entrepreneurial potential in

their targeted social groups. Other evidence, however, suggests that any future such initiative needs to be clearer about the needs and entrepreneurial potential of the groups targeted. Hence some EPF projects were not sufficiently clear in this respect and therefore experienced difficulties in achieving their target outputs. This suggests the need to make better use of existing knowledge of entrepreneurial potential and the opportunity structures and barriers faced by different social groups. For many individuals in situations of need, assistance with employment may be more appropriate than encouraging them into new start-ups.

Self-employment/business start-up is a considerable challenge for anybody, even in the best of circumstances, with many obstacles to be surmounted. People in situations of disadvantage face extra barriers on top of this, and often need a great deal of advice and support with regard to a range of issues even before issues relating more specifically to self-employment/enterprise can begin to be addressed. The challenge is therefore how best to build in continuity and progression in support provision.

The relationship of specialist providers to mainstream enterprise support
It was argued by a number of interviewees that in order to make a substantial difference, projects targeted at niche groups would need to be much better funded and with better provision for ongoing support and more integration with other support providers. Projects have experienced various degrees of co-operation and 'buy in' from other agencies, and synergy with other relevant policies. Some projects experienced particular difficulty gaining the support and co-operation of other agencies. Concern was expressed by a number of interviewees about the future of specialist providers in a context of ongoing contraction and restructuring of existing business support in line with the government's Business Support Simplification Agenda. Projects targeted at hard to reach and disadvantaged groups are too often time limited and insufficiently funded and therefore only ever able to engage with the problems faced at a superficial level.

At the same time, enterprise/business support is in a process of transition and restructuring in a context following increasing concern about the overly-complex nature of the business support system, that there are too many different programmes and initiatives, and the recent drive to consolidate business support around a smaller number of providers. Following from this, consideration needs to be given to integrating lessons from the EPF programme into existing provision, in a context where the aim is to develop fewer and more strategic interventions but using the experiences and resources of particular specialist organisations. Future policy therefore needs to find an appropriate balance between rationalisation and making best use of specialist organisations to access and support niche groups. This recommendation accords with the 'braided approach' which attempts to integrate specialist and mainstream support into a more unified system (e.g. Ramsden, 2004, p. 70).

Awareness raising and community engagement
In terms of making a fundamental impact on the awareness of enterprise of significant numbers of people, interventions focused on children and young people have the most promise. Interventions which take a broad and inclusive approach to community engagement and enterprise have particular potential in terms of empowering local communities to move forward.

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Appendix I: Status and enterprise activity of EPF participants

Appendix Table 1: EPF participants: Status and enterprise activity

Code*	Current status	Self-employment/new venture activity	Contribution of EPF support	What else needed to meet aspirations?
WLU1	Employed: 3 p/t admin jobs	n/a	Would have taken a lot longer to find work	No - happy with flexible work
WLU2	Employed: p/t with EPF lead organisation	n/a	Would have still looked for work or been unemployed until PGCE started	Starting PGCE in Sept
WLU3	Employed: 2 p/t admin jobs	n/a	Would have looked for work but may have taken longer	Would still like a f/t job in project management utilising engineering qualification
WLU4	Employed (unchanged): still p/t with husband's business	n/a	Was a catalyst in deciding to become a teacher. Might have arrived at same point without EPF support but more slowly	Aims to study for teaching qualification
WLU5	Employed: p/t data entry	Training to be massage therapist but will keep p/t work while she builds up business, i.e. cautious due to previous tough times	Helped her find job when she was desperate + clarity and support to create own business. Not sure what would have happened otherwise: would have 'muddled through'?	Needs to pass exam to become a massage therapist and build up network of contacts.
EP1	Self-employed p/t	Painter/artist	Little difference - but boosted confidence	Growth potential curtailed by illness
EP2	Self-employed: p/t gallery assistant & p/t teaching art/craft teaching	Craftwork/artist	Helped focus ideas and speed business development	May need financial assistance for exhibition attendance/craft fares etc. in the future
EP3	Self-employed: p/t then f/t	Business based on dressmaking	Faster business development, more focus & contacts	No
EP4	Self-employed: p/t	Business based on fear of flying therapy	Helping to develop bigger business idea	IPR issues and capital
EP5	Self-employed: p/t	Organic compost business	Helped develop idea beyond small scale sales into larger scale industrial process	Need to resolve IPR issues
EP6	Self-employed: f/t	Photographer (v busy)	More confident to grow and funded equipment	Capital

			with £500 prize	
EP7	Self-employed: p/t	Jewellery making	Started faster with sure footing to grow ideas	No - has had all support required
BSC1	Employed: Postman & librarian	N/a	Gave hope, some direction for further training in healthcare	skills development, esp. English language & practical work experience in a care home
BSC2	Unemployed and voluntary work (unchanged)	n/a	Knowledge - but not found healthcare work	Need to get on some form of foundation course/skills transfer course for foreign medical workers enabling them to work in the NHS
BSC3	Employed: teacher, RETAS assistant at Buckingham college	n/a	Confidence, knowledge - did not get NHS job though	No
BSC4	PhD study at Bradford University	n/a	Unclear how it helped	Skills development to enable to work in NHS (currently a Russian qualified Doctor). Found college course himself and hopes now to become a teacher.
BSC5	Unemployed (unchanged)	n/a	Wanted help to get healthcare job, but EPF did not help	To get a job in NHS
EI1	Employed f/t (unchanged – with Student Union)	n/a	good work experience, rewarding	None - not really looking for self employment option
E12	Student f/t (unchanged – now in final year degree course)	n/a	Increased confidence, opened up her mind	No – not really considering self employment option at this time
E13	Employed f/t (originally in f/t SU job – now working f/t for a telecoms company)	Aspires to self-employment - running a pub	Opened up opportunities, now considering options	Skills development – aspires to run a pub
E14	Student (unchanged): teacher training, p/t artwork	Aspires to self-employment p/t	Increased interest in self employment option	No
E15	Final year student (unchanged)	n/a	Will now consider self employment option after some employment experience	No
EI6	Employed: partner in own business	Film production business	Huge insight into start-up and contacts - much better placed	No - all covered
EI7	Employed: partner in own business	Film promotion work	Started much quicker and on firmer basis than would otherwise have been the case	No
TCE1	Employed p/t (unchanged)	Wants to work in theatre	Ongoing involvement in community theatre + many more friends	Would like to work further in arts/theatre

TCE2	Unemployed: on incapacity benefit	Hopes book will be published	Ongoing involvement in community theatre + huge social impact, fulfilled sense of community	Dependent on success of book, but also plans to return to more secure employment in publishing industry
TCE3	Employed FT: installing broadband service in homes	Wants to work in theatre	Ongoing involvement in community play - huge social impact, more connected and stable etc.	Looking at acting as a career option
TCE4	Retired + voluntary work	Directs new theatre group involving 50 local people	New theatre group would not have happened	New theatre group appears to be on a good footing, with a lot of local support and working towards next major production
EA1	Unemployed (unchanged) - incapacity benefit)	Still plans to start-up a business - innovative approach to music and film distribution network using the internet + becoming more musically active again	Wouldn't have had benefit of contacts / support - may have got their without help but would have been slower/harder?	Capital - already has detailed bus plan
EA2	Unemployed (unchanged) + caring for young child	involved in setting up Contemporary Itinerant Arts Project	may have found help/funding elsewhere but would have been slower	Capital
SCE1	Self-employed freelance artist (unchanged - exhibitions etc) + setting up own business	Web based business: directory of Chinese Community services, businesses, organisations etc	Would still have developed project but would have taken longer	Capital + marketing + advice on financial side
WER1	Self-employed (unchanged) + recently got p/t job (admin) to supplement family income	Designs and makes mosaic table and mirrors (up prior to EPF)	Received help from lead org prior to EPF (inc access to grant) - project did not make a big difference	Capital to enable to get involved in large crafts fairs - not earning enough at moment to pay for entry into important craft fairs
WER2	Self -employed (unchanged) + benefits - not earning enough	Handcrafts and textiles	Received help from lead org prior to EPF - inc grant	Capital to enable access to craft fair circuit
WER3	Self employed (unchanged) but now wants to start own business	Producing and designing cards	Would have struggled considerably in terms of setting up own business without help	Needs further business planning advice
WER4	Self-employed	Internet business - buys items wholesale and sells on ebay	Could not have done it without support but also important was substantial redundancy money from previous employment in a bank	Accountancy help re tax returns

*NOTE – codes identify EPF projects: WLU – Women Like Us; EP – Elevator Pitch; BSC- Business Skills 4 Care; EI – Enterprise Idol; TCE – Tonbridge Community Enterprise Play; EA – Enterprise Action; SCE – Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project; WER – Women's Enterprise Rainbow.

APPENDIX II: Case Studies of EPF projects

1. Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project

Wai Yin Chinese Women's Society

Background

Project aims and objectives

The project was aimed at giving Chinese residents of Greater Manchester access to information, skills development, dependent care support, learning by experience and access to finance to promote their capability to start and improve enterprises. In addition, the project aimed to:

- increase the diversity of the Chinese enterprise environment by promoting the development of enterprises outside of the restaurant / take-away trade;

- increase the participation of both unemployed and economically inactive Chinese women (i.e. mothers, housewives) in enterprise;

- increase the number and range of social enterprises operated within the Chinese community;

- increase networking and trade initiatives within the local business community and between Chinese and non-Chinese communities.

The project targeted disadvantaged communities in Central and Greater Manchester who are unable or unwilling for a variety of reasons to access mainstream facilities, namely:

- economically inactive Chinese Women aged 16+;

- unemployed Chinese Men and Women aged 16+;

- future social and business entrepreneurs from other ethnic and disadvantaged groups whose training and support needs are not met by mainstream services;

- Chinese small business owners;

- small business owners from other ethnic and disadvantaged groups who are unable or unwilling to access mainstream services.

Managing/delivery organisation

The Wai Yin Chinese Women's Society, a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, was established in 1988 in Manchester's China Town to provide support to Chinese women who had suffered domestic violence and the breakdown of family life. With the help of two successful lottery applications spanning 1996-2001, the charity has grown and broadened the scope of its activities to address a range of needs in the Chinese community as a whole. Projects include: adult education (e.g. ICT and ESOL classes); an

employment service; mental health support; and various other activities aimed children/young people, women and the elderly.

The society has 499 members and over 250 further non-member users. It has over 430 people registered on adult education, operates a bilingual UK Online Centre and over 500 people have used the Employment service since its inception.

Funding includes European and Central Government Grants, Commissions from local statutory services (including social services, youth services and mental health services) and smaller grants from local services such as Connexions, with a turnover of over £800,000 per year for the last 5 years running.

Project cost
The Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project was originally costed at £58,090 in total, with an EPF contribution of £42,590 and a projected business community contribution of £15,500. Actual EPF expenditure was £33,314 due to the EPF pilot finishing early following Wai Yin's success in becoming an approved provider for the Greater Manchester business support agency, Chamberlink.

Without the EPF grant Wai Yin would have attempted to raise local support, although the project manager felt that they would most likely have failed to achieve the critical mass which EPF provided, both in terms of funding and raising Wai Yin's credibility with other stakeholders. In other words, the project would have either gone ahead on reduced scale or possibly not at all. No matched funding was received and, according to the project manager, the project struggled with limited funding during the early stages in particular.

Origins of project idea
The background to the project is the higher than average unemployment and economic inactivity rates of Chinese people in the North West, their tendency to be concentrated in low paid jobs, and also that Chinese owned businesses are of predominantly low value to Manchester's economy. The particular idea and stimulus for the project came from Wai Yin's pre-existing project aimed at supporting employment in the Chinese community. An increasing number of enquiries were being received for business support and enterprise training from the group attending this service. The employment project was not able to provide such support and there was a growing feeling that the organisation should be in a position to respond to such enquiries, in particular to support Chinese people who wished to branch out of family businesses and undertake more diverse business ventures (i.e. outside the restaurant and takeaway trade). At the same time, there was a perceived need to improve the quality and environment of the existing Chinese business base.

The project proposal referred to further evidence on the nature and needs of the target group, characterising the socio-economic situation of the Chinese population in the North West in terms of:

- social isolation from wider Chinese society due to dispersion;

- social isolation from local, non-Chinese society due to language barriers, racial intolerance and cultural barriers;

- economic disadvantage within the job market due to language / cultural barriers and prejudice;

- economic disadvantage within the business world due to narrowly defined opportunities dictated by language, cultural and prejudicial barriers;

- failure to access mainstream services including training, job-centres, business support services;

- failure to access mainstream jobs outside of the family business and wider Chinese business community.

The EPF proposal also refers to evidence of the failure of existing enterprise agency services: a telephone survey conducted in 2003 which found that take-up by Chinese users was negligible (i.e. between 0 and 10 enquiries over the previous 6 years). The Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project was therefore aimed at overcoming this 'market failure' by providing a more 'culturally appropriate' service.

No other partners or stakeholders as such were involved in the development of the project idea and proposal, although Wai Yin consulted informally with a range of local support providers who were also concerned at the lack of take-up of business support services by the Chinese community.

Project delivery

The project aimed to deliver the following services and outcomes:

- Reach 3000 Chinese people with bilingual (English/Chinese) materials promoting enterprise guidance, training and support opportunities.
- Host 3 Enterprise Awareness Events, including successful Chinese business role models, reaching 300 Chinese people.
- Translate and culturally adapt existing enterprise training and support modules and deliver to 50 Chinese people.
- Develop bilingual information and guidance services to promote support facilities available to business start-ups (reach 400 people).
- Establish and support the development of four new social enterprises that provide 'intermediate jobs' for those wishing to develop enterprise skills in a supported environment.
- Identify 10 existing successful small business volunteers / mentors from within the Chinese community to support new entrepreneurs with ongoing guidance / mentoring.
- Achieve 5 new business start-ups as result of interventions above.

The project was managed and delivered from within Wai Yin, with the project manager (project manager) being responsible for co-ordinating project activities, the development of partnerships and working relationships with mainstream and other agencies, recruitment of management and support staff, and budgeting, monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes.

With respect to the marketing of the services to target groups, this was mainly by word of mouth and contacts between family and friends in particular, since, in the words of the project manager: 'trust and personal contact is the most effective means of engaging the target group.' Email was also used as a communication tool to give notification of events and to target women. Both word of mouth and email promotion were facilitated by Wai Yin already having over 1,000 members using its services. Some information was provided in the form of leaflets distributed to China Town restaurants, but with a very limited / mixed response.

During the first 3-4 months the project manager was directly involved in service delivery but experienced some difficulty in this respect. She felt that, as an English woman, she had not been able to gain the trust of, and engage with, Chinese businesses, even without the language barrier. She was later able to recruit three business advisors, two of whom were Chinese and one of whom was Polish but with experience of delivering business

support to Chinese people in Latvia. Although the Chinese workers had no difficulty in engaging with businesses, the Polish worker was unable to make progress and was therefore redirected into workshop development. The two Chinese speakers were also involved in developing bilingual course materials. A lot of advice/mentoring was also delivered by telephone.

The project manager saw her main contribution particularly in terms of promoting a policy agenda for the Chinese community and ethnic minority businesses with mainstream agencies in Greater Manchester, and developing relationships with key partners and funders. ChamberLink, the main SBS deliverer and Business Link Operator for Manchester, were involved in overseeing the project from the beginning. Wai Yin also sought the active involvement of the Prince's Trust, the Enterprise Fund, Third Sector Enterprises and local Enterprise Agencies throughout the delivery of the project with the intention of establishing partnership arrangements with each organisation during the project lifetime for future collaboration.

> 'My strength in the project ended up being about looking at sustainability in key partnerships, relationships and funders. Because, born out my early frustration that I was not going to deliver myself a direct service as an English woman to this community – that was born out within (3-4 months) (…) we needed to get more resource to get the right staff in to make sure we had a more robust service. I worked very, very hard pushing this project, and the fact that we had funding behind it from the DTI – there was already a shape to the project.' (Project Manager)

These efforts contributed to the establishment of an EMB Advisory Group within Chamberlink, the ringfencing/targeting of resources for EMBs/ EM community development across five Manchester boroughs, and the establishment of the post of Head of Ethnic Business Policy within Chamberlink.

> 'That literature and target plan of what we were doing really gave some meat to the bones of me going forward to ChamberLink (…) it was a real stepping stone for us (…) we had the kudos to make that leap. So that was, in the end for me, the main impact of my role in the project – making sure that we pushed this agenda in the mainstream agencies.' (Project Manager)

Chamberlink subsequently set up a tendering procedure for organisations to deliver services to EMBs in Manchester and Wai Yin successfully bid to deliver services to the Chinese community in January 2005. With the agreement of the Small Business Service it was decided to finish the EPF project in order to avoid conflict with the new source of funding. Unfortunately, the contract with Chamberlink was terminated after just three months due to difficulties with the funding source.

Project outcomes and achievements

Assessment of the outcomes and achievements is somewhat complicated by the short-lived and chequered history of the project and that it has only been possible to interview one beneficiary of the services provided. It was the view of the project manager, however, that the main achievement was in Wai Yin becoming a referred supplier for the Greater Manchester business support agency, ChamberLink (albeit only for 3 months), and that Wai Yin is now firmly established as a member of Chamberlink's EM business Advisory Group.

The other main project outcomes, as identified in Wai Yin's end of project report, are below summarised against predicted outcomes:

> *Reach 3000 Chinese people with bilingual (English/Chinese) materials promoting enterprise guidance, training and support opportunities* - report refers to the project

having been promoted with a number of key agencies; and establishing a database of 400 Chinese businesses (300 take-aways); also referring to wider marketing activity yet to happen.

Host 3 Enterprise Awareness Events, including successful Chinese business role models, reaching 300 Chinese people - 6 events were held, involving meeting up to 100 Chinese people (details provided).

Translate and culturally adapt existing enterprise training and support modules and deliver to 50 Chinese people - As a result of needs identified during the project several basic food hygiene and first aid courses were delivered to the local catering sector (30 attendees); several employee advisory sessions delivered in partnership with legal services commission (12 attendees); workshop on cash-flow for pre-starts and new-starts (3 attendees).

Develop bilingual information and guidance services to promote support facilities available to business start-ups (reach 400 people) - Information on business services provided to 105 Chinese businesses, including through interactive business dinners.

Establish and support the development of four new social enterprises that provide 'intermediate jobs' for those wishing to develop enterprise skills in a supported environment - Have assisted 3 developing enterprises: a Chinese nursery, a women's trade, training and employment organisation, a lending circle (in partnership with the Enterprise Fund), and are currently working on a feasibility study relating to catering in hospitals.

Identify 10 existing successful small business volunteers / mentors from within the Chinese community to support new entrepreneurs with ongoing guidance / mentoring - Forwarded 15 people as volunteer mentors to ChamberLink.

Achieve 5 new business start-ups as result of all interventions listed above - not achieved due to early termination of EPF funding, although two new starts in particular came out of short period of ChamberLink funding: a Chinese woman website developer assisted to access start-up funding, and a Chinese woman looking to develop a cultural imports business for musical instruments. Have also developed a new scheme resulting from a partnership with the Enterprise Promotion Fund and the Royal Bank of Scotland to provide start-up training and access to soft loans to Chinese women.

The one person supported by the project who was interviewed was a young Chinese woman who was in the process of setting up a web-based information service for the Chinese community and who had been supported in various ways by Wai Yin, including with respect to start-up funding (an Unlimited grant):

> 'Wai Yin helped with applying for the funding, they went through the form with me. I was put on different courses (…) They were very helpful, its definitely good to have someone to speak to, to help balance ideas and to network, because people at Wai Yin have contacts – they put me in touch with different people. At the moment the web site is up and it relates to the Chinese community quite a lot so it would work quite well with Wai Yin as well.' (P1)

The views of all those interviewed (including the project manager and a Chinese business advisor) indicate that the overall experience of the project is best described as 'mixed'. According to the project manager, the project was well targeted, met a real need, the delivery was adjusted to deal with some early problems. At the same time, however,

there is obviously great disappointment and frustration that the contract to deliver services for ChamberLink was so short-lived:

> 'It was mixed, in terms of success. The friendliness of the people, people responding to the name of Wai Yin has been very positive because Wai Yin already has a large number of existing programmes which, by and large, the Chinese community already know. And the name Wai Yin has given them the confidence to respond to this organisation. The other view is that the programme leaves behind frustration for those that want to start up a business because there was no continuity to it: it was like a sudden cut off point and all the inspiration that was given to them couldn't continue anymore because of lack of funding.' (Chinese business advisor, S1)

The project manager was of the view that the Chinese business community has been particularly neglected by policy makers but has considerable potential ('they are an invisible minority – this is a national issue'). Prior to the EPF project 9 Chinese businesses would typically be helped in any one year; whereas the EPF project assisted 115 and, according to the project manager, could easily have achieved a similar level of contacts per quarter. In terms of the contribution of the project to reducing social exclusion and inequality in the locality / target group, the project manager was of the view that to have a significant effect on employment rates would take a lot longer but that the EPF project had been a significant first step.

The Head of External Contracts with Chamberlink was of the view that Wai Yin were accepted and well integrated with the Chinese Community in Manchester and that, although he had not seen the EPF project final report, on the basis of past experience, Wai Yin would have managed to achieve the EPF project targets with no difficulty.

Lessons, subsequent developments and potential

Lessons
Wai Yin see the main impact of the Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project in terms of having raised the profile of the Chinese business community with the mainstream business support system in Greater Manchester and drawing attention to the needs of this group and their further potential. Securing the EPF funding was particularly important in terms of giving the project credibility; hence the research and target plan prepared in support of the bid was also crucial in supporting the case presented to Chamberlink. What is still lacking, however, is a service targeted at new starts and growth businesses, seen by Wai Yin as crucial for addressing the issue of 'overcrowding' in the Chinese business base (i.e. given that 90-95 per cent are in the catering sector) and the need to support diversification.

A number of lessons relate to the experiences of delivering the project and some of the difficulties experienced in gaining the support of other organisations.

An important lesson with respect to delivery relates to the need for appropriately qualified business advisors and contact staff who are also representative of the target community. The project final report also notes the need for such advisors 'to have distance from the community politics'.

Some initial difficulties were also experienced around gaining acceptance amongst established Chinese associations / networks, although these were overcome in time and, as a result of such experiences the project manager felt that she had achieved a much better understanding of the Chinese community and had become better at negotiation and presentation to other agencies and engaging people in general.

The key problem from Wai Yin's perspective, however, has been the lack of continuity of funding which has undermined the organisation's ability to build on the experience of the EPF project and their short-lived status as a referred supplier of enterprise support services in Greater Manchester.

> 'That's one of the things we've suffered from is that we've not had any consistency of support from mainstream funding. There are a lot of changes about, a lot of things under review in the mainstream (business support) services at the moment, from what I can gather – from having a dialogue with Chamberlink. From 1 April they made 25 per cent redundancies due to a large funding cutback. All the work that they were doing with peripheral providers was affected, with our funding ceasing abruptly, so that has caused us quite a lot of difficulty and we haven't had the continuity of service that we would have wanted (…) My own research found 11 (Chinese) businesses ever reached by Chamberlink and we saw 115 in 7 weeks. So the problem is that the mainstream service isn't reaching certain communities but they are holding all the funding.' (Project Manager)

Subsequent developments and further potential
Wai Yin currently have no dedicated resource for business/entrepreneurship support and any such work only now takes place on an ad hoc basis, unfunded basis, in response to enquiries and pre-established contacts (e.g. see individual case study). There are, however, two projects involving Wai Yin with further contact and work with the Chinese Business community:

- Some pilot funding to support a lending circle has been gained, although project has experienced problems around recruiting a suitable individual to deliver it; the situation at time of interview was that an arrangement to deliver the service with another organisation based in Liverpool (Train 2000), already delivering a similar programme, was about to be finalised.

- As a Learning and Skills Council approved provider of a wide range of educational courses. In partnership with two other ethnic business support providers, Wai Yin have been funded by the LSC to deliver training support to the catering sector.

A further area of potential need issue raised by interviewees relates to the recent rapid growth in immigrants from mainland China[12], particularly the unfamiliarity of this group with the British regulatory context and the greater tendency for businesses in this group to operate on a more informal basis and to be less receptive to external influences.

In conclusion, the project manager and business advisor interviewed felt that the project had considerable potential and could be extended to every region; only Liverpool has some similar provision for its Chinese community. This, however, would clearly need much more substantial and sustained resourcing. In relation to this, the Head of External Contracts at Chamberlink emphasised the difficulty of mainstream providers funding and managing multiple small projects, even when, as is often the case, such projects have been shown to be well managed and successful in achieving their aims and objectives. At the same time, Wai Yin have been unfortunate in that their project occurred at a time when business support has been in a process of contraction and restructuring.

> 'A lot of groups get funding to run pilot projects, and if they are successful the mainstream will pick it up, but (…) even if projects are done well, with all the boxes ticked (…) the resources are not there for the mainstream to split its provision. (…) This project occurred at a time when business support is unclear and in a process of transition in the North West'. (S2)

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[12] 90% of the UKs Chinese population is Hong Chinese / Cantonese speaking.

Conclusions

The achievements of the Sustainable Communities Enterprise Project are based on the case presented by Wai Yin of a need for a 'culturally appropriate' enterprise support service targeted at the Chinese community in Greater Manchester and which could address the 'market failure' of existing mainstream services. A number of difficulties were experienced during the early stages of the project, although these were largely overcome through recruiting staff more suited to delivering services to Chinese businesses. Mainstream recognition of the need for and potential of such a service appeared to be confirmed when Wai Yin were successful in their bid to deliver enterprise support services for the Business Link Operator for Manchester. Unfortunately, subsequent funding cutbacks have meant that the work started by Wai Yin has ended abruptly, with the organisation now only being able to deliver further support on an ad hoc and unfunded basis. The case study particularly illustrates the policy tension that can emerge between 'peripheral providers' targeting support at niche groups and the interests of mainstream business support providers to streamline services, particularly during a recent period of transition.

Case study sources

Documents: EPF Project Final Report

Interviews: Project Manager (telephone and face to face follow-up)
    Business advisor (S1) (face to face)
    Head of External Contracts, ChamberLink (S2) (telephone)
    Participant (P1)

2. Women Like Us

Background

Project aims and objectives:
The aim of the pilot was:

- To give women with children information, support and confidence to prepare them for returning to work.

- To identify and provide flexible employment opportunities for women in the voluntary sector.

- To provide women with the skills and inspiration to develop their own enterprises.

This was to be achieved by the following objectives:

- Developing a range of effective, relevant and accessible marketing techniques to raise awareness about the service provided by Women Like Us to both women and employers.

- Providing an informal support network for women, through both online services and social events, which offered an opportunity to share and compare experiences, market the service and attract new members, tap into a range of skills, build partnerships and get professional peer support.

- Working with voluntary sector employers to develop and promote work 'tasters' and flexible employment to women. (WLU, 2005, p. 10-11)

Managing / delivery organisation
Women Like Us Ltd was established in 2003 as a not-for-profit social enterprise based in north London. At the time of the case study the organisation had nine staff, mainly drawn from the target group, although at the time of the EPF project there were just two people involved: the project manager and her business partner. No other organisations were involved in the delivery of the pilot project, although the co-operation of a local infant school as a focus/conduit for the pilot was crucial.

Project cost
Total project cost was £74,085, with an EPF contribution of £28,000 and a total (in kind) business community contribution of £46,100. Without the support of EPF, WLU would have tried other potential sources of charitable/public sector funding but would not have gone ahead without this.

Origin of the idea
The idea for the project came from the experience of the project manager and her business partner, both of whom had young children and both worked freelance in the voluntary and public sector for a number of years and, through this, had developed a particular interest in social enterprises and their establishment. The project manager was the chief executive of a mental health charity when she met the person who was to become her business partner. At this time, her own children were quite young and she therefore decided to go freelance in order not to have to work full time. Her freelance work brought her into contact with many different organisations - businesses, charities and social enterprises - many of which were experiencing recruitment and retention problems and were looking for somebody who could work for them part-time (i.e. for two days a week or so). Further insight into the origin of the idea is provided by the project manager's own account:

'At the same time, because I was freelancing I was at my children's school a lot more and all I seemed to be meeting were women who had amazing skills they had built up before having children, who had stopped working for five or six years. Their children were at school and they were standing in the play ground thinking 'what could we do?' and in fact had lost a lot of confidence, not knowing how exactly to get back into the labour market. Informally, over a period of about a term or so, I told probably about six or seven women about jobs and they went on to get these jobs. I encouraged them to apply, helped them with the application process (…) and we then really sat down and thought: there is this massive untouched talent pool out there of women who are a complete loss to the economic cycle, where all this money has been spent on training, educating them and because they have taken up some time out, their issue is the same as anyone with long term unemployment - they have lost confidence, they have lost contact, they do not have anyone to mentor them, they can't jump back on.'

The project manager also pointed out that, although many other projects were focused on getting people back to work, none had been targeted on women who were not on benefit, and that such women were less of a policy priority due to their not being registered as unemployed. WLU's self-produced evaluation provides further insight on the problem:

'Employers were not getting their needs across to women, nor were they able to reach out to women and promote the flexible policies and opportunities they had to offer in the communities where women networked. Likewise, women were not using existing return-to-work schemes, seeing them as inaccessible, inappropriate and not able to address their needs.'

'Most of the women we spoke to said that they would not use alternative employment services, such as Job Centre Plus or high street recruitment agencies, as they found them inaccessible and inappropriate.' (WLU, 2005, p. 3 and p. 16).

With regard to the latter point, for instance, two of the participants interviewed recounted previous negative experiences they had had with JobCentres and recruitment agencies which had proven unsympathetic and unable to respond to their needs:

'The Job Centre was useless: they have no money, they have no training on how to provide support, and they are a bit rude over there. It's not a place that you feel gives you any confidence, on the contrary, they make you feel worse.'

'If you go to a job agency, they are not really there to help you, they don't build you up, they want somebody who is "already there"'.

Another interviewee also referred to her negative experience of government sponsored courses which are compulsory for job seekers to attend as a condition of being able to claim benefit. Her experience was that the element of compulsion contributed to attendees not fully participating and taking the courses seriously, therefore undermining potential impact.

Project delivery
The project provided mentoring, work tasters and freelance contracts within the voluntary sector, providing a middle ground to help women back into the labour market, with the aim of giving them the confidence to use their skills, supporting them to manage their time and readjust to working life. The organisation's network introduced participants to other women with whom they could work and develop ideas, and referred them on to organisations offering specialist enterprise support services.

The project manager and senior business partner were primarily responsible for delivery, with the project manager focusing more on the development of the service and the senior partner more on the promotion of the service. The project manager initially approached the head teacher of her children's school, who proved very supportive and agreed to the

school being used as a focus/conduit for the project and to liaise between WLU and the parents. The social enterprise / not-for-profit status of WLU was also identified as crucial in terms of gaining such access and co-operation from schools. A considerable amount of research was conducted by WLU, including a number of meetings held with parents on the school premises. A letter was sent out to all parents offering help in getting back to work and giving examples of the sort of jobs that were available. It is also worth noting that about 35 per cent of the women who have subsequently approached WLU have been by word of mouth; in this regard the project manager emphasised the focus on the school gate as being crucial. The school also helped with the promotional video, which was filmed in the school playground and involved parents who had benefited from the scheme.

The locational context for the project appears to have been an important factor contributing to the early success. First, and in terms of the characteristics of the target group, many of the parents were highly educated and skilled, often with professional backgrounds[13] (of the four participants interviewed, two were educated to degree level), as was emphasised by the school head teacher:

> 'My parents are skilled and articulate so they were able to respond to (the project manager) and they did have skills to offer – e.g. they'd previously worked as legal secretaries and so on. They were also keen to market themselves. How easy this would have been in a different environment – I'm not so sure but they would have had to have a different strategy.'

Second, it is clearly of importance for this target group that flexible work opportunities are available locally (i.e. within reasonable daily travelling distance); in this regard the London economy clearly provides opportunities for the target group which may be harder to come by in other parts of the country.

Project outcomes and achievements

The project has clearly enjoyed considerable success, as reflected in the documented outcomes achieved (and subsequent developments, described below) and the views and reflections of all those interviewed for the case study. The project manager felt that WLU had easily exceeded the original aims and expectations:

> 'The response was unbelievable, it was just one school and we got inundated by responses which led to about 30 registrations. (…) basically we got 30 women registered with us and I think over the next term 10 of them got jobs which in terms of ratio was very good (…) I do not think we had any particular difficulties on the ground, I just think we have been absolutely overwhelmed by the kind of positive energy that has come from the project.'

All of the five women interviewed who had been assisted into flexible employment (and self employment support in one case) affirmed their positive experiences, and with no particular difficulties or recommendations for improvement emerging. Interviewees particularly emphasised the positive impact of the support on their confidence:

> '….Women Like Us were very professional – they don't just throw people at jobs they might not be suited to.'

> 'They helped me ask lots of questions and find what I wanted to do (…) and also prompted me to keep doing it as there were deadlines set at certain points (…) It influenced my confidence a lot, as ladies there would pick up on what you were doing and say 'don't you think you're good at that?' … they would highlight certain areas you hadn't even thought about. As you end up

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[13] Note also that women in London are less likely to work than in the rest of the UK: the employment rate for women in London is more than 10 per cent lower than the national average (*Women in London's Economy*, Greater London Authority, 2005 - cited in WLU, 2005, p. 7).

at a workshop and you think there are so many people in the same situation you don't feel you're bit odd or isolated.'

'I think it was good for me, it was at a time in my life when I had nowhere to turn, and no advice and I come from a culture in France where when you are unemployed there is much stronger support (…) I used it as much as I could – asking questions and they were always polite and helpful. I think WLU gave me the clarity of how it is to create your own business (at a time when) I was a bit worried, negative, that the only way I could build a business was with money, but then I realised that if I invested in a training course I could develop a skill which I could sell, maybe something with my hands. They have helped me to be a bit more open about what being self-employed requires.

The most apparent achievements of the pilot project have mainly related to assisting women into flexible employment, although WLU have also provided one-to-one business coaching to seven women to date and have also recently run a seminar on business start-up. ('From my memory, most of the women just wanted to get back to work.' (Project Manager).

The head teacher also described the project as a 'roaring success', emphasising the extent to which this was down to the extent to which the project had been very well formulated and implemented and the personal qualities of those involved in delivery:

'(they) are experienced business women and they knew how to manage it. It was well implemented. (….) They had credibility, initially here - and that gave them the foothold. But it's been successful because of their enthusiasm, determination and commitment (…).'

The project also fits well with the government's developing policy agenda for schools to offer extended facilities and increase their role as a focus for local communities (e.g. providing or facilitating access to childcare, breakfast clubs, social services, health services, security information etc). This is intended to make it easier for parents to go back to workplace with these accessible childcare facilities in the actual school.

'I think this is a happy accident – that the initiatives are running in parallel. I don't think the government has deliberately explored the opportunities of bringing these things together, which is a shame. On the one hand, there is the extended school initiative which involves the promotion of schools as a local community focus; on the other hand, there are opportunities for people to develop enterprises, and to me the two go hand-in-hand. Schools offer high class provision for children and entrepreneurs are going to see they have more backup if they want to do anything. Somebody should point out that if these two roads converged, there could be considerable benefit. Government are putting money into both of these initiatives but there could be more return on them if they overlapped.' (Head Teacher)

WLUs own Evaluation Report refers to feedback from the women they have assisted, employers, strategic organisations, training providers and job brokerage agencies - all of which confirms the extremely positive nature of the project, as reflected in the following:

- 'Women who had previously only worked in the commercial sector found that Women Like Us opened up a range of new opportunities to them with their contacts in the public and voluntary sector. They found these sectors could offer a greater degree of flexibility, as well as a supportive environment where they could re-build their confidence, re-adjust to working life and also contribute to their local community.'

- Smaller voluntary and community organisations found Women Like Us's service to be very effective in offering them help with both identifying and sourcing women for flexible and sessional opportunities within their organisation, particularly when they didn't have the capacity to support full time or permanent staff (WLU, 2004, p. 4).

Lessons and future potential

A key factor underlying the success of the project has been the very good understanding of the needs and potential of the target group and how this was effectively linked to the needs of potential employers, particularly in the public and voluntary sectors. The understanding of the target group was directly rooted in the experience of the project manager and her business partner (both professionally and as a working mothers themselves), and also the further research conducted prior to implementation. Also crucial has been the co-operation of the school involved, a further factor here being the evolving policy agenda whereby schools are increasingly encouraged to expand their roles as a focus for local communities.

WLU have been able to build on the success of the pilot project by gaining further funding from the London Boroughs of Camden and Islington to extend their service to these boroughs, and also £40,000 from the Esme Fairburn Foundation for core staff costs over 18 months. Further funding from ALG/ESF was secured to deliver an expanded service over 12 months (ended March 2006), and a grant from the London Development Agency was recently secured to enable them to deliver the service for another two years. At time of the project manager interview, WLU were running projects in 15 schools, using a very similar approach to that adopted for the pilot. Each project involves a parent who is well known to the school who is paid at least £200 per term to act as an interface for WLU and potential recruits. About 500 women had been registered and at least 10-15 women from any one school.

> 'In school after school, we have now got mail shots reaching about 6000 women. We've got request from other areas of the country asking us to set up in their area. The potential is enormous. (…) We are now in the boroughs of Camden, Islington, Barnet and Haringey. That is were we have got our pilot schools. But if someone wants to register from Brent we take them.' (Project Manager).

With regard to broader lessons particularly identified by the project manager, these relate to the need to build on existing networks, which she also related to her understanding of the limited success of many projects aimed at getting people into work which had received support:

> '…to capitalise on existing networks, instead of reinventing the wheel which will probably not work, and to focus on what works because I think there is an enormous amount of projects out there that don't work, and they are not evaluated properly, they are not getting people into work and yet they are getting fortunes of money, unbelievable amounts of money. My own personal thought about it is that there are a lot of private companies in employment/job creation market who are making a lot of money with not so good results and I think that needs to be looked at very carefully.' (Project Manager)

Finally, the project manager also emphasised the importance of locality, for women in particular and in relation to enterprise:

> 'Some of the stuff we are doing is trying to create - and this is really in the plans for next year - a local market. Because the local issue, which is really important to women, is the idea of working locally, living locally, and shopping locally. And one of the things we are trying to do is to try and create a network of women who have set up their own businesses and use our website to promote their businesses to other women in the network, and they might be local garden designers.'

Conclusions

WLU have been very successful in linking the needs of skilled women parents for flexible work and the needs of employers in London (mainly in the public and voluntary sector) who were offering such work and were experiencing difficulties in recruitment.

The key challenge would seem to be the extent to which this success can be replicated in more deprived areas, where the skills base of the target group is likely to be less strong and where flexible employment and opportunities for enterprise are less in evidence than in more affluent locations.

Case study sources

Interviews with:
Project manager
Head Teacher of local school where project was piloted
Five Participants - women assisted into flexible employment, including one who was also assisted with respect to a self-employment business idea

Documents
Evaluation Report on Pilot Service, Women Like Us, April 2005

3. The Tonbridge Community Values Enterprise Play

Claque Theatre

Background

Project aims and objectives:
Through the process of producing a major arts project, to provide a dynamic training programme in partnership with local business / education support providers using the teaching skills of the most experienced community theatre company in the country. Activities and training techniques included:

- management and production of a community play project

- a board game designed by Claque Theatre to take volunteers through the process involved in making a major (community play) project come to fruition

- workshops in school to introduce the challenging role of risk taking in the learning process

- building interpersonal and team playing skills

- how to be creative and embrace new ideas

Managing / delivery organisation and partner organisations
Claque Theatre is a Registered Charity and Limited Company, established in 1979 as a vehicle for exploring and developing a new genre of collaborative theatre. During the past twenty-five years Claque have established themselves as leaders in the field of community plays, having produced 45 such plays across Britain and in America, Canada and Europe.

A number of partner organisations were involved in the EPF project, including: Tonbridge Community Play – a volunteer group, which operated under the wing of Claque Theatre; Business Link Kent; the West Kent Education Business Partnership (which provided links to nine local schools); the Independent State Schools Partnership (which helped two schools set up websites); University of Kent (which held a Business Day); Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council; Arts in Business; the local Chamber of Commerce (which provided links with local businesses); and Tonbridge & Malling Social Services Disabilities Team.

Project cost and additionality
Overall project cost was £116,350, with £11,000 from business and community contributions and £29,850 from the EPF. The project would have gone ahead without EPF, but would have been on a smaller scale and would not have included the schools outreach activity and also the shadow apprenticeship training in theatre skills.

Origin and rationale of the project idea
The community play concept is well established, having originated from the work of Ann Jellicoe and the Colway Theatre in the late 1970s, and subsequently practised and developed by Claque Theatre under the direction of Jon Oram since 1985 (2). Some of the thinking behind how an arts-based project can contribute to stimulating enterprising behaviour is revealed in Claque Theatre's directive:

> 'To enable the widest possible range of people in a community to produce and participate in an original work of artistic excellence, and contemporary relevance; the process of which releases and develops the thinking, talents and strengths of individuals and the community, creating conditions in which people become more innovative and enterprising and more likely to develop further collective and creative activity.'

The EPF pilot as a whole was seen as offering the opportunity to further explore the relevance of the concept of the community play to the development of entrepreneurial potential and skills in a specific locality and in partnership with local businesses and other key organisations. The idea for the board game had previously been developed by Claque as way of introducing teams to the experience of managing a large project (i.e. a community play) and the creative and problem solving processes involved.

The focus on a specific locality, the people who live there and the potential for the development of 'community values' was particularly important; in this respect Tonbridge, although not officially designated as a deprived area, was described by interviewees as being a somewhat disparate and fragmented community, with the north of the town being more affluent and the south being more 'industrial' and less affluent. Claque's application to the EPF particularly emphasised outreach work to 'groups, populations and individuals who are more marginalised because they have fewer opportunities or impetus to participate in community life. The age range and cultural mix is therefore very broad.'

At the same time, the opportunity provided by EPF appears to have encouraged Claque Theatre to articulate more explicitly what they had already been doing for a number of years in terms of 'enterprise', as is suggested by the following comment from the project manager '…we would not have thought about focusing our activities on enterprise and, until we looked into it, had not realised just how much of what we do is (already) related to enterprising activity.'

Project delivery
Overall responsibility for the management and delivery of the project resided with the director of Claque Theatre, supported by seven other full time professionals also from Claque and a further six part time professionals. In practice, there was a high level of devolution and sharing of responsibilities; hence the community play was managed by Claque but operated in partnership with Tonbridge Community Playgroup - a steering committee formed of nine volunteers from the local community. The steering committee included individuals with considerable skills and experience themselves, including a business support / regeneration consultant, the head of drama at Tonbridge School, and at least two people with extensive managerial/ business experience. The theatre professionals were involved in training local volunteer apprentices in various theatre related jobs and skills (e.g. theatre management, script writing, stage management etc.) and two visual local artists were hired to work with schools over a three week period.

The various activities involved in the 18 month project included:

- the staging of 12 performances of the community play;
- eight schools workshops at which the board game was played involving 800 children;
- public training workshops and talks;
- shadow apprenticeship training for theatre volunteers, under the wing of theatre professionals;
- an artefact project and exhibition; two masked/puppet parades;
- TV and radio features and leaflet drops to promote the project.

Particular efforts were made to involve local businesses, including through the local Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club, and a workshop day held with the Business Education Partnership aimed at engaging businesses with local arts-related activities.

Project outcomes and achievements

The documentary evidence, including the EPF project final report produced by the project manager (2), and the interviews conducted for the case study indicate that the predicted outcomes have been largely achieved and, in many respects, surpassed, despite some difficulties experienced. The main specific outcomes are briefly summarised below:

The Tonbridge Community Play - this was the core of the project which linked to and encapsulated the aspirations of the various other activities. The play was based on research conducted by a small team on the history of Tonbridge and also the feelings of local people about the town. A professional playwright was commissioned to write the play (*Jealous River)* which was focused around issues relating to transport, health and the polarisation between rich and poor. The performance of the play ultimately involved a local cast of 130 and a further 100 volunteer helpers, costume/set makers, and musicians contributing to the final event, and with 1600 total participants in the whole project. The play finally had a run of 12 nights at a local school hall, with a total audience of 2,890. Some disappointment was expressed that the audience fell a little short of what was hoped for, this also being attributed in part to the limited budget available for advertising the play. (S3, P1])

The other main activities were held in schools under the Enterprise Education Programme:

Enterprise Awareness and Training Workshops - West Kent Business Partnership were already involved in helping local schools to develop Enterprise Promotion Days and had previously contacted Claque Theatre to assist with this. These involved the application of drama techniques in enterprise education and practical preparatory exercises for work placement (communication skills, work and interview techniques etc) and involved a total of 420 participants.

Community Play Board Development and Enterprise Workshops - involving a series of five full day and half day community play board games for schools in which children experienced a simulation of running such events. A total of 380 participants were engaged in problem solving, programme planning, budgeting, dealing with crises and unexpected events and other creative exercises.

Developing an Enterprise role-play programme for Primary Schools - this was supported by further funding from the Children's Fund and involved an enterprise role play for primary school children from 7 to 10 years old. Six schools and a total of 720 participants were involved in a process that included pre-discussions with teachers, preparatory workshops with individual classes, the role play itself and post-assessments with children and staff.

Artefact Project - two local visual artists were engaged with a brief to work in three primary schools and the wider community to develop an exhibition through a series of creative workshops. A total of 80 participants were involved, with 5,000 visitors to the exhibition.

All of the interviews conducted support that the project as a whole has been very successful, with most respondents feeling that it had far exceeded the original aims and expectations. With regard to the activities targeted at schools, the project co-ordinator with the Education Business Partnership (S5) felt that these had been successful in achieving the original aims and targets, referring to the positive feedback received from schools (including both students and from teachers).[14] It was clear to him that students had been particularly engaged by the board game and, in his words, had 'thoroughly enjoyed it - and enjoyment is an important prerequisite for learning'. The feedback also indicated to him that the rapport between the members of Claque Theatre and the groups of pupils had been very good.

Some difficulties were experienced in engaging with the local business community and in relation to sponsorship. Relations with the Education Business Partnership were initially difficult, although it appears that a change of leadership in this organisation has enabled a more positive relationship to develop. The project manager also expressed disappointment that the considerable efforts to involve local businesses had not been more fruitful; relatively few representatives from businesses attended a workshop on 'local arts and enterprise', for instance. It has only been more recently, since the project has proven successful and established a legacy, that the local business community has warmed to them. Some disappointment was also experienced in relation to sponsorship, with a local fundraiser withdrawing her commitment to the project close to the production period (2: p. 7).

Interviewees were particularly positive about their experience of the community play and its wider impact, and gave detailed accounts of their own roles and experiences and of their perceptions of the achievements of the play in terms of building 'community values', developing individual confidence and potential, and team building.

Building community values - Interviewees particularly emphasised the contribution of the play to the building of 'community values' in Tonbridge through the emphasis of the project on recovering a sense of local history, redefining what the town meant to those who lived there, and through spanning social divisions by developing understanding of people in different circumstances. This aspect of the project is illustrated by the following quotations:

> 'It was very much focused on the locality – a place- based project. Community values came first. (…..) Will anybody set up business as a result of it? – I'm not sure. Has it changed lives? – yes probably. The model has a value in communities to make them think about their position – a sense of belonging. (…) so it made people think about the town in a different way,

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[14] While also referring to the difficulty of measuring 'objectively' the impact of such events.

not only the performers but those who came to see the play (…) it changed my perspective, its somewhere that I live now, the same with my daughter - we feel part of the town.' (S1)

'(…) it was above expectations as a presentation because it was a unique type of theatre based on the history of Tonbridge. So it had a huge impact as an artistic device, but then you have to ask yourself – what impact did it have on society? And I think that's more difficult, except that the people who were in it continue to remain friends across some boundaries that existed and they are involved more in the community.' (S2)

'The play helped break down some stereotypes that different groups of people have of each other.' (S4)

'I had only just moved to Tonbridge and knew very few people here] so I thought I'll get involved in something. It was greater than anything I could have expected really. (…) It was beyond my expectations, my hopes of building a network of friends and links within time in the community has also exceeded my expectations and I know more people here now than I did living for 8 years in this town. (….) What struck me was the contrast between that experience and the rather isolated itemised lives we tend to live. (…) it was the sense of losing yourself in the creation of something bigger – the whole became greater that the sum of its parts (…) there was so much generosity of spirit and sense of community and sense of revelling in each others successes (...) We all want to work towards something that is not just about ourselves.' (P1)

'I've never experienced anything like it in terms of a shared experience that had virtually no friction, considering how long we worked together and how much had to be done and how inexperienced a lot of people were. It wasn't a proper theatre, we didn't have all the facilities there – it was amazing how well we all got on and the support within the cast particularly – if anything went wrong someone covered and nobody ever reproached anyone else and it was just phenomenal and then the audience response was absolutely….' (P2)

Particular efforts were made to make the play as socially inclusive as possible, particularly in terms of including more marginalised groups, although it appears that this aim was not fulfilled to the extent that had been hoped for, as the following quotations suggest:

' (The project manager's) attitude was that if you turn up and were interested you were in - you did not have to have any experience, and I would say that probably 85-90% of us did not! (the project) manager] was very keen to promote the inclusion of any ethnic group or disability group that wanted to be part of this and we actually tried to get some immigrants - from Eastern Europe - involved, and we really tried to reach out to get them involved but ultimately there was not much interest.' (S3)

'The advertising could have been better. (…) if these things are aimed to be inclusive community projects, I think the outreach workers could have done better. In terms of social class it was largely middle class – you'll see that's wrong when you meet (other participant interviewee), a real East End lad – he was terrific, but mostly it was the sort of people who get involved in community things anyway.' (P1)

The latter comment in particular reflects the well documented tendency of community development activities to appeal to people who already have an interest in the particular sort of activity involved and also, perhaps, have the resources (time, skills etc) to do so.

Building confidence in individuals - particularly in terms of helping them to think about themselves in different ways, to be more open to new ideas and possibilities, and to feel more confident and supported with respect to decisions involved when considering change (project manager, S1, S3, S2, S4, S5, P2, P3). One participant, for instance, had previously been involved in crime on a regular basis; his involvement in the play was

described in terms of a process of change that has recently resulted in him returning to full-time employment (P3).[15] As the Project manager commented:

> 'This is a way in through the arts (….) What I'm finding mostly when 150 people first arrive to be in it is that they are hugely insecure. I almost teach everybody as if they are phobic because there are all those fears, so its certainly a way in for people who are coming from (…) a low base of confidence and abilities, and who are quite transformed by it and then feel capable of kind of going on and doing something. What is hard is that there are some people who are unemployed and who are so far down the confidence ladder that it is very hard to get them involved in anything, but they do trickle into this for sure.' (Project Manager)

Further insight is provided by comments from steering group volunteers and other participants in the play:

> 'It is broad (i.e. the conception of entrepreneurship) but it empowers people and it makes them feel confident, it makes them better - it makes them more employable basically. It doesn't tick the boxes in that we can say this happened or that happened - that's the problem with it. I know the government is very keen on ticking its boxes and it has its targets and they are sort of measurable by number, but this is a tricky one.' (Project Manager)

> 'I would say that for a lot of people that took part in it, it was probably a life changing experience because about 85% of the people that were in the play had never acted before. So that did something immediately to their self esteem and confidence, and until I got to know some of the people and what they did, and where they came from and their backgrounds - I was amazed at some of the things that went on in peoples life that you are not aware of and things they have to cope with and I just think that these people came and found over a hundred new friends, and I think they have now gotten involved in other projects that they would not have probably gotten involved if they had not done the programme. (…) I met and saw people from different walks of life that would not have had the opportunity to do some thing like this. To see them physically growing in confidence every time you saw them and it was nice that children were involved as well. (S3)

> 'If you define enterprise in its widest sense rather than restricting it to enterprise business start-up, it has had an enterprising impact. (…) its about being innovative, taking risks, seeing opportunities and having the determination and strength to see it through to the end – so it was very enterprising for everybody involved in it – at any time anyone could have given up, but people stuck with the process and the content.' (…) people were enterprising in getting involved in the first place, as so many people in any community just stand back and are passive. We made a step forward in trying to redefine what the town meant through this play process – that in itself is enterprising – that's not the accepted definition of entrepreneurial.' (S1)

> 'I feel that it definitely contributed to enterprise in the locality in the broadest sense, in that a lot of people have found a different way of perceiving their lives, including their working lives, giving them greater confidence and openness to new ideas, which could include with respect to setting up a business etc. (S4)

> 'In terms of confidence – never thought I could, in front of 300 people, lead some singing – I can't sing!! But (the project manager) is so empowering and enabling and you watch everybody really grow in stature and you watch people who were quite timid – towards the end when (the project manager) asked for a volunteer for this – people were sticking their hands up and wanting to do more, wanting to contribute more, to this thing we created. I can't think of a single person who didn't want to do more, be involved more – it was really remarkable. (…) you need to be reawakened sometimes, you can get stuck in your job. One of the things about the community play was how energising it was. (P1)

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[15] Further detail of the influence of the project on this participant is included in an appendix to this case study.

Capacity / team building - engaging a team of volunteers in project planning and management, and building relationships with other local organisations:

> 'It's increased my experience of committee work and how you set up projects and make them work, together and conduct meetings and every time I act I acquire a new skill – it's a step forward in this particular case as I playing a blind character it certainly enhanced my understanding of what they means.' (P2)

> '(…) the steering committee in particular learnt so much about running – we're talking about an investment of £85,000, and people's time and effort: where do you rehearse in the community? how are you going to get people to do that? – they were running a business for 18 months, and it rubbed off as some of those people that were on it. I've had experience in business myself but some of them on the steering committee hadn't, and they are far better business people now than they were before. I've just had to try and work out the finances of this new play and spread that around and have a discussion about it and they know what we're talking about, and what the difficulties are of putting on any enterprise, but theatre in particular. The only income you get is box office and that's all up in the air until its all over - which was true of the community play of course – we didn't know how much we were going to get in so we had to go out and get people to come and see it and pay, and all that is quite meaningful especially to younger people who suddenly realise it s not that easy and what the difference between profit and income was. (S2)

> 'It was an amazing exhilarating experience – its very difficult to describe how hundreds of strangers you met in that school hall on a cold Sunday afternoon became a team (…) it was tremendous fun for me, fun just doesn't do it justice and yet we were all working towards this big production which turned out to be greater. I've certainly learnt from (the project manager) stuff about team building and about cooperative work.' (P1)

Lessons, subsequent developments and potential

Lessons
The Tonbridge Community Play project demonstrates how a number of mutually reinforcing factors have combined to have a powerfully catalysing effect on social creativity in a specific locality. The most immediate factors underlying the success of the project appear to be:

- the power of the community play concept itself (which, since the inception of the idea in 1978, has been practised over a number of years in a wide variety of contexts, including internationally);

- the skills, experience and commitment of those centrally involved, (both in Claque Theatre and the voluntary steering committee) including the nature of the leadership provided by the project manager and his colleagues in Claque Theatre.

The community play in particular involved a high level of engagement on the part of all those involved. Interviews conducted with stakeholders and participants support that an important factor underlying the success of the project has been the skill and experience of Claque linked to the visionary and enabling approach of the project manager:

> '….everybody involved felt that they had ownership: rather than it being directed by one person in a plutocratic way the script was evolved out of talking, research and sharing ideas.' (S4)

> 'I think you need a spur – a facilitator as (the project manager) was, as Claque was – the right people and this is where you are talking about professionals and if you are, by definition, you have to fund them, whether through the Lottery or the Small Business Service etc. (…) but you do need a facilitator – someone skilled in the commerce of putting on a major event plus

the artistic skills. (…) So, two things are needed: entrepreneurial expertise and artistic expertise. (The project manager] has them both).' (S2)

'I think it was obviously extremely well run and organised, in terms of (the project manager) knowing exactly what he was doing in the directing side of things because he is obviously extremely proficient and a very motivating person. He may not realise this, and I think that he was probably the one person that bought out the best in people, but they did not realise then how. And the play would not have happened if (other member of Claque) had not been on the scene, working with them, because she could do every thing from write letters for sponsorship to actually taking part in the play when somebody actually went sick on the night. She would literally just pick up the script and went with it. I think a lot of it was down to the way it was run.' (S3)

Relatedly, a number of interviewees attributed the success of the project to the way that people were initially engaged, through presenting them with an idea that was exciting and in a way that made them want to continue to be involved:

'I think the thing that struck me in terms of this kind of project, which is unique in terms of what you are looking at, is the strength, the power that is has as a vehicle (…) to find the enterprise in a community and stimulating it, so that you walk away and they have their own energy, which I think it's what we've done. (…) (A key lesson relates to) power as a vehicle for regeneration and how to stimulate it in areas of society that really need it.' (S2)

Subsequent developments and potential
The community play in particular has left a tremendous legacy for Tonbridge; rather than being a one-off the pilot project was a first step giving rise to other projects:

- As a direct result of the community play, a new community enterprise theatre group has been established in Tonbridge (Little Bridge) – founded by individuals who only came together as a result of the play. This involves 50 people and has recently put on its first major production with the help of a grant from the National Lottery and which was attended by 600 people.

- Plans are afoot to create a new performance centre (a straw bale theatre) as a venue for supporting local community play activities and training, workshops for schools, and other social performance and inclusive activities aimed at having a broad impact on all members of the local community. There are also plans to reinstate the local River Festival and a number of parades/carnivals are being proposed.

- A current project involving Claque Theatre and disabled people in a number of awareness raising events in local schools that aims to address a particular problem of people with disabilities being bullied on public transport.

- Importantly the project has gained a tremendous amount of publicity and momentum locally which has led to improved relationships, including with the local authority (initially sceptical, now very supportive), the Education Business Partnership[16] and within the business community (also only lately).

Most interviewees emphasised the further potential of the project idea in relation to stimulating and regenerating communities, some also referring to previous examples of what community play projects had achieved in other contexts:

'What people can do collectively is extraordinary - so this is not just a play, people do come out of this feeling very differently about the place they live in and themselves particularly, and they feel much more empowered. (…) there is an energy now for people to want to do

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[16] This organisation was about to close down, however, due to lack of funding.

something for their community and that feeling of empowerment that they want to give to other people.' (Project Manager)

'I work in regeneration and am interested in this community play model to see if it would be valuable for e.g. New Deal for Communities areas – in fact the community play process (has been used) in more deprived areas, areas of economic downturn, like in coalfields areas in South West Canada, in isolated communities. Tonbridge is different but (the project manager) had this feeling that Tonbridge was a 'nothing place' – quite a different dynamic in the town as it has little community feel. I think it work very well - New Deal for Communities programmes are too far focussed……going for five years but it might actually support them in exit strategies.' (S1)

'In Leicestershire, where I used to live, someone funded a community play (not by Claque) and I was on the board of the professional theatre at the time. But it was a sink estate, and they did a play about the sink estate which had some political influence and the council realised people were talking about things that they should hear – it became an issue and had some political implications (…) Theatre itself is a political animal and you can influence people.' (S2)

Important prerequisites, however, and as previously suggested, relate to the need for initial public support (S4) and for the sort of leadership and direction which needs to be provided by highly skilled and committed individuals.

Conclusions

The Enterprise Values project has been particularly ambitious in terms of the variety of its activities aimed at engaging as many people as possible within its target locality. Factors underlying the success of the project relate to the nature of the project idea itself (particularly the tried and tested concept of the community play), the enthusing and empowering leadership role played by the project manager and Claque Theatre which, in turn, effectively engaged the skills and energy of other individuals in the community. The project therefore demonstrates many of the key ingredients needed in order to stimulate community values and creativity/entrepreneurialism, both in terms of the skills and personal qualities needed and also the sort of contexts which are most likely to be supportive / responsive. With regard to the latter point, although the community play approach appears to have been applied with some success in communities that are more deprived than Tonbridge, it is suggested, however, that the availability of resources, skills and also the propensity of people to become involved could vary considerably according to the nature of localities.[17]

Case study sources

Documents
   (1) *Building for the future: Claques white paper 2005-2008,* Claque Theatre, 2005
   (2) *Claque Theatre Enterprise Promotion Project: Final Report,* Claque Theatre, June 2005

Interviews
   Project manager, Claque Theatre Artistic Director (telephone and face to face follow-up)
   Community play volunteer committee member (S1) (face to face)
   Community play volunteer committee member (S2) (face to face)
   Community play volunteer committee member (S3) (face to face)

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[17] A number of studies support that efforts to stimulate community activism and the social economy are most likely to succeed in areas that are more socially diverse and/or prosperous that are able to offer the institutional and other resources needed to support such efforts (e.g. see Amin, et al., 2002; Amin, 2005, p. 621).

Community play volunteer committee member (S4) (telephone)
Project co-ordinator, West Kent Business Partnership (S5) (telephone)
Participant (P1) (face to face)
Participant (P2) (face to face)
Participant (P3) (face to face)

Appendix – individual participant case study

Mark (not real name) was 30 years old and with a young family, had been 'thrown out' of school early with no qualifications. He had a history of occasional casual work (e.g. roofing/building work) and petty crime and was unemployed at the time he became involved in the community play. At the same time he was also attempting to change what he described as 'all kinds of bad behaviour'; the most recent example of this being an attempt to break into an ATM machine in which he was caught and arrested by the police. Mark met somebody at the local church who was involved in the community play and who invited him to join the workshops. The idea appealed to him since he had always been interested in acting and he saw this as an opportunity to get involved in something different at a time when he was looking to change his life. Mark started attending workshops, beginning with a small part that subsequently developed into a more substantial role:

> 'At first I didn't know what to expect, but then after a while it was good to see what you could achieve with all sorts of stuff, you know, like making things and confidence around people, understanding how people respond to certain things. So I grew in confidence in talking to different types of people from all walks of life (…) it opened my eyes to something I've always wanted to do, and now I'm doing that - so its had quite an impact (…) I was chucked out of school so I missed out for a few years. (…) The way I look at it is – you are leading your life in a certain way and you don't really get round to seeing lots of people. My experience is not necessarily the right way. But when you meet 200 people over the course of months and you see them a lot of times and as it draws nearer to the end you're spending a lot of time with them. And you look at them and realise what is normal. And I have to say that with me - I was a thief about six months before I was involved in this - that's what I'd become. It was crazy - I didn't like doing it but that's what I did. I stopped it before I became involved in this – but when I see how nice people are and how normal people are – it makes you realise (….?) and that this trying to get loads of money is crazy – it's irresponsible and its crazy. And being round so many normal people – I say normal meaning law abiding – made me realise that isn't the way to go and its as simple as that.'

Mark has subsequently got a job with a telecoms company installing domestic broadband facilities which, although not well paid, has fulfilled his immediate aspiration to return to 'normal' life and to support his family.

> 'So it has had a major impact on me. And also since taking that decision and seeing that – just by seeing the way people treated me (…) its made my life a whole lot happier. And I'm earning really bad money which makes me very normal (laughs) cos anyone who earns bad money is really normal! And I'm happier indoors and I've got a lovely family and that's all I'm expecting.'

4. Enterprise Action

Groundswell UK

Background

Project aims and objectives:
'To create opportunities for homeless and excluded people to develop enterprise initiatives and access relevant resources, supporting homeless people to harness their own potential and overcome poverty through the creation of their own business ventures. (…) The scheme promotes enterprise as a solution to social exclusion, creating a forum for homeless and ex homeless people to gain skills and insight into running and starting businesses.' (Enterprise Action Programme Evaluation, Groundswell, 2005).

Managing/delivery organisation
Groundswell UK is a national charity, founded in 1996, that supports a network of people and projects who are committed to inclusive approaches to helping homeless, poor and 'excluded' people in general.

Project cost
Core funding was provided by the National Lottery (78% of total costs) and the remainder by EPF (£29,146).

Origin of the idea
The project originated as a development of Groundswell's Grant Award Scheme and Social Business Support Programme. Recent years had seen a growing number of applications from people wishing to create their own enterprises; an evaluation of the Social Business Support Programme (2004) particularly identified 'the need to link homeless led enterprises in with existing support systems' (1). During a decade of assistance to homeless people, Groundswell had become increasingly aware of 'the resourcefulness of homeless people and their 'DIY ethos'' and that such people 'can be channelled into a more productive process than mere survival'. Particular experience of assisting homeless people to start-up social enterprises had previously been gained in London in collaboration with Bootstrap Enterprises in Hackney. The recognition of the importance of nurturing and harnessing the skills and abilities of such people within the mainstream of business support was seen as crucial. In reality, because of the nature of homeless/disadvantaged people, this requires a great deal of 'hand-holding' by intermediary agencies such as Groundswell and its partner agencies in the regions (project manager interview).

Project delivery
Eight Enterprising Action events were held during the winter of 2004/5: in London (20 attendees), Exeter (14 attendees), Manchester (about 15 attendees (S1), Brighton, Birmingham, Leeds and Middlesbrough (attendance figures not available?). These events entailed a series of workshop activities including testimonials by 'enterprise ambassadors', individual planning support and an introduction to local enterprise support agencies. The events were promoted through Groundswell's newsletter and existing network.

A key role was played by the 'enterprise ambassadors': people with experience of both homelessness and the creation of 'community enterprises' who were appointed to (a) act as 'inspirational role models' to homeless people with entrepreneurial potential and (b) to demonstrate to mainstream providers of business support that homeless people are 'capable of entrepreneurship' (1).

Groundswell worked in partnership with local homeless peoples' agencies (through 'Homeless Link', the national body with oversight for local homeless peoples' agencies) and the National Federation of Enterprise Agencies, with the aim of developing effective local working partnerships between appropriate agencies at the local scale.

Target outputs
Target outputs, as identified in the original funding application, were to:
- Distribute Enterprise Action materials to 2000 homeless groups
- Create and distribute 1000 resource packs
- Organise 8 regional action days for 150 homeless people
- Train and support 10 homeless ambassadors
- Establish working relationships with 12 enterprise support services

Project outcomes and achievements
According to Groundswell's self-produced evaluation report (1), the target outputs were achieved with the following exceptions:

- The resource packs had not been created and distributed, although this was expected to be achieved by August 2005

- Although 8 regional action days were held, it is not clear whether the target attendance of 150 homeless people was achieved (i.e. the report only refers to 68 feedback forms collected from these events).

The report indicates that Groundswell have 'established working relationships with 24 enterprise support agencies' (i.e. exceeding the target by double the number) although it is not completely clear what this entails in practice.[18]

Some of the key difficulties identified in the report are (para. 6.4):

- The London location of the Groundswell offices made regional coordination, development and promotion difficult.
- There was an acknowledged lack of staffing and resources.
- The existing Groundswell database was seen to create difficulties in organising network wide regional activities.
- Initial participant feedback from the Exeter and London 2004 events indicated dissatisfaction with some of the groupwork exercises. The programme was amended to take account of these issues.
- Due to wider external staffing and financial issues the Resource pack output has not been yet achieved.

The interview conducted with the project manager further highlighted the following operational issues:

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[18] Contact details for only one support agency representative were provided by the PM.

- The project was national, covering Brighton, Exeter, Middlesbrough, Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham and two London Boroughs. This was, perhaps, rather ambitious for a pilot project and stretched Groundswell's resources, particularly as the agency experienced staffing problems during the period of the pilot project.

- The project was more successful in the regional locations where existing relationships with local enterprise agencies already existed prior to the pilot, such as in Hackney and Brighton (where InBiz, Brighton EA and the Prince's Trust all participated) and, importantly, where partner agencies understood and were able to provide the level of in-depth assistance and follow-up support that homeless clients often require.

- Considerable difficulties were experienced in trying to establish effective networking links to the mainstream of business support in regions and locations where Groundswell did not have a pre-established network. The project manager complained about the 'complex, fragmented and varied nature of business support in different locations' and the difficulties experienced in finding agencies that they could work with who were both committed to assisting disadvantaged people and with the requisite competencies. Hence in practice some partner agencies (e.g. Community Enterprise Exeter and Bootstrap Enterprise Hackney) were shown to be more attuned to the in-depth support requirements of homeless people than others in the regions.

The reflections of members of the Groundswell team who were involved in the organisation of the events are also referred to in the evaluation report (para. 6.1). One key point to emerge is the view that only a small minority of homeless and excluded people (Groundswell's target constituency) are likely to be able to adopt 'enterprise as a solution to social exclusion':

> 'For the organisers there was a recognition that these kind of events are niche and may not be of use to all homeless people and their experiences, but that this may provide a compliment to the GAS[19] and the GAS could be promoted through the Enterprise action days' (para. 6.2)

With regard to experiences of the actual events, as part of their self-evaluation exercise, Groundswell devised and distributed feedback forms to participants at the eight events; a total of 68 forms were collected.   This figure and also the number of attendees reported for specific events suggest that some events in particular may have been very sparsely attended.[20] Groundswells evaluation report highlights two findings (para. 5.2):

- that in terms of relevance to participants' needs, 89% thought that event had been 'good' or 'excellent'

- that most (23 out of 25) thought that 'their enterprise was more likely to happen' because of their participation in the event (para 7.2 refers to '93% of participants felt their enterprise ideas were more likely to succeed as a direct result of the events').

The personal testimonies given by the 'enterprise ambassadors' are highlighted as having had a particular impact, with many participants commenting favourably on this aspect of the day (para. 5.6).   Some positive comments relating to the enterprise planning session are also referred to (para. 5.7). The business support section of the day, involving representatives from local enterprise and business support agencies, appears to have been more indifferently received, with many participants feeling that representatives were 'not

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[19] The Grant Award Scheme provided by Groundswell.

[20] Note, however, that higher attendance numbers can have the disadvantage of making it harder to respond to the needs of individual participants.

responsive or suitable for their needs'. Some further critical comments from the feedback forms are also referred to (para. 5.3) relate in particular to a feeling that the events were 'rushed' and also that some participants would have been able to promote the events more widely if they had received more advance notice (reinforcing the impression of sparse attendance at some events).

Groundswell's own evaluation identifies the 'real outcome' of the project as: 'Inspiring and supporting people with experience of homelessness to create their own enterprises.' (para. 7.1) The problem acknowledged by the report was that this was not explicitly stated as an outcome at the outset of the project (a series of outputs were identified instead) and that systems were not put in place to collect data against the outcome. The report goes on, however, to record a number of positive outcomes (some previously identified under previous section), including specific outcomes against particular events (para. 7.2).

- East London: 4 people applied for a GAS award – 1 of whom was successful and 1 person took up the Bootstraps service.

- Exeter: One person successfully applied to GAS. One person took up the Prince's Trust scheme.

- Brighton: 1 person applied to the GAS, Brighton Housing Trust began planning for user involvement project with Groundswell

- Birmingham: 1 person successfully applied for a GAS. Two of the participants began working a project together (Big Issue and Torch Housing Co-op). Two people went on to seek advice from ARK Enterprise Support Agency.

- Manchester: 1 person applied for the GAS. The Novas group from Liverpool made good contacts with Depaul Trust around user involvement. 1 young person from the Nightstop went to meet an enterprise advisor from WEN

- North London: 2 people applied for a grant. One went on to start a Bootstraps social Enterprise course.

- Middlesbrough: Call Darlington Night Stop. An exchange visit was arranged between Glaneirw environmental conference centre and SHAIDY characters – homeless young people's group. Darlington night stop was trying to replicate its own SHAID Scheme.

- Leeds: How to start up an enterprise CD Rom distributed to all participants.

The report produced by Groundswell highlights that:

> 'The majority of the feedback from this evaluation was highly positive. The events seemed to have captured a mood, and invoked enthusiasm amongst many of the participants for social entrepreneurship.' (para. 8.1)

Interviews conducted for the purpose of this case study, with two participants (one in London and one in Exeter) and one business support officer who gave a presentation at the Manchester event, support that the experience of these events was generally positive. Neither of the participant interviewees had any points of criticism nor suggestions as to how the days might have been better organised. The following quotations provide further insight into the challenges involved and also their positive experiences:

> 'Most people in the state of homelessness are not ambitious to do things, so to find ones that are who want to pull themselves out – you have to search them out. Groundswell were really good at creating that environment and making those connections. (…) There were about 20 to

30 people at the event with business ideas and who were either homeless or had been recently struggling with drugs or physical handicaps, so we were all the underdogs. We explained our situations and our goals – it was a chance to exchange details, have a nice meal, a good afternoon. There were a couple of good presentations on constructing business plans, communicating with the authorities, charities etc (….) It was better than I thought it would be – I was really impressed. I came away with a buzz, feeling it was time well spent, met great people, it was well organised, it had quite an impact on me. It was beyond my expectations. I have kept in touch with some of the people, made good connections, good information was distributed. I learnt a lot, gained confidence, met like minded people and we benefited from each others experience and moral support …' (P1)

'… it was very positive – good to talk to others who had set up their own projects and to know that I was not working in isolation. I would say that it revolutionised me in that it had a big impact on my confidence.' (P2)

Comment from the one business support representative (who had considerable experience of business support, including having started her own business) was restricted to her experience of the event in Manchester, having had no involvement with the project beyond this:

'…the approach adopted was good, showing a good understanding of the issues and that the participants (between 10-20) were dealt with sensitively. (…) I was impressed by some of the participants who had very good ideas and were very articulate' (S1)

More negatively, she also felt that the event was, necessarily perhaps, only a superficial introduction to the issues. In her view, there remained a need for the specialist business support aspect to be better integrated in projects aimed at disadvantaged groups (homeless, women etc); projects which were too often time limited, insufficiently funded and therefore only ever able to engage with the problems faced at a superficial level.

'Out of all the social support agencies they were very helpful and knowledgeable – a lot of times with government and non governmental agencies you really get the impression a lot of these people are just picking up their pay packet – nobody is enthusiastic, but they were, very much so.' (P1)

Lessons and future potential

Groundswell's report concludes with a series of recommendations relating to the future administration of events, their content (notably better preparation of business support partners to ensure that their contribution is relevant to participants) and the management of the overall programme (1, p.10). The main points emphasised by the project manager relating to how future project work might be improved, in the light of the pilot project experience:

- Map out existing business support provision in local areas prior to project start (or make use of existing business support mapping, where it exists).

- Establish support networks of relevant agencies (homeless and business support) prior to project start and develop and build upon these networks over time. It is important that contributing business support agencies are aware of the in-depth assistance that is required and are geared up to deliver such support. Such agencies need to meet with Enterprise Ambassadors, prior to project start, to find out exactly what was required in order for these people to successfully move from homelessness into self-employment.

- The use of local Enterprise Ambassadors, as role models of previously homeless people who have successfully set-up in business, is essential to the project. These

people have to be recruited to the project and trained to provide inspirational presentations to the target homeless clients.

- The project totally failed to conduct follow-up monitoring/review work of those who received assistance and it is not clear what the overall, on-going impacts of the pilot project have been. It was suggested that between 8-16 homeless people went through the process of mainstream business support – but no individual case studies were provided as evidence of this.

- Staff continuity is essential to project work and a funding crisis that affected the agency during the course of the EPF project led to 4 staff leaving and eventually contributed to the agency not being able to claim all of their EPF allocation.

All case study interviewees felt that the project idea had wider potential and deserved further support, although the business support officer interviewed emphasised that it would need to be much better funded, with better provision for ongoing support and with greater integration with other support providers.

Groundswell have subsequently received funding from the Esmee Fairburn Foundation to continue the Enterprising Action programme, in a similar format, for a further three years. This has already involved an event held for 40 people on a boat on the Thames; feedback from the project manager on this experience indicates that this may have been less successful than the smaller events due to the difficulty of providing sufficient individual to participants. In future, therefore, further events are to be restricted to a maximum of 20 participants.

Conclusions

In many respects the Enterprising Action project was one of the most challenging of those to be funded under EPF, given its national spread and the nature of the situations confronting people in its target group. In spite of the difficulties experienced and the limited numbers reached, the project can be judged a success insofar as the available feedback from participants and stakeholders has been highly positive.

A number of organisation/delivery issues have been identified and associated resource implications as a result of the experience, although the key issues appear to boil down to (a) how best in future to maximise the participation of people who can potentially benefit from the support offered; and (b) the need to provide an integrated package of support for disadvantaged people.

Self-employment/business start-up is a considerable challenge for anybody, even in the best of circumstances, with many obstacles to be surmounted. People in situations of disadvantage face extra barriers on top of this, and often need a great deal of advice and support with regard to a range of issues even before issues relating more specifically to self-employment/enterprise can begin to be addressed. The challenge is therefore how best to build in continuity and progression in support provision.

Case study sources

Documents
    (1) *'I could do that!' Enterprise Action Programme Evaluation,* Groundswell, 2005
Interviews
    Project manager (project manager) (telephone)
    Participant at London event (P1) (face to face)
    Participant at Exeter Event (P2) (telephone)
    Stakeholder: Women's business support officer, Manchester Women's Electronic Hall
    – invited by Groundswell to give a presentation at Manchester event (telephone) (S1)

5. Women's Enterprise Rainbow

TNG Ltd

Background

Project Aim and objectives

The aim of the pilot was to help women throughout the community to increase their awareness of enterprise and to demystify the process of setting up a business. The project aimed to reach women of all ages and backgrounds: lone parents; ethnic minorities; women returners; women carers; socially excluded groups. This was to be achieved by the following activities:

- To visit women in their own spaces (supermarkets, mothers and toddlers groups etc) to disseminate information and answer questions about their own business ideas.
- Providing an umbrella service to signpost women to support organisations, sources of finance and training providers to encourage them to bring their ideas to fruition.
- Provide awareness events and workshops in spaces where women feel culturally confident and have the support of their peers.
- Link women with those who have successfully run their own businesses to share experiences with their peers and to gain confidence in their own skills.

Managing /delivery organisation

TNG Business Support Ltd is part of the TNG Group, which has a turnover of £16m per annum with over 450 staff and operates from 42 sites in England. The Group is mainly involved with the delivery of contracts for Job Centre Plus and the Learning and Skills Councils. The business was set up in 1983 and operates from 14 sites including Nottingham with 30 staff and 15 self employed associates.

Amongst the services provided by TNG is a scheme on behalf of Jobcentre Plus to help unemployed people start up their own businesses. This is undertaken through a mixture of workshops and awareness sessions.

Project cost

Project total funding was £55,600 of which EPF provided £44,100 with other organisations including community groups and Job Centre Plus providing contributions. EPF funding contributed towards a part time administrator, funding for TNG staff input into the organisations of the Roadshow, workshops, publicity and training, and the remainder towards publicity, travel, and office costs.

Origin of idea and concept of the project
TNG Business Support operated on behalf of Jobcentre Plus a programme to help unemployed people start up their own businesses. This was through workshops and counselling sessions and supported test trading over a period of 6 months. The Rainbow was conceived as a way of extending their role to women who didn't access provision through the Job Centres.

TNG had conceived the project through their understanding of social and institutional barriers which women face in terms of attempting to access enterprise support. The Project Manager has referred to recent research which shows that women own just 26 per cent of the UK's small and medium enterprises but that 74 per cent of women think it's easier to start a business than it was 10 years ago. The DTI's own research suggests that women in general suffer barriers based on finance (lack of detailed credit history). The experience of the Project Manager who in her role of business counsellor was aware that women taking the self employed option were low in confidence and that there is scope to assist these women. This can be off putting to women who feel that their only experience of life is to run a home or to hold down a low skill job. The Project Manager attended a Think Tank on Women's Enterprise which highlighted the view that the business start up world was full of men, and that they were intimidated by this.

The EPF project and its concept have grown out of TNG's work with clients. Workshops are offered to unemployed people of all ages and genders. In a 6 month period, 79 per cent of clients were men and 21 per cent were female. Some of the male participants had partners at home who would like to come more involved with the business or in setting up their own businesses. Because their (male) partners make claims for support on behalf of the whole family, the partners do not get access to government training schemes. In this way at present, women who have unemployed partners are currently prevented from accessing existing provision (unless they attend as a partner of a claimant) and precludes those who do not receive state benefits.

TNG had already undertook a survey of women with whom they had contact. When asked about barriers 100 per cent of respondents felt that there were barriers for women. These included:

- Men's attitude towards them
- Not feeling they were being taken seriously because they were women
- Childcare and fitting in around the needs of the family
- Lack of confidence in their own abilities
- Finding funding

There are support organisations that can help women in a variety of fields but 'no one crosses the spectrum.' Some organisations only employ women to help their participants; others tend to focus in geographical areas because of their funding regimes. The Project Manager therefore felt that existing provision was innovative and important but limited by these constraints. For example in Nottingham there are a variety of organisations which provide various services which contribute to raising awareness such as:

- Nottingham Business Venture (based in Basford)
- New Deal for Communities (based in NG7 postcode)
- Prince's Trust (dealing with those under 31 years old)
- Prime (dealing with those over 45 years of age)
- Nottinghamshire County Council Economic Development Unit (only dealing with those outside the Unitary Trust of Nottingham City and over 29 years old

- TNG Business Support (dealing with those in receipt of benefit when referred by the Job Centre).

However, as the project manager stated:

> 'Our approach differs from existing provision because we will not wait for the client to come to us – we will go to them to stimulate interest rather than wait for the results of that stimulation. For example, if we have a stand in a supermarket to raise awareness of a workshop we plan to run later in that area, we will be talking to women directly. We will be able to encourage women directly to take the next step to find out more about the services on offer from a whole variety of bodies without taking out of an environment in which they are already comfortable. We want to pre-empt the fear factor in picking up the phone to make an appointment because we know from our experience that the women we see find this very difficult.'

Project delivery

Project delivery was based on the approach already adopted by TNG in its existing outreach work. For example TNG had a contract with Job Centre Plus where they organised and participated in an event designed to attract Incapacity Benefit and Income Support clients to their programmes. The event was held in one of the most deprived wards and attracted over 40 people who came to find out more about training opportunities.

Sixteen Roadshow events were organised in a variety of locations such as supermarkets, churches, community centres, library, sports centre, and a charity shop. In addition to the Roadshow, five Awareness Workshops were organised. The project had a rainbow logo and had the slogan "create your own business." Large posters were distributed in the areas where the Roadshow was planning to go. It was also promoted on local radio programmes. Stands were set up at each location containing leaflet information and materials. Attractions were also provided for children so that they would be entertained giving opportunities for mothers to engage with the Roadshow.

The services provided are in essence an expansion of the 'contractual boundaries' of TNG. In essence the funding enabled TNG to staff the project as well as expand the information and signposting services. Records were made of those who attended the Roadshows and participants received an application pack and invited to attend workshops or awareness raising events. Women were encouraged to bring a friend to break down the isolation women often feel. This provided an opportunity for TNG to engage more women and build peer group support amongst participants.

Each attendee at the awareness raising events was provided with a certificate of attendance which was used when approaching other organisations. According to the Project Manager clients often appreciated these certificates and viewed them as a positive confirmation of their ability to understand the concept of enterprise. Participants also received certificates following the workshops.

A notable feature of the way the project has been implemented is the involvement of other organisations and agencies. For example the Inland Revenue 'have been an integral part of the project attending many events encouraging women to come forward with their concerns and helping women to understand Tax jargon.' Job Centre Plus has also made use of the Roadshow providing information and signposting to programmes such as the New Deal.

Project outcomes and achievements

In terms of delivering information to a broader community and geographical area TNG has been able to access the media. A radio broadcast was undertaken throughout the whole of the East Midlands area which included a listener phone in session.

The following table provides an overview of some of the key outcomes from the project.

Table 1: Women's Rainbow Events

	Targets	Achieved
Women completing questionnaires	300	353
Roadshows held	16	17
Awareness workshop	5	7
Marketing Workshops	5	7
Completed Business Plans	30	43
Business Starts (March 2005)	15	16

Source: TNG

Results of the Rainbow Road Show Questionnaire
Women were requested to complete questionnaires at the Road show events. A total of 355 questionnaires were completed. A significant number 240 (67%) expressed an interest in starting their own business. This suggests the importance of outreach work as a delivery method for reaching women who without the Roadshow events would not have considered enterprise and self employment as a career/employment option. In terms of business premises required the largest number (147) preferred their own home although a significant number (94) considered business premises as more appropriate.

Table 2: Type of premises required for business

Home	147
Business premises	94
Business incubator	6
Other	26

Source: TNG Survey

Unsurprisingly the reasons for preferring self employment given in the questionnaires were unsurprising with the majority seeing independence as the key reason for setting up their own business. In terms of barriers to self employment (Table 3) the majority considered a lack of advice as a problem, although access to finance and premises were considered as issues.

Table 3: Employment status of Road show participants

Self employed	18
Part time	69
Full time	35
Unemployed 0 -6 months	35
Unemployed 7 – 12 months	90
Retired	8

Source: TNG Survey

This table suggests that the Roadshow has fulfilled its objectives of not only reaching a significant number of women but also those who are in vulnerable positions in the labour market. Only 18 currently in self employment attended and also a relatively small number in full time employment (35). 125 women were unemployed and of this number 90 were

experiencing long term unemployment. Furthermore 69 were in part time employment. This is quite significant in that women see self employment as a possible route out of unemployment. In relation to qualifications held there was an almost equal split between numbers below NVQ Level 3 (categorised as low skill) and those above. 104 did not state and perhaps a large proportion of these had no qualifications. In terms of caring responsibilities only 26 replied that they had such responsibilities whilst 247 said they didn't. Eighty-two did not answer either way. On the other hand 103 replied to state that they have children although whether they care for them has not been established. Nevertheless it does beg the question whether such a large proportion of women reflects a wider trend of women with caring responsibilities are not interested in setting up their own business.

Connections with Agencies – the role of Job Centre Plus, New Deal for Communities and East Midlands Enterprise Agency
TNG have contracts with Job Centre Plus and JCP who referred clients to the Roadshow. In this way the Roadshow facilitated enterprise development for those going through the New Deal programmes. The Rainbow did have an impact upon the development of women's enterprise policies by the East Midlands Development Agency (Emda). At the time the Roadshow was set up in 2004 work was in its infancy in the development of a Women's Enterprise Action Plan for the East Midlands. Emda had appointed a Women's Enterprise Officer (WEO) whose post was funded by Prowess – a national advocacy organisation working towards equal numbers of men and women starting their own business. Emda had no formal relationship with the Rainbow but the WEO provided support for the Roadshow and had close contact with the TNG Project Manager. This relationship was productive for the project as the WEO spoke at one of the events, and provided advice when required.

The WEO states that the Roadshow has played an important role as a model of good practice for Emda's policy development in terms of ways in which to promote women's enterprise and reach a larger number of potential women who may want to start their own business. In many respects the Rainbow as a method of outreach is something which she considered Emda would support as good practice.

The event was held in the New Deal for Communities area – although clients who were referred for further support as a result of the event were assisted by the NDC. Unfortunately the NDC were not able to identify the women involved. The NDC Programme Manager, Work and Enterprise had become closely linked and supportive of the Rainbow through her involvement with Prowess.

Personal Stories
Out of a contact list provided by TNG it has been possible to interview four women. Face to face interviews were held with two women, 'Jane' and 'Anne' (not real names) were already in business and were used a 'role models' for the final event. Telephone interviews were undertaken with two other women, 'Sally' and 'Catherine' who had participated in the Roadshow and as a result had been assisted in starting their own business.

Jane has a degree in English and History and has already set up her own business in hand crafts and textiles. Jane's contact with the Roadshow was through her involvement with TNG who supported her through the Test Trading process. Jane has been in business since April 2005 and the Roadshow event was an opportunity to sell produce but also Jane was seen as a 'role model' to which women who were thinking of setting their own business could turn to obtain some insight first hand about what it is like. Jane has used to be a Community Development Worker working for a local authority in North East

Derbyshire. The job was part time and she gave it up partly because of the long commuting and also because she wanted to be her own boss. Jane has found out through word of mouth about help available and this is how she got in touch with TNG. She also received a grant of £2,500 for equipment although she could not remember the source of this grant. She stated that she qualified for this money because she lives in a poor area of Nottingham (Hyson Green). Jane is a lone parent although she claims that this has not really affected her business because her child is 11 years old and relatively independent. She claims to be poor and at times struggles with the business.

> 'There have been days when I have stood in the pouring rain at some craft fair and only sold about £9 worth of stuff. It can be a bit demoralising.'

On the other hand,

> 'I do feel optimistic about the future and I wouldn't do anything else.'

This commitment to the business and to carry on is sustained to some extent by the fact that she can claim Working Tax Credit to supplement her income. She also held the view that being able to work from home, being one's own boss were motivating factors for continuing the business even though it did not really seem to provide a living wage.

Anne lives with her partner who has his own business, she has two young children, 5 and 8 years so her personal circumstances are quite different to Jane's. Anne's motivation to start her own business was as a result of being made redundant by Carlton Television which merged with Granada. She was a PA at Carlton. The redundancy made her think about working for herself because of her passion for making craft but also because of the desire for independence and a more flexible working life. She set up her own business in 2005 designing and making mosaic tables and mirrors. She received a £500 Market Research Grant from Nottinghamshire County Council. Her business is similar to Jane's that she operates on the basis of selling at fairs and commissioned work. Like Jane she runs it on a shoe string and is very much dependent on her partner financially. This can create some tensions mainly because she would like to be financially independent. When asked about some barriers and difficulties she faces with the business she identifies three. The first is related to commissioned work:

> 'Sometimes I am commissioned to make something – recently it was a table which took quite a long time to make and which I sold for £300. The question is whether that was the right price so in many ways I could do with some advice about pricing what I make.'

The second barrier relates to selling what she makes:

> 'With respect to the type of work we do and things we make (here she is also referring to Jane) we need to get on to the larger organised Craft Fair circuits. The Fairs costs around £300 which I simply cannot afford. However getting involved would make such a difference as it bring us into to contact with the sort of customers who are likely to buy what we make.'

The third barrier relates to childcare:

> "I have two young children so I am extremely limited in what I do. I have to work to school hours and we cannot afford childcare. We can claim Child Tax Credits but this is insufficient."

These barriers have had a significant impact on the way Anne organises her business. First are the restrictions to school hours. Second, because of the low income she receives she has been forced to take up a part time job (as an Admin worker) so as to supplement the family income.

Sally was unemployed when she came in contact with the Rainbow although she has been intermittently self employed as a Fine Arts Teacher/Designer since 1995. It was a result of her involvement with the Test Trading Programme run by TNG on behalf of Jobcentre Plus that she was referred to the Rainbow events. This contact according to Sally became a sort of catalyst for defining a future career route which enabled her to diversify from her previous work.

> 'I have had a lot of time to look at what I am doing. I have a lot of skills and a history of employment and self employment. Getting involved with the Roadshow Workshop provided me with an opportunity to consider what I was going to do in the future. This is because I am approaching 40 and a lot of my work involves lifting heavy materials. …..The Women's Enterprise project enabled me to look at the possibility of starting my own card company.'

The EPF contributed to consolidating some ideas she was working with about future business plans. It also was considered important to her because of the environment in which the events created – one which was mutually supportive with the possibility of getting to know other women and share experiences. Sally had strong views about Enterprise.

> 'I have been employed to deliver art classes in a Prison. There is such a lot of untapped potential out there. There seems to be no encouragement to use their skills.'

From her long experience of self employment she had become quite critical of the approaches to supporting enterprise that she had encountered .

> 'My first point of contact of business support was when I first became self employed in 1995 during the "Post Thatcherite School of Business!" Courses were predominantly populated with men in suits who wanted to make a lot of money quickly. Many of the business plans seemed to be unrealistic. In any case this was not helpful to me.'

Catherine had come into contact with the Rainbow through her Partner who was unemployed and picked up the information from Jobcentre Plus. She was unemployed being made redundant from Barclays Bank in Nottingham after working there for 17 years. She had been thinking about self employment for a long time but:

> 'I lacked the courage to take the plunge and it was the redundancy which made me pursue my interest in self employment. In that respect being made redundant was probably a blessing in disguise!'

Catherine now runs her own business buying and selling goods through ebay. Contact with the Roadshow enabled her to be signposted towards relevant business advice (particularly relating to tax returns and accountancy) which was provided by TNG. It also acted as an important point of contact with other women and enabled her to feel that she was not alone in terms of her situation of starting out.

Lessons and future potential

One of the interesting aspects of Jane and Anne's experience in relation to the Rainbow is that they saw the event as an opportunity to sell some of their produce. In fact the event may have had a greater impact in that they met each other and became good friends as a consequence. It was apparent from interviewing them that they give each other mutual support and this may be quite an important factor in sustaining their respective businesses. This underlines the importance of establishing networks and the role of networks in terms of providing support. The other feature is the emphasis upon being ones own boss as being important in terms of a prime motivation in setting up a business. Both women may not be typical in terms of background – they are educated and articulate and Anne is currently undertaking a part time degree at the Open University. However, they have experienced unemployment and Anne's struggles in keeping things going with

childcare and general financial barriers is probably typical for a lot of women who try to start their own business.

Sally who had been in self employment for a number of years felt the Roadshow helped her to change business direction but more importantly provided advice and information in an environment which was supportive. This also applied to Catherine who had come into to contact with the event at a critical time when she had just been made redundant and was feeling relatively isolated in terms of pursuing her business plans.

The other lesson from the project is that it was closely linked to other agencies involved with business support (NDC, Emda, Jobcentre Plus) who provided both support (in kind) and enabled the spread of ideas about how outreach work and networking can be built into policy and practice.

Conclusions

The *Women's Enterprise Rainbow* has been successful in reaching a large number of women through the Roadshows. According to the organisers 15 businesses have started as a result of the Roadshow. The idea of the Roadshow has been to disseminate information and develop intervention strategies for those women who are interested in the idea of enterprise and starting their own business. Its success in fact related to its integrated approach to increasing awareness. First is to 'spread the word' in terms of using local venues to advertise the Rainbow events. Second is to capture interest through the organisation of workshops providing a range of advice about business development. Third is to actually follow up interest in terms of intensive counselling and support. WER has highlighted the need for a coordinated response and has been inspirational for Emda's recent drive to promote women's enterprise in the East Midlands.

Case study sources

Telephone interviews
    WER project manager,
    Officer in Job Centre Plus Nottingham,

Face to face interviews
    4 women participants,
    Emda's Regional Women's Enterprise Coordinator
    The Programme Manager, Work and Enterprise for Nottingham New /Deal for
     Communities.

6. Enterprise Boat

Enterprise Island

Background

Project aims and objectives
The aim of the project is to use a boat trip as a means to:

- find potential entrepreneurs
- give insight into what entrepreneurship is about
- get a captive audience on a 4 hour boat trip on the Tyne and get them to participate in entrepreneurial 'games'/activities

Managing/delivery organisation
Enterprise Island formerly known as the Robert Owen Centre has operated since 1992. The organisation undertakes research, design and delivery of enterprise programmes running from pre-start to existing enterprise support.

Project cost
The total project cost was £62500, with £37,500 from the EPF.

Project delivery
The project involved the boat trips for University students and school children and was delivered by Enterprise Island. During the boat trip an initial Question and Answer session was run and then participants formed into groups to play business games – develop a business idea, market it and buy and sell products in a mock market place – to see if they can make money. At the end of the event the groups had to present their ideas to a panel. The group making most money were the winners i.e. the best business concept was the winner.

Participant students were mostly at the early stages of their courses – the aim was to generate interest in enterprise and increase their knowledge and understanding of entrepreneurship.

An important feature of the project was the *methodology and philosophy* deployed by Enterprise Island to identify potential 'entrepreneurs' and exploit entrepreneurialism.

Previous research on attitudes to and understanding of enterprise by teachers has raised a number of questions:

What is enterprise and what has it got to do with me?
Why as a hard pressed subject teacher should I get involved with something else?
What is the difference between enterprise and business?
Surely this is business planning, marketing etc and should be dealt with by the Business studies or equivalent Department?

Enterprise Island wanted to challenge and clear up misconceptions and undertake an action learning event for both teachers and students to enable them to learn about

enterprise by doing something. The approach adopted essentially involved five stages to becoming an entrepreneur:

1. There is a need to talk things through - no business was ever started by a business plan it is inevitably a conversation or discussion.
2. There is a need to test oneself - enterprise capabilities are only realised by 'doing something'.
3. There is a need to gather information and skills.
4. When one becomes destination focussed, as many entrepreneurs are the starting point is with an aim and then gather resources. The motto is 'do something'.
5. There is a need to test an idea - nothing happens until somebody sells something. According to Enterprise Island:
   'On paper the concept may seem sound but research may indicate that people will buy something but until they are asked to part with their money you never can tell!'
6. 'Get a shock'! - every entrepreneur has a reality check or a shock that they have to overcome. It is this problem solving ability that gets them through. It also tests their self confidence and worth and suitably assisted they can overcome the problem.

It is considered important to combine the ingredients of learning how to think and act like an entrepreneur with a session which informed and inspired. More significantly all the participants had to go away realising that they all had some enterprise ability and that having seen how businesses are created and operate-albeit in a tight timescale-they could consider starting a business as an option for them.

The day was totally action learning based. The minute the participants were on the boat-it comprised a mix of four schools who did not know each other and who had never worked together before-were told to introduce themselves to a stranger. Formally, this exercise went on for about twenty minutes as they worked their way around about six to eight people each.

Participants then moved on to the specially designed exercise. In essence, the participants had to make and sell something, source all the ingredients, buy them make them get orders turn it into a product deliver and get paid. To this mix aspects of reality were added: no prices were set, suppliers folded, buyers changed terms and conditions, visits from health and safety closed down the plant. They were told that in business there are morals and ethics but no rules! At the end of the session there was feed back and then refreshment.

Project outcomes and achievements
There were around 35 participants on each boat trip. Overall, there were over 100 beneficiaries. All participants filled out questionnaires and received follow-up from key staff at University and schools. However it has not been possible to track these questionnaires and records have not been maintained for evaluation purposes. Most school pupils and graduates who participated in the scheme have left and therefore not traceable.

Benefits to participants
Participants on the Enterprise Boat were selected through the Schools for school pupils and the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne Enterprise Centre.

University of Newcastle Upon Tyne Enterprise Centre - The Enterprise Centre offers students extra curricular events to help students develop and understanding of business and skills needed for success in a chosen career path. The Centre runs a variety of programmes including: 'Enterprise Works' which involves a number of workshops

relating to various aspects of business skills (creativity and ideas generation, product development, commercial awareness, leadership etc.).

The then Head of the Enterprise Centre used the Enterprise Boat as an opportunity to fulfil the strategic aims of the Enterprise Centre:

> 'The Enterprise Boat was used as a bridging activity for developing entrepreneurial and enterprise skills for students and graduates.'

Some elements of the methods used for the Boat have been used to complement specific programmes within the Enterprise Centre such as 'Enterprise SOUP (Society of University Pioneers)'. This encourages entrepreneurship through networking. SOUP students supported by the Enterprise Centre encourage students to interact with each other and with people from the business community, generate entrepreneurial ideas, gain information and contacts to improve their ideas or business and develop their entrepreneurial skills and knowledge.

School Involvement – Prudhoe, Haydon Bridge and Ponteland High Schools, Tynedale, Northumberland - A small focus group was set up with teachers from these schools in order to assess the impact of the Boat with the school curriculum and school pupil experiences. In 2003 the schools successfully obtained Enterprise Pathfinder Status under the Department of Education and Skills Initiative. Four schools (the above plus Hexham School) put a joint application for status as a 2 year project for introducing enterprise in schools. DfES gave the schools discretion to develop their own programmes. Part of the DfES budget paid a consultant to assist the schools to develop their programmes. Other funding came from Tynedale Local Strategic Partnership and Rural Enterprise Tynedale. Enterprise Island, who delivered the programme were commissioned to work with the schools.

Each of the schools had appointed 'Champions' or 'Co-ordinators' as part of the Enterprise Pathfinder Initiative to take a lead role in integrating enterprise within the School curriculum. Although the project was collaborative in one sense, the project also involved competition between the schools in terms of developing a business. This was an exercise for both teachers and school pupils to develop enterprise skills. To some extent with Enterprise Island's original involvement the Boat initiative came out of the process of implementing the Enterprise Pathfinder.

A key 'player' in the development of this project was the teacher appointed as a School Champion from Prudhoe School. Her experience serves as a useful example in terms of the challenges and possibilities schools face when attempting to integrate enterprise in the school curriculum. Prudhoe School has 80 staff and 1052 pupils. Teachers were initially reticent and wanted to concentrate on their core subjects. An enterprise zone was set up within the school and networks were developed. A first activity concentrated on the gifted and talented students and a day's training in enterprise activity was given to staff. There was also reluctance by the students to participate in the initiative. The students were counselled and it transpired that their reluctance was due to their fear of failure and of their perceptions of what an entrepreneur is. These perceptions were challenged with an emphasis upon being enterprising is about creativity and not just a focus on selling. It was considered important to build in a school Enterprising Philosophy which is: 'Students can have a much happier existence and be much more prepared for life if we show them how to be enterprising'.

Although the boat was seen as part of a string of initiatives, it did have a catalytic effect because of its novelty. Because of this, at first there were not many takers for the boat trip and teachers positively had to persuade pupils to participate. The contribution of the boat

however has been seen as substantial in terms of changing the culture of the school in relation to how enterprise can be delivered and slotted into various courses. In fact an emphasis has been not to identify the Pathfinder as synonymous with learning how to set a business but as another possible learning and experience. As one of the Champions stated:

> 'my specialism is English and I was involved as a Champion which had the advantage that pupils did not necessary see or identify enterprise as Business Studies.'

The Boat also contributed to changes within the school. As teachers commented:

> 'If students have ideas and what to pursue them then the culture is there that will look at individual ideas and provide them time and funding from elsewhere and so they can pursue things which they couldn't do otherwise.'

One teacher commented on the longer term impacts of the Boat in terms of opening up different opportunities for the school.

> 'It opens up other arenas as well. For example we have got the European Youth Forum which links between different countries and exploring enterprise in schools and through that we have got links with our European MEP who has set up a subsidised trip to the European Parliament.'

The integration of enterprise within the curriculum has contributed to developing certain skills which would not normally be obtained. As one teacher states:

> 'In the context of my school enterprise is something about competing, taking risks, building self confidence and developing negotiating skills.'

As Enterprise Island did not retain records such as feedback forms from the Boat it has not been possible to undertake any rigorous analysis of impacts on pupils. However pupils in one school were asked to write their thoughts on their experiences with the Boat. Most of the comments are positive and provide insights into the potentials of the project for interesting pupils in developing business ideas:

> 'I particularly enjoyed the enterprise task we were given, it was good fun but taught us a lot about enterprise and buying and selling.'

Learning about enterprise also assists in making decisions:

> 'The trip gave me an idea of the challenge and decisions included in running an enterprise (the day showed the benefits of running your own business e.g. being your own boss.'

The importance of approaching the challenges of enterprise with enthusiasm came out of the trip:

> 'The boat trip was class. Dead, good, wicked. I learnt many entrepreneurial skills from the buying and selling games.'

The trip also seemed to serve the purpose of actually engaging pupils in thinking about business development. As one pupil commented:

> 'The activities of the day were interesting if unoriginal. However they did provide me with some ideas for future business plans.'

Again, taking Prudhoe as an example, enterprise activities have led to a number of

positive outcomes such as the Evening Chronicle Young Achievers Award for Enterprise, British Telecom Award, and over 25 enterprise companies trading from the school.

Contributions to social inclusion - It was possible to identify some examples where students from disadvantaged backgrounds benefited from the Enterprise Pathfinder initiative in terms of identifying and following up business ideas. However the Boat was never seen as something that had a strong inclusive element other than providing opportunities and interest to young people who would not normally either get the opportunities or would be interested in enterprise. The benefits are seen as more indirect in that the initiative (the Boat and Pathfinder) is seen as part of a process of regenerating a local economy which had suffered economic decline in recent years (see below).

Sustainability and links with other policies - The Pathfinder is part of Rural Enterprise Tynedale (RET) set up in 2003 to respond to foot and mouth disease and its impacts on the local economy. Its goal is to bring about changes in the level of awareness of enterprise and enterprising behaviour and activity by working with and through enterprising institutions, communities and individuals. RET involves a series of projects including an Enterprise Festival, the School Pathfinder Project, workshops for community and voluntary groups. RET is a key element of the Northumberland Rural Strategy and Action Plan.

The Pathfinder set the 'ball rolling' and a momentum which has been kept going through various funding regimes. In addition to the DfES funds to run the programme, funds have also been obtained from the Tynedale Strategic Partnership.

Conclusions

Enterprise Boat involved around 100 participants and provided a novel introduction to enterprise for school students. In this way it made a valuable contribution to the development of enterprise education within local schools which had recently obtained Enterprise Pathfinder Status under the Dfes initiative.

One North East (the RDA) had informed Enterprise Island about the Enterprise Promotion Fund and featured the Enterprise Boat in their 'Make your Mark' submission. No one attended the boat trip from One North East nor was there any attempt to follow up the lessons learned. This was seen as a lost opportunity. Furthermore staff turnovers within One North East disrupted any continuity of contact with EPF projects.

The experience of the Boat challenges a view that permeates strategies and policy documents (the Northern Way was highlighted) about the North East comprising a weak enterprise spirit. Barriers to enterprise are often institutional and mainstream business support measures tend to favour those who are already geared up to starting a business. People from disadvantaged backgrounds often require other and more innovative approaches, before reaching the business planning stage.

The experience of the Enterprise Boat project as part of a package of initiatives has heightened the positive impacts but to carry the momentum forward and to be sustainable requires a continued stream of funds.

7. Enterprise Idol

Staffordshire University

Background

Project aims and objectives:
- To raise awareness of enterprise and encourage entrepreneurial activity amongst students and young people. The project mainly targeted undergraduates and primary school children.

- Attempted to fill a gap between latent entrepreneurial ability and pre-start business support promotion, by awareness raising through interactive events.

The project idea came out of conference in Durham where Ian Scott of Enterprise Island presented ideas for engaging young people in entrepreneurial activity under the banner 'entrepreneurs just want to have fun'.

Managing/delivery organisation
The project was designed and delivered by Staffordshire University Knowledge Transfer Team, who are based in the Research and Enterprise department in partnership with the University Careers Service and Student Union.

Project cost
EPF contribution £40,114, with business and community funding of £19,400 and in-kind additional Staffordshire University support amounting to a total project cost of £77,234.

Project delivery
The project was managed by Staffordshire University Knowledge Transfer Team of three core staff, including a marketing student placement from the Business School. Additionally, eight students were supplied by the Student Union Volunteer Co-ordinator to run a one hour event for over 200 primary school children (aged 8-9), drawn from eight local schools, during Enterprise Week.

The project was neatly dovetailed into other events, such as the Enterprise Week activities organised by the Education-Business Link team and HE Full Circle RDA funded programme, based at Staffordshire University, to assist entrepreneurship through Students Enterprise Fellowships.

The main focus of delivery was a series of Enterprise Idol events which involved nearly 1,000 people, including Enterprise Idol shows at two campuses, the schools event and an awards evening. A feature of the student events was that everyone present, including presenters, on stage participants, production team, film crew and audience members was involved in the process. The process included completing entrance forms with business plan ideas, as well as lively debate about 'what is enterprise', building products out of limited resources, mounting a promotion campaign and presenting the final business concept to a panel of judges (e.g. as in the 'Dragons Den' television show). These events could not have taken place without EPF funding.

Project outcomes and achievements

The project has been deemed by all concerned as highly successful, both in terms of stimulating student enterprise and also in raising overall awareness and gaining considerable publicity.

A total of 12 Enterprise Idols were selected and six have so far gone on to set-up their own businesses. Whilst it is not clear how many would have started their own business in any case, there is evidence to suggest that this process has been facilitated very effectively through the Enterprise Idol process, which was able to direct potential entrepreneurs to the Enterprise Fellowship scheme and to the bursary scheme managed by HE Full Circle, which includes university based office space, access to training and mentoring assistance (drawing on local chamber of commerce members' mentoring support) and soft loan funding.

Delivery organisation experience
The project was viewed as extremely successful and although not continuing in its original format, it has left a lasting legacy through various on-going applications of elements taken from the project. This is a viable concept which has made a significant contribution to 'building and enterprise culture' through bridging the gap between generating initial entrepreneurial ideas and linking people to a wide range of suitable assistance. In the view of the project manager the concept could be rolled out nationally to include FE as well as HE and is also applicable to school children of various ages.

Whilst the 'Enterprise Idol' brand has ended with the end of funding, several key elements of EI have been retained. First, the successful role of the student placement assistant in EI has led to HEFCE core funding for two student placements over two years to carry out a Student Union 'Enterprise Co-ordinator Role'. Second, the careers service has vastly improved its e-marketing and contact with students in regard to self–employment options. Third, a social enterprise competition has been planned. Fourth, there is a continuing presence of SU Volunteers participating in Enterprise Week. Fifth, a Student Union Enterprise Society has been formed. Sixth the University is piloting 20 self-employed student work placements using the University's business village office space.

Participants' experience
All of the interviewed participants were very positive about their experience with Enterprise Idol. All had been contacted directly by the project manager and all of the respondents expected to learn something about entrepreneurship and felt that the 'lively debate' and 'stimulating activity' had yielded 'high calibre business ideas' and had been thought provoking, positive and encouraging. They were all now aware of the possibilities for enterprising activity and where they would be able to get assistance, if it was required (e.g. from staff within the university).

One respondent had already started to run his own business during his time as an undergraduate, undertaking some associated film editing consultancy work and has subsequently developed this into a full-time business. One student noted the influence of an older student entrepreneur as their role model. In total three people went into the event thinking that they would like to run their own business, two have now started to run their own businesses, both in the film sector (both were film media students and had filmed separate Enterprise Idol events for the project). One other respondent is currently exploring the possibility of running his own public house. Interestingly, the remaining respondents had not been particularly interested in entrepreneurship and in two cases had no role models to relate to, but after the event felt that this was something that could interest them at some time in the future. One of these respondents mentioned that:

'…although self-employment was not my main aim, which is to become an art and design teacher, since Enterprise Idol I become more interested in the idea of working part-time as an artist and have been in contact with a self-employed teacher and artist I know, who has encouraged me to contact galleries to see if they can exhibit my work.'

An important observation was that arts and media students could definitely benefit from business skills and entrepreneurship training, since this is often not covered in their courses and yet is quite typical for these people in these industries to be self-employed.

A key factor was the depth of involvement each beneficiary had felt about the programme and that in each case it had been particularly relevant to their circumstances. Therefore, the benefits of the project had been 'raised confidence' and 'insight'. One person was '…astonished to find out just how much support for enterprise existed within the university.' Another respondent emphasised that although they had only participated as a volunteer assisting in the delivery of EI's Enterprise Week activities with children, that this was '…a tremendous experience which raised my confidence in working with and presenting ideas to children, which for me as a future teacher was invaluable.'

Overall, there was unanimous support for continuing Enterprise Idol in some format, such as within Enterprise Week, in order to regularly stimulate student and young peoples' enterprise activity. Those involved in the student volunteer schools event noted that this was also a very successful activity and a demonstration of how the concept can be adapted to different target audiences.

Stakeholder experience
All of the interviewed partner organisations viewed the project as mutually beneficial and would like to see the project continue, particularly as it has a wide variety of applications (e.g. for schools as well as FE/HE students).

The Student Union Volunteer Co-ordinator commented on the success of the project's role in Enterprise Week and how it had been highly praised in 'Aim Higher' meetings.

The Education-Business Link respondent explained that they run 'Aim Higher', which is a Phoenix funded project assisting enterprise related activities in local schools and that they had invited Enterprise Idol to participate in Enterprise Week. This contribution is likely to continue this year through the work of SU volunteers, despite lack of funding.

The HE Full Circle representative explained that their five year RDA funded project assists graduates who want to start their own businesses. Enterprise Idol complemented their work well and does appear to have stimulated increased enterprise activity. Over the past three years, over 400 students have been assisted and more than 30 have started their own businesses. The organisation is closely linked to Business Link, Prince's Youth Business Trust, local enterprise agencies and the Minority Business Association. The local Chamber of Commerce is also a provider of mentors.

The Staffordshire University Careers Officer interviewed indicated Enterprise Idol had 'raised awareness and unearthed latent entrepreneurial skills'. They use e-mail marketing to students and currently have around 200 students who have specifically elected to receive self-employment information from them. An important legacy of Enterprise Idol has been the improvement of this service promoting information about self-employment and available assistance to students.

Conclusion – key lessons

The EI events were highly successful because they engaged directly with the target student/school children audiences. In fact everyone involved in the EI events had a role to play and gained some benefit. Key lessons from the project relate to:

- The importance of peer-to-peer networking to gain credibility with students. The use of a student placement to market the project was very successful.

- Working in an effective synergistic partnership with other suitable organisations. Enterprise Idol filled a niche role in stimulating entrepreneurial interest which has complemented other associated services.

- The project concept evolved flexibly and was adapted successfully to suit the requirements of different target audiences (e.g. school children and HE students).

- Potential entrepreneurs have been effectively signposted to other partner organisations, both within and outside of the University to gain appropriate on-going assistance. To this effect, the project was extremely well networked with other local support organisations (e.g. PYBT, BL, Chamber of Commerce, Minority Business Association etc.).

Table 1: Case Study Interviews

Interview Type	Interviewee Characteristics
Delivery Organisation	1 interview with the Director of Staffordshire University Knowledge Transfer Team, responsible for managing the overall project.
Partner Organisation	4 interviews: 1 interview with HE Full Circle Manager 1 interview with Education Business Link enterprise 1 interview with Staffordshire University Careers Service Advisor 1 interview with Staffordshire Student Union Volunteer Co-ordinator
Participants	7 interviews: 5 students including one also self-employed 2 employed staff at Staffordshire University - All aged between 19 and 30 2 women 3 undergraduates, 3 graduates, 1 post graduate 2 have started their own businesses and 1 is about to do so

Appendix: Participant case study

Mike (not real name) is a 23 year old graduate in film, television and radio studies from Staffordshire University – he is white and English.

Mike was employed at the time of *Enterprise Idol*, as he and two other fellow media graduates from Staffordshire University had decided to remain in the area and become partners in a start-up film business called 'Reels in Motion'. The idea had come to them at the end of their graduate year. They won some awards for their graduate course work in film making and were referred to the University's Research and Technology Unit which

offers in-depth assistance to university spin-out businesses. The partners were assisted in putting together a business plan and were awarded an Enterprise Fellowship Scheme (EFS) loan of £10,000 – an interest free loan repayable over 5 years with nothing to pay for the first 2 years.

Their business idea was quite innovative (a requirement of the loan scheme), relating to setting up a media production company to assist in the production of corporate promotional materials. The EFS allowed them to have hot-desking facilities at the University and to receive a considerable amount of advice, training and mentoring support.

Prior to starting their business, all three partners had a desire to run their own business. In at least two of their cases their fathers had previously been self-employed and were therefore supportive of the idea. Furthermore, although Mike cannot recall any encouragement for self-employment during his schooling, or specific training for this during his degree course, he was very aware of the prevalence of self employed people in the media industry and examples of other students who had become self-employed. He was encouraged by this and it did fuel his aspirations to one day manage his own business.

Mike and his two business partners were made aware of *Enterprise Idol* through an invitation to participate in the project from the head of the R&T Unit, also the EPF project manager. It was suggested to them that they could participate in several ways, including producing a promotional package for EI, participating in debates about enterprise from a role model perspective (having already started a business) and also by entering their business idea into the competition for which there wee cash prizes for the most enterprising ideas.

Mike's expectations of participating in the event were quite modest. He and his partners immediately saw that this was a good opportunity to test out their business idea and skills in a practical way, which would involve filming an EI event and compiling a promotional package for EI and that this could potentially give them good exposure, if successfully delivered. Mike did not expect to win a prize or become as involved in the project as he did – but this was "…excellent experience and a real confidence booster."

Experience of the project
Mike's participation in EI was actually far greater than he had first expected – not that this was a problem. Mike and his partners filmed one of the Enterprise Idol events where members of the audience were invited on to the stage to form teams and produce business ideas.

> "It was all a bit like 'Dragons Den' on television, with teams of participants trying to sell their business ideas to a panel on stage."

Mike also became involved, as a former student role model entrepreneur in a debate about 'what is enterprise?':

> "The debates were really good and I think people were genuinely surprised at how informative and stimulating they were…..there was a real buzz around the room."

Mike and his partners put together a marketing promotional package for EI, which included a DVD/video of the EI event that they had filmed. This package was subsequently used to promote the programme and did give 'Reels in Motion' excellent exposure.

Overall, Mike felt that although EI was not really an in-depth support experience for him, it provided an excellent opportunity to showcase his skills and was 'very helpful'. Additionally, he felt that the experience had been a very positive one and he had never expected to win an EI award. 'Reels in Motion's' promotional DVD was shown at the awards evening and Mike won a £250 prize for the business idea that he entered into the enterprise competition.

Subsequent experience and current situation
Subsequently, after EI, Mike and his partners have received considerable assistance through on-going support from the Enterprise Fellowship Scheme, through networking, mentoring, office facilities, appropriate training and signposting to suitable trade events etc.

> 'Enterprise Idol and the Enterprise Fellowship Scheme have allowed us to progress our business far in advance of where we would be. We moved through a test trading situation where EI was extremely helpful from a practical perspective, to now being up and running. The whole process has been incredibly supportive and has allowed far more rapid progress with the business with far less risk involved.'

> 'Enterprise Idol provided us with more than just a certificate or an award, in fact we received tremendous publicity and even some work came out of it, including further work for the university.'

> 'Although we all knew people who had run their own businesses, including in some cases our own parents, we did not have any real insight into what this involves until we got involved with EI and EFS. The EI debates about business start-up, what it involves, what works and what does not provided a useful and practical grounding for us.'

Mike was very positive about the EI experience and was of the view that the project was highly relevant to media and arts students in general, who are likely to become self-employed after leaving college, or at some time in the future. He saw it as the sort of thing that should be run on an annual basis as it has a real resonance with so many students.

> 'There could be more crossover to non business studies students, such as artists, photographers and media students as it seems so well suited to assisting these people.'

8. DIY Café

Business Link Tyne and Wear

Background

Project aims and objectives

The *DIY Cafe* project was designed to encourage the development of new ideas and promote an awareness and understanding of enterprise amongst young people and those who work with them in Tyne & Wear.

The project aimed to provide opportunities for young people to undertake an 'enterprise task' by setting up an evening event built around dinner. Guests to the dinners were invited on the basis of their entrepreneurial profiles and their willingness to act as mentors to the young people.

The dinners were designed by the young people to act as catalysts for a discussion about enterprise and act as vehicles through which participants could begin to identify routes through which young people can engage in entrepreneurial activity.

Managing Delivery Organisation

Business Link Tyne and Wear considers itself to be the key player in terms of publicly funded business support across Tyne and Wear, working with delivery and strategic partners in the private public and voluntary sectors.

Project Costs

Total project cost was £54,000, including a total business community contribution of £10,000 (in-kind) and EPF requirement of £44,000.

Project delivery

A core team comprising the employees of Shaw Howarth Ltd and selected associates was established to deliver the programme. Specialist support was also brought into the project largely through the engagement of locally based restaurateurs. The following organisations were also made aware of the project as potential partners:

- Tyne & Wear Education Business Link Organisation
- Education Business Partnership Network
- Enterprise coordinators within FE Colleges
- Keyfund Federation
- Young Enterprise
- Durham University Business School GLEAM programme
- The Bridge Club
- Tyne and Wear Social Enterprise Partnership
- Women Into the Network

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A PR consultant, Yellow House PR, was engaged to support the initiative. Paper and e-flyers were distributed to potential host organisations and entrepreneurs inviting them to become involved in the initiative. The distribution of flyers was facilitated by the potential partner organisations.

A number of key organisations responded to the literature of which a selection formed the host organisations. These included; George Stephenson High School, Seaton Burn Community College, GLEAM and Westgate Community College. All Saints College, Newcastle College and Sunderland College also expressed interest in the programme but were unable to accommodate the activity within its timeframe. This was largely because the programme was timetabled over a financial rather than an academic year.

Project outcomes and achievements

Four host organisations recruited seven groups to the DIY Café programme resulting in four separate dinners, three groups combining together for the events which were held as follows:

> George Stephenson High School
> 17th November 2004 at The Mission, North Shields
>
> Westgate Community College (two groups)
> 23rd November 2004 at Oldfield's Restaurant, Jesmond
>
> George Stephenson High School and Seaton Burn Community College
> 8th March 2005 at Kissi Restaurant, Whitley Bay
>
> GLEAM 16th March 2005 at The Barn, Biscuit Factory, Newcastle

The project engaged 63 young people in the programme and 38 entrepreneurs. The events were the culmination of enterprise programmes introducing young people to entrepreneurial ways of thinking and which provided an opportunity for participants to learn by doing. The event confronted participants with levels of uncertainty and the need to act creatively and identify resources. They were time limited and provided opportunities for participants to develop their enterprise ideas through networking and to establish mentoring relationships.

A variety of enterprise projects emerged from the young people's learning in a number of sectors. These included, fashion, music, sports, beauty and travel. Some young people used the programme as a means to develop business plans as part of their formal education. Others developed enterprise initiatives to develop within school, for example, nail bars and sports coaching activities.

Entrepreneurs attending the dinners were invited not only because of their entrepreneurial skills but also for their familiarity with commercial sectors the students were interested in and for their links into broader networks within these sectors. This was particularly important with regard to the Kenya project where entrepreneurs with design skills or experience of fair trade were sought.

Benefits to participants
The Business Education Partnership assisted with developing contacts with Head Teachers. PIE had already established contacts with RDA (ONE) funded programme called Getting into Enterprise where they train teachers about enterprise – so already established linkages.

The Schools and School Pupils
Seaton Burn Community College and George Stephenson High School used the programme to support a very exciting initiative linking them with primary schools in Kenya. The students developed fair trade enterprise initiatives designed to generate income to support the Kenyan school. Additionally, the students hope to act as mentors to the Kenyan pupils to enable them to develop their enterprise skills. An example of the type of activity currently being undertaken is the production of sisal products for sale in the UK. The project built capacity within the participating organisations to support young people engage in entrepreneurial activity beyond the lifetime of the project and supported the creation of new relationships between participating organisations and the enterprise community. In particular, the schools were introduced to Business Education Partnerships and local funders such as the Keyfund Federation.

George Stephenson High School (a comprehensive school situated in North Tyneside) embraced the programme to the extent that it has continued to work with Shaw Howarth Ltd on the development of accredited enterprise programmes through the Open College Network. The programme provided a relevant and meaningful route for entrepreneurs to participate in supporting young people into enterprise. Many of the entrepreneurs passed on contacts to teachers for future reference. The teacher involved with developing the programme in George Stephenson High School comments on how the DIY café idea has impacted on the way the students have embraced enterprise education:

> 'The DIY café is now part of six units that the school offers as a GCSE equivalent, accredited by the Open College Network. The six units are; the 1st unit is DIY café, the 2nd unit is Sales Advertising and Law, the 3rd Unit is Production, the 4th Unit Enterprise Futures, 5th Unit is Business Plan and 6th Unit is all about Finance and Enterprise. With the 1st Unit, the DIY Café is where Jane Shaw (Head of People into Enterprise who were responsible for the Project) and myself started working. The student has go to work on identifying the key characteristics that entrepreneurs need, identifying local entrepreneurs within their community, have conversations with them and actually organise an evening were they will invite and entrepreneur to an evening do, where they will meet them and greet them, feed them and discuss enterprise skills needed to be successful. And also present a business idea to the entrepreneurs on the evening.'

Some of the specific achievements can be measured in the grades students achieve. The current year 11 students, for example show indications that 70% will be successful in achieving a grade A-C equivalent in Enterprise – the average for the school is 44% A-C grade. What is interesting and relevant is that the majority of school pupils are from working class backgrounds.

The project has acted as a pilot initiative for the engagement of young people with entrepreneurs and to support the development of an enterprise culture in the region. North Tyneside Business Education Partnership and educational and youth initiatives in Tees Valley have expressed interest in rolling out the programme within their own sub-regions. Enterprise Newcastle has commissioned two new programmes one of which will be made available to All Saints College which was unable to schedule the activity under the current programme's timetable.

Graduate Students Durham University Business School (DUBS) Graduate Learning of Entrepreneurship Accelerated through Mentoring (GLEAM)
Contacts at DUBS were used to involve students from their entrepreneurship programmes. Additionally, organisations only felt able to participate if they could see a direct link to other curricular activities. However, those that did participate recognised the value of the programme in supporting enterprise learning and have subsequently embedded the programme into their schedules.

The links between the DIY Café and GLEAM have been seen as important. The GLEAM approach essentially involves facilitating a system in which existing owner managers can support new (or potentially) new owner managers. Both mentoring and network building are important to developing entrepreneurial skills. The Café is seen as giving another dimension to the GLEAM approach.

A small focus group of GLEAM participants was undertaken. Some participant comments provide insights into the impacts of the programme.

For the GLEAM Programme the Manager comments:

> 'It was to our advantage to get involved with the Café because we were all looking for mentors at the time.'

> 'I found it (The Café) a relaxed atmosphere and informal.'

> 'The Café helped me to understand the network thing and gave me insights into the business culture which I did not have before.'

The Café offered opportunities which were not necessarily forthcoming through tradition business support measures. Furthermore the participants who are artists found that traditional business support services did not really benefit them. The process of finding a mentor unlocked particular skills. As one student comments:

> 'We all had to invite a guest who would benefit us as individuals. In order to do this we had to undertake a stakeholder mapping exercise in order to identify who to invite. This made me physically having to contact people.'

This was seen as a challenge. But the benefits of developing network skills were apparent amongst the graduates.

> 'You can have a beautiful business plan but unless you can do something about it all it is but a beautiful business plan!'

The project coordinator emphasised the way the Café idea opened up more possibilities for people to find mentors:

> 'One of the guys who is on the graduate programme is an artist and was looking to sell work and his entrepreneur was an art dealer, and that gave him access to his ideas and contacts. The art dealer was a busy guy. The student rang him up 20 times and this poor guy had got post it notes all over his computer saying so and so rang again and in the end he was so intrigued he turned up and came to dinner as a consequence.'

Contribution to social inclusion
The Café has opened up a series of avenues and possibilities for school pupils at George Stephenson School who are from working class backgrounds who would not traditionally entertain possibilities of engaging in business development. The Café inspired the introduction of enterprise in the school which is now embedded within the school curriculum.

Sustainability and links with other policies and programmes
The EPF Café project is linked to a 'chain' of initiatives which have been developed in Tyne and Wear to promote an Enterprise Culture which is a key element of One North East Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and also Tyne and Wear Economic Strategy. Despite existing structures in place to support new business development, this rate of development is low within Tyne and Wear. The philosophy and methods behind the Café are to reach those groups – particularly young people, many from disadvantaged backgrounds – who will not normally entertain ideas of creating their own business.

Conclusions

Whilst the Café had a clear link up with the regional and sub regional RES, it was found that it would have been more beneficial for One North East to have a more 'hands on' link with the project so as to consider wider possibilities for its deployment in business start up policies. Their involvement was also hindered because of staff turnovers within One North East. This affected the possibility of assimilating the project within the RDA policies because those staff who had nurtured a close link and interest had left and the opportunity was therefore lost.

The project was successful in generating very positive feedback from participants and in achieving its target outcomes. Teachers and others working within the education sector found the programme of particular benefit which sits well with the Government's ambition to promote stronger links between business and schools as a means to give pupils a better understanding of their future roles and responsibilities in the economic life of their communities.

Schools are now charged with developing enterprise learning as part of a coherent programme for vocational and work-based learning which links with other aspects of the curriculum, such as citizenship and careers education: it is recognised within the schools inspectorate that enterprise learning has implications for teaching and learning styles in terms of setting pupils more open-ended problems, encouraging them to take more responsibility for their actions and giving them greater autonomy in taking decisions. Programmes such as DIY Cafe are well placed to support this.

Programmes of this nature should continue to be developed to support educational organisations in embedding enterprise within the curriculum and the broader culture of schools and colleges. Funders should make resource allocation available to support such programmes.

The guiding principles behind the project were that to be 'entrepreneurial' is to be able to 'seize an opportunity'. Enterprise learning therefore facilitates developing certain types of skills which would not necessarily be obtained within other types of training and educational programmes. This may be the key for developing an enterprise prospectus in relation to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

9. Women Entrepreneurs Succeeding in the Business Game, or 'Elevator Pitch'

Train 2000 Ltd

Background

Project aims and objectives

The Elevator Pitch project recognised that women entrepreneurs are an under represented group in Merseyside (as well as nationally) and most notably ethnic minority and disabled women. EPF provided an opportunity to test a model approach that could be linked to their marketing programme, which required working in partnership to deliver an event that could excite and stimulate potential women entrepreneurs. Building on the existing Phoenix funded Train 2000 POWER programme network of community and business support agencies across Merseyside, including Liverpool John Moores University, key project aims were as follows:

- To develop an innovative model approach to promoting women's enterprise – an appropriate enterprise promotion tool for women
- Specifically focus on assisting ethnic minority and disabled women from deprived neighbourhoods into self-employment/enterprise
- To target women who had recently completed, or were about to complete vocational, further, or higher educational training programmes throughout the Merseyside sub-region.

The project idea was developed loosely on the USA 'elevator pitch' concept, requiring participants to present a business idea to potential backer, or customer in two minutes, but was expanded to include a series of 'pitches', as part of a 'business game' with £500-£2000 cash awards presented to the best business ideas and pitches. The idea was refined in partnership with John Moores University and existing Train 2000 project partners, including Barclays bank, Prince's Trust and Business Liverpool the local authority enterprise support arm, which all helped to promote it and assisted in the delivery of the event.

Managing/delivery organisation

This EPF pilot project operated under the brand name of 'Elevator Pitch' (and is referred to as such in this text). Elevator Pitch was managed and delivered by Train 2000, a specialist women's economic development agency, operating as a social enterprise company limited by guarantee, established in 1996. This established agency is well networked with other business support organisations across its catchment area of Merseyside and has considerable experience in managing and delivering women's enterprise initiatives through New Opportunities for Women (NOW), Women in Business and Women's Enterprise Initiative projects. Train 2000 is a founding member of the national, regional and sub-regional women's enterprise support structure, which includes

PROWESS, the North West Regional Women's Network and Merseyside Social Enterprise Network respectively.

Project cost
EPF contribution £42,175, with business and community funding of £14,058 (notably with funding from Barclays bank and in-kind staff assistance from the local authority and Prince's Trust) amounting to a total project cost of £56,233.

Project delivery
Promotion and outreach an important key to the project was to overcome issues of marketing a women's enterprise event, as Train 2000's experience is that women lack confidence and that there is a need to work with existing organisational points of contact for women and to hold awareness raising events at these places (e.g. universities, colleges and local community centres/social group organisations e.g. mothers groups) in order to encourage women to come forward and use enterprise support. This outreach strategy was vital the success of the project. Over 4,000 postcards were distributed to women students via educational establishments and local cafes and bars. The project also received widespread local television, radio and newspaper publicity and was supported by a website, mass e-mail and a wide range of networked partner agencies/organisations (e.g. EAs, banks, universities).

Staffing The project was managed by the project manager (the CEO of Train 2000) and involved 15 advisor staff, as well as volunteer participants from banks, local authority and local businesses who performed roles and judged in the pitch event.

The Business Game and Elevator Pitch The business game involved participants developing an innovative business proposal, which was initially presented on the back of a postcard application. Initial applications were short-listed and the selected finalists attended a pitching event at Liverpool's Radio City Tower. During the event, participants were invited to make a pitch to a potential business backer during the 1.5 minute elevator journey to the top of the tower. At the top of the tower, the conference room held a 'pitching event', where further four 2 minute pitches were made to various volunteer judges (e.g. bank staff, local entrepreneurs), representing potential buyers, suppliers, business backers etc. After the 'pitching event' an awards evening was held, at which five prizes of £500 were distributed to the best business ideas and pitches, with the idea being that this money would help the development of the business idea.
Monitoring and management - The project was monitored against the targets it set, with on-going management systems in place. There were monthly review progress meetings and databases of partner agency contacts and participants were kept. The project manager stated that the EPF was a good, 'supportive' programme to work with.

Project outcomes and achievements

The project manager regarded the project as very successful. The project eventually included two 'pitching events' at Radio City Tower in Liverpool and an awards evening. The original aim was for 20 people to be targeted for a single 'pitching event', but because there were over 120 decent applications, two events were held, involving around 24 participants (12 at each event). Apart from the five award winners a number of other women have been integrated into the existing established Train 2000 women's enterprise training support programme which includes an eight week start-up course, various workshop/seminar events and on-going mentoring.

The project manager was able to provide specific examples of women who had gone on to develop their business ideas after the Elevator Pitch project, including one woman

whose confidence boost from the project had led her to start a business helping people to overcome their fear of flying (see beneficiary interview section).

The project was deemed to have contributed to building an enterprise economy and also to tackling social exclusion, as it targeted women from poorer neighbourhoods in Merseyside and also those from ethnic minorities and with disabilities. All of the participants attending the pitch were women, 35 per cent came from poorer neighbourhoods in Merseyside, 45per cent were economically inactive, 27 per cent were lone parents, 21 per cent were BME and 6 per cent were disabled.

Project influence and legacy
The Elevator Pitch model, as a way of encouraging women to get involved in enterprising activities has now been accepted as a good practice approach locally and has been partially integrated into the business support network. However, the local Business Link remain sceptical and unresponsive, despite strong lobbying from Train 2000 for more creative approaches to attract women into enterprising activities. Cost remains an important factor and it is acknowledged that the original project could not have gone ahead without EPF and that future pitching events will have to be on a smaller scale. A scaled down 'pitching' event was held on 8th March 2006 and there are plans for another similar event September 2006. This is now integrated into Train 2000's marketing process, but will not operate on a larger scale without external funding (BL has promised some funding, but this has not yet been forthcoming). The project manager feels that the project could easily be replicated elsewhere, but stressed the importance of linking an appealing idea like this with in-depth outreach and promotional events in order to overcome the barriers (i.e. lack of confidence) which women face. This type of outreach work is expensive, but necessary and a great deal more should be done to raise awareness and encourage women on a national scale.

Participants' experience
Seven women participants were interviewed, ranging in age from 25 to over 55. Two of the participants were already in the early stages of self-employment, whilst 2 were in part-time employment and seriously considering self-employment, one person was a homemaker who was in touch with John Moores University exploring a business idea and the remaining two people were short-term unemployed, one being a recent graduate and the other having left a business trainer job.

Prior to taking part in 'Elevator Pitch' six women respondents had received enterprise support. Five of the respondents were already in contact with Train 2000 and were recommended to the project by their Train 2000 advisor. The remaining two respondents were referred to the programme by friends who saw advertisements which led to one person filling out a postcard application, whilst the other registered on-line. One of these people was already on the 'Next Move Scheme' organised through the British Crafts Council (a two year scheme providing a university placement and £6,000 grant).

Due to the fact that six out of seven respondents had previous contact with enterprise support agencies, it was unsurprising that they all exhibited knowledge of other women entrepreneur role models, however, two respondents specifically mentioned knowing other women running similar types of businesses to the ones that they were developing, whilst none could recall any influence exerted by schooling and one respondent referred to how 'discouraging and unhelpful' Job Centre Plus had been.

All of the respondents referred to 'Elevator Pitch' as being an important way of focusing their business idea and progressing this forward. The respondents were at different stages of business development, with those who were thinking about self-employment able to formulate and test their idea and gain confidence from the process, whilst for those who

were already running their own business the project facilitated consolidation and growth (e.g. by testing new ideas for business development and facilitating networking). All of the respondents benefited from increased confidence and felt that the 'pitch event' was a 'daunting, but positive and rewarding experience'. Interestingly, there was little mention of preparation and training for the 'pitch' and it appears that most participants prepared themselves. Train 2000 took the view that they '…did not want any participants to have an advantage…' by receiving assistance prior to the pitching event, but that they were geared to providing assistance subsequently.

Several respondents mentioned receiving £500 awards and stated that these were used to assist their business (e.g. to buy business cards and promotional literature, to attend a trade event and to buy specialist equipment). Two respondents particularly benefited from networking undertaken at the events, notably at the awards evening, but for most respondents this was of little benefit. All respondents referred to being able to access appropriate on-going business support from Train 2000 mentors and advisors, who were highly praised.

All of the respondents had gone on to develop their own businesses, which included aroma therapy, craft work (jewellery), flying therapy (curing fear of flying, including developing a flight simulator at Liverpool airport), curtain and clothing repairs, photography and home composting (with potential wider commercial/industrial applications) and design consultancy. A couple of these new businesses were part-time, in one case because of ill health and in another case because the idea had been slow to develop and there were complex (as yet unresolved) issues relating to intellectual property rights and commercial applications. All respondents felt that the project had added some value in either (i) developing initial ideas to start a business or (ii) focusing existing business ideas and that this had raised confidence and speeded up and refined the process of their business development. There was unanimous support for the work of Train 2000 and for the continuation of 'Elevator Pitch'.

Stakeholder experience
The individuals from two stakeholder/partner organisations interviewed were both involved in the project delivery, where they assumed roles as potential customers and judges at the two pitching events and also attended the awards ceremony/networking evening at St George's Hall.

Both stakeholder respondents indicated that they were approached by Train 2000 to assist in the event, as existing partner organisations for Train 2000's women's business support programme. Both described the project as very successful, suggesting that the project has contributed to building an 'enterprise culture' amongst women in Merseyside and to assisting socially excluded, notably unemployed women from poorer areas of the sub-region. One respondent noted that:

> 'I saw a whole range of women of all ages from different backgrounds, including young students and older women returners. Some were just starting with their business ideas, whereas others were already self-employed and developing their business in its early stages. The project seemed to give participants focus and a push to take things further – making it real.'

The project was described as particularly successful in contributing to overcoming the barriers faced by facilitating access to business support assistance for the first time, overcoming their apprehensions and lack of confidence and assisting participants with test marketing for their business ideas. Both respondents were aware that several of the participants that they had seen had gone on to use further business assistance (e.g. from

Train 2000, or other local agencies including the Prince's Trust) and establish their own businesses.

The project definitely 'sparked a lot of interest' and was felt to be worth repeating, indicating that they are aware that there are plans to run future pitching events and that they would be willing to participate in them. Apart from being an excellent idea, which compliments the existing marketing of women's enterprise support locally, Train 2000 is an established and successful women's business support provider across Merseyside, which is very well networked with other complimentary agencies/organisations.

Conclusion - key lessons

- Outreach was vital in overcoming women's caution and lack of confidence to develop their business ideas. The methods and approaches used by Train 2000 were sympathetic to women's needs and requirements and encouraged a good response.

- It was important that the project was stimulating and the development of a 'pitching event' in a landmark building gave the project considerably more appeal and kudos than a mere business plan competition.

- The project was carefully planned and designed, linking in with an existing established network of women's business support activities and led by an experienced and appropriate agency in Train 2000. As such, Elevator Pitch (or variants of this idea) will continue to be used, as it has proved an effective tool in encouraging women into enterprising activities and complementary to the agency's other marketing approaches.

Table 1:   Profile of Case Study Interviews

Interview Type	Interviewee Characteristics
Delivery Organisation	1 interview with the project manager, CEO of Train 2000
Partner Organisation	2 interviews: 1 interview with Prince's Trust Area Manager 1 interview with Head of Business Support, Liverpool City Council
Participants	7 interviews: • 7 women, all 'white' • 2 women with disabilities • 3 aged 25-35; 3 aged 45-55 and 1 aged 55+ • 5 have degree level qualifications of which 2 have postgraduate/professional qualifications • 2 had no qualifications, one of which had work experience as a call centre manager • 2 were already in self employment; 2 were in part-time employment; 2 were unemployed; one homemaker

Appendix: individual case study

Susan was age 50, with no academic qualifications, but holding a professional qualification as a licensed practitioner of NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Practice) – which is

highly relevant to her business activity.

At the time of taking part in Elevator Pitch, she was working part-time in her own business and also undertaking voluntary work. Prior to this she worked as a call centre manager for Littlewoods retail, a role she had held for several years. She had started to develop the idea for a business assisting people who have a fear of flying and joined Train 2000 for some start-up training tailored at assisting women into business. This idea developed out of her interest in hypnotism and eventual professional qualification in Neuro-Linguistic Practice (NLP). She contacted 'Women Into Business' who provided start-up assistance via Train 2000. After starting up her part-time one-to-one counselling business for people with fear of flying, she became ill and had put the business idea on hold. After recovering from illness, she developed an idea involving a cabin simulator which could be located at Liverpool airport and it was this idea that she 'pitched' at the EPF event.

Having kept in contact with Train 2000, with a view to using their on-going support to assist her new business venture, they were able to recommend that she take part in 'Elevator Pitch'. She had always wanted to run her own business and, as explained earlier, had dabbled with working part-time helping people to overcome their fear of flying. She knew of other people who were undertaking hypnosis and mind-related therapy work and noted that they were typically self-employed. After her initial contact with Train 2000 she realised that it would be possible for her to become self-employed and she received excellent advice relating to start-up and notably business planning.

> 'When I was approached about Elevator Pitch I knew that it could lead to contacts and really help me to focus on developing my business concept.'

Experience of participation in the project
Entry for Elevator Pitch simply involved writing a short description of a business idea. She was then selected to take part in Elevator Pitch which involved giving a series of two minute pitches about her business idea to five different people, including a banker, an entrepreneur and a business support provider. She received considerable assistance from her Train 2000 advisor about the content and delivery of her 'pitch'.

> 'The emphasis was on convincing the person in the lift that I had a good idea.'

As a result of EP she gained a huge amount of confidence in her idea made a number of valuable business contacts and received considerable publicity, including an article in the local paper and being filmed as part of the 'Airline' television programme.

Important contacts made as a result of EP included: assistance with finding funding, including the bank for the Loan Guarantee Scheme (LGS), Liverpool's 'European Capital of Culture Funds', Business Angels for equity investment possibilities.

She was also introduced to John Moores University for technical assistance and met the person who designed the space shuttle simulator for 'Space Cadets'. A further area of advice she has been steered towards relates to securing intellectual property rights.

Subsequent experience and current situation
Whilst she has continued to provide her fear of flying lessons in conjunction with contacts at Liverpool Airport, more or less on a full-time basis, the flight simulator idea has been in pre-start gestation for about a year. She is now getting very close to pulling it all together, having located a suitable aircraft (it will take 6 months to do the salvage work), a location for the business near the Airport Hotel and various funding strands (Bank loan of £50k and potential business Angel equity investment of a further £50k).

Susan recognised that the Elevator Pitch project had played a considerable role in advancing her business idea and she is uncertain how far she would have got without the advice and support provided.

10. WORK EXPERIENCE FOR THE LIFE EXPERIENCED

Business Solutions Bedale

Background

Project aims and objectives
The project aimed to provide direct, practical experience of enterprise for people in rural North Yorkshire who were interested in starting up a new venture. It was particularly targeted at women over 50 years old. The project involved attracting people who had a business idea and providing them with a more 'hands on' experience than could be provided by the normal business advice services, in the context of a placement with an established small business.

Managing/delivery organisation
Business Solutions Bedale, which is now known as Business Support & Development is a not for profit company limited by guarantee which provides guidance, training and support to would-be entrepreneurs and existing young businesses in the Hambleton & Richmondshire area of North Yorkshire. BSB has a contract with the Employment Services, providing assistance for the self-employment option of Job Centreplus and has also been an accredited Learn Direct Centre since Jan 2005 (representing 45% of the organisation's turnover). The EPF project was solely delivered by BSB in collaboration with local business owner/managers.

Project Cost

Total project cost was £36,075, with a total business community contribution of £10,000 and total bid to the EPF of £26,075.

Origin of the idea

Work Experience for the Life Experienced (WELE) was an extension of BSB's established role as a Business Link contractor offering one-to-one business pre-start/start-up assistance. The agency's own summary of the project refers to local, limited market research which supports that 'people would like to receive a placement, whether they are on a Government Scheme to become self-employed, or simply just thinking about going it alone.' Several previous BSB clients, moreover, had 'expressed an interest in passing on their experiences and that they would value a "spare pair of hands", as a reward for the time and energy of having someone.' The focus on women was in response to the policy of Business Link to encourage more female led start-ups.

Project delivery

The project was delivered by BSB in collaboration with local business owner/managers who provided the placement opportunities. A half time facilitator was employed and project delivery was also supported by existing business advice staff within BSB.

The project was actually marketed under the title 'Look Before You Leap' and promotional activity included advertising through listed partner organisations and making brochures/flyers available in outlets such as local libraries, banks, surgeries etc. Business Link Gateway staff were also briefed about the project in order that they could signpost potential participants.

A database of host businesses was established with checks also being made to establish that they had appropriate health and safety and insurance cover before placements went ahead. Once a placement had been arranged one of the business advisers, or the facilitator, visited the business and the person on placement to identify and make provision for any additional training needs. The placements were for 2-3 weeks.

Project outcomes and achievements

Although the aim was to assist 20 people through work experience placements only 12 people had been assisted by the end of the project. Of these:

- two participants have subsequently started up their own enterprises (a marketing agency and a trout fishery business);
- a further six were still planning to go ahead with their business idea;
- three had found permanent employment with their placement employer.
- in one case the WELE experience helped the participant to realise that self-employment was not the right option for her, considered by BSB to be 'a positive outcome as her success potential was doubtful.' (WELE Final Report)

An important legacy outcome identified by the project manager has been the establishment of a database of volunteer host businesses who are also compliant with health and safety/insurance requirements, giving BSB an on-going ability to host short-term placements should they be required.

Work placements of several weeks duration for pre-starts were found to be too long and difficult to organise for the target age 50 plus population and take-up was disappointingly lower than expected. Many potential beneficiaries had time restrictions which did not allow them to take up the proposed length of job placement of 2-3 weeks. According to the project manager, most only wanted placements of a day or two, either because they were already in employment and could not get the time off, or because they were already a long way down the road to start-up and did not feel that a longer placement would be helpful.

Some insight into the experience of the placements is provided by interviews with two participants.[21] One of these (who was not over 50) worked in a hotel and wanted to set up a Dance School. A placement was organised at a Karate School which, although not ideally suited to the participants needs, was considered to be the nearest equivalent business.[22] There were also practical difficulties, since it meant that the participant had to take time off from work (using her leave entitlement) and travel 20 miles to undertake the

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[21] Other potential interviewees for whom contact details were provided by BSB were either not genuine participants or proved to be uncontactable.
[22] Note, however, that there are issues of competition that limited the extent to which placements could be in businesses that were too similar to the potential new venture.

placement. Although the manager of the School had spent some time with the participant and was able to help her with business planning aspects, the participant felt that the placement had not been sufficiently structured. She was also critical of the seminars provided by BSB on the process of setting up a business: 'They were quite interesting but not relevant to me.'

She also complained there had been little follow-up after the placement and was generally negative about her contact with BSB: 'They did not know anything about dance.' This person was clearly committed to making the most of the project, this being borne out by here willingness to use her annual leave in order to participate, and still intends to establish her own business.

A business owner of one of the host businesses, a recruiting agency, was also interviewed. The participant who had been placed in his organisation was already at developed stage in thinking about the sort of business she wanted to run (she was over 50), and being placed with a recruitment agency was relevant to her proposed marketing agency start-up. The business has subsequently started trading has maintained a working link with the recruitment agency. The interviewee felt that the placement experience itself had not really been of assistance since the participant was already well on the way to developing her business. However, the fact that the start-up business involves a trading link with the placement business indicates that the experience had a positive side.

Interestingly, when asked to comment on the scheme, he felt that more could have been done to get prospective employers involved in the pre-establishment stage of the project: 'the whole objectives of the scheme seemed to be bit woolly.' He also felt that a better briefing session and more support for employers in order to maximise the potential benefits of the placement would have been useful.

Although Age Concern and Women in Rural Enterprise were originally mentioned by the project manager as contacts and collaborators a follow-up interview revealed that BSB had in fact 'gone it alone' with the project and that no other stakeholder had been involved.   An interview with Age Concern (Richmondshire and Hambleton) revealed that, although there had been some previous contact with BSB about general matters relating to employment and enterprise support for older people 'nothing materialised because there was no money.'   It may be possible that these discussions spawned the WELE project but Age Concern confirmed they were not involved and they had not even been aware of the existence of the project. This lack of involvement of a key stakeholders seems likely to have contributed to the disappointing outcomes.

Lessons and future potential

The main problem identified in the project final report was that BSB had many more host businesses who were willing to pass on their skills and experiences than they had candidates who were willing and/or able to take up these opportunities. The report identifies that a number of potential candidates were unable to participate due to existing work commitments precluding them from allocating two full weeks of their holiday entitlement. People who were on the verge of starting-up, tend to be more motivated to devote time directly to their new ventures than on somebody else's business. The report concludes from this that 'it would have been more fruitful if the scheme had provided an opportunity for each client to do a round of a number of existing businesses and have a shorter period with a greater variety of entrepreneurs'.

The project manager also felt that the experience had reinforced the need for those involved in delivery to adopt a flexible and understanding approach, not assuming that people in the 50+ age group require less assistance for business start-ups. In the project

manager's experience, older people can be 'set in their ways and do not always take advice from younger aged advisors well.'

The project manager was critically reflective of the experience of WELE, considering that the project idea was basically 'sound' but in need of some adjustment. Despite the problems a WELE 2 (subject to available funding) was being planned which would draw on some of the lessons learned.

Further insight into the lessons and further potential of the project is provided by interviews with two stakeholder organisations. Women in Rural Enterprise (WIRE) had no recollection or knowledge of the project although the interviewee acknowledged that it was possible that someone within the organisation had been contacted at the time when it was being set up. Their view was that the project could have benefited from their early involvement and collaboration, given that their main work is on supporting women into enterprise.

Age Concern were also contacted and expressed the following key concerns which would need to be taken into consideration in any similar follow-up project:

- that before embarking on any such a project some detailed survey work was needed in order to clearly identify the needs of the target population;

- although the WELE project was set up as a pilot with the possibility of rolling out throughout North Yorkshire, it was considered that Richmondshire and Hambleton was possibly not the best area in which to implement the pilot. This is because it is an area of very low levels of unemployment and many people of the 50 plus age group are in-migrants moving to a 'rural idyll' and with little interest in setting up a new business;

- that placements with potential competitors may be a barrier to getting some employers involved. This suggests the need for more careful consideration of how best to involve employers and the design of placements to better meet the needs of those wishing to start a business;

- that key stakeholders such as Age Concern should have been more involved, including during the design stage. The organisation runs Forums in the area which provides a voice for older people and these could have been used for informing potential participants. However such involvement does have potential resource implications. Age Concern stressed that many voluntary organisations operate on very stretched resources so a future project would require building in resource allocations for other stakeholder involvement.

Conclusions

The experience of this project was that work placements of several weeks duration for pre-starts were too long and difficult to organise for the target age 50 plus population and take-up was disappointingly lower than expected. The main factors contributing to this disappointing outcome appear to be:

- problems with the basic concept of placements in small businesses, including that people who were on the verge of starting-up, tend to be more motivated to devote time directly to their new ventures than on somebody else's business. The view of the lead organisation, however, is that the problems could be overcome with some modification in how the service is delivered;

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- the nature of the rural location, combined with the more general difficulty of engaging older people in entrepreneurship (also experienced by other EPF projects targeted at this group);

- the lack of early involvement of key relevant stakeholders and of research to clarify the needs and entrepreneurial potential of the target group.

Case study sources

WELE Project Final Report

Interviews with:
    project manager (including follow-up interview)
    One placement participant

Other stakeholders:
    One owner-manager of a host business
    Age Concern
    Women in Rural Enterprise

11. Business Skills 4 Care

CareConnext Learning

Background

Project aims and objectives
- To assist up to 12 refugees/asylum seekers, aged 24 plus, from foreign healthcare backgrounds to achieve self-employment in health associated activities.

Managing/delivery organisation
Careconnect Learning Ltd provides learning opportunities through Learndirect for employees in UK health care. Essentially, this involves tutor facilitated e-learning.

Partner organisation
The Refugee Education Training Advisory Service (RETAS) provided office space for training sessions and referred nine refugee participants.

Project cost
EPF contribution £30,660 with an additional £3,730 from RETAS and Careconnect contributions (e.g. from in kind staff time).

Origin of the idea
the idea for the project appears to have followed from the overall purpose of the lead organisation, Careconnect Learning, to provide learning opportunities through learndirect for employees who already work (or who want to work) in health care. The project application refers to research carried out by the Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service (RETAS) that 'there is almost no targeted business advice available throughout the UK for refugees to facilitate their entry into self-employment'. The proposal further states that 'Refugees and business proprietors from ethnic minorities feel excluded from mainstream business support organisations […]. We would aim to motivate our target group to gain relevant skills to be able to provide a further service to other refugees coming into the area'. [….] RETAS conducted a recent mail out to those registered on a database set up jointly by the Refugee Council and the British Medical Association database to gauge interest in the regions in the kind of projects we hope to conduct'. The application does not provide details of these findings but briefly refers to evidence identifying eight cities 'as possible places to duplicate projects specifically aimed at refugee health care professionals.' The interview with the project manager clarifies that the expectation was that refugee healthcare professionals would develop businesses based on 'alternative therapies', such as acupuncture, homeopathy etc.

Project delivery
The project required half a day attendance per week over a six month period. A series of courses were delivered providing information about UK health work (e.g. regulations and qualification requirements) and included information about self-employment options and how to start and run a business. Course materials were delivered on laptop computers at the offices of RETAS in Leeds with a course tutor in attendance.

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Project outcomes and achievement

Nine refugees were assisted. Whilst around half achieved some form of certification for completed specific course modules, only two refugees completed the six month course. Only one participant is believed to have become employed in the health sector. None of the five participants interviewed had gone on to work in the health sector, or become self-employed.

Delivery organisation experience

The project was professionally delivered by an experienced tutor from a care home background. It was felt that the course was too long and would have benefited from being more intensively delivered, over a shorter period of time. The partnership worked well, but the project could have benefited from more consultation at the initial planning stage. In the event, participants wanted to know about how to work in the UK health service, rather than achieving self-employment. Whilst the project clearly addressed social exclusion criteria, it did not contribute to 'building an enterprise culture'. The project was viewed as partially successful, mainly because lessons learned from this pilot have been applied to on-going project work in London. It was therefore felt that there could be wider applications for this type of project.

Key lessons
- A similar project in Tower Hamlets has benefited from using role models
- A more focused, more intensive course might have been more suitable and achieved high completion rates.
- E-learning may not be the most appropriate way to deliver courses to people whose first language is not English and who require more intensive one-to-one assistance.
- Better collaboration and pre project planning with the partner organisation and the refugee community could have led to more appropriate course delivery and content.

Participants' experience

All of the participants were referred to the project by RETAS and none of them had any experience of, or desire to become self-employed. These were doctors and pharmacists with Russian or Afghanistan medical qualifications who were seeking re-qualification in order to work in the NHS.

Of the five people interviewed, the four who attended the course found that it was too long and only two people completed it. One respondent was unable to attend, as they lived in Bradford and the course was held in Leeds.

Whilst recognising that the course provided 'a useful insight into how the UK health system operates', most were disappointed that the course had not led to anything concrete. A couple of respondents highlighted the vicious circle of not being able to gain entry to BMA retraining and that this course had not helped in providing a foundation for entry to this. Generally, there was a feeling of disillusionment. The course might have led to 'less professional roles in the health service, such as care home assistants'.

On a more positive note, two respondents had been referred to a local FE college for English courses, which had proved beneficial and one person had found part-time college work whilst studying for a bio-medical degree.
Stakeholder Experience:

The respondent from RETAS described the project as 'ill-conceived'. This is the only project that they have run with Learn Direct, who supplied ten laptops for the course,

which was held at the Leeds office of RETAS. It was noted that the tutor came from Scarborough and was not a local person, which might have helped. However, the main problems were:

- The course was too long and spaced out, which did not suit the refugees and it was difficult to maintain attendance.

- The refugees were seeking re-training for professional medical roles and were not suited to self-employment.

- Laptop based learning was not a helpful approach for refugees. They would have benefited more from intensive face-to-face approach, which may have been better suited to their learning culture.

- The course content was rather simplistic and did not address the needs of the target audience who were ideally seeking a professional foundation course.

RETAS has not subsequently worked with Learn Direct in West Yorkshire.

Conclusions

Business Skills 4 Care aimed to assist up to 12 refugees/asylum seekers, aged 24 plus, from foreign healthcare backgrounds to achieve self-employment in health associated activities. Nine refugees were assisted. Whilst around half achieved some form of certification for completing specific course modules, only two refugees completed the full six month course. Only one participant is believed to have become employed in the health sector and none of the participants interviewed (5) had gone on to work in the health sector or become self-employed. Whilst the project attempted to address social exclusion criteria, participants were not appropriately qualified to, or interested in, setting up businesses based on 'alternative therapies' (acupuncture, homeopathy etc) but were primarily motivated and qualified to gain employment in the NHS. Better collaboration and pre project planning with the partner organisation and the refugee community could have led to more appropriate course delivery and content. The project was, however, viewed as partially successful by the project manager, mainly because lessons learned from this pilot have been applied to other on-going project work in London.

Table 1 : Profile of Case Study Interviews

Interview Type	Interviewee Characteristics
Delivery Organisation	1 interview with Careconnect Senior Manager with overall responsibility for project oversight
Partner Organisation	1 interview with RETAS Regional Manager
Participants	5 interviews: • 5 men aged 25-40 • 2 unemployed, 3 in voluntary work • All Afghanistan refugees