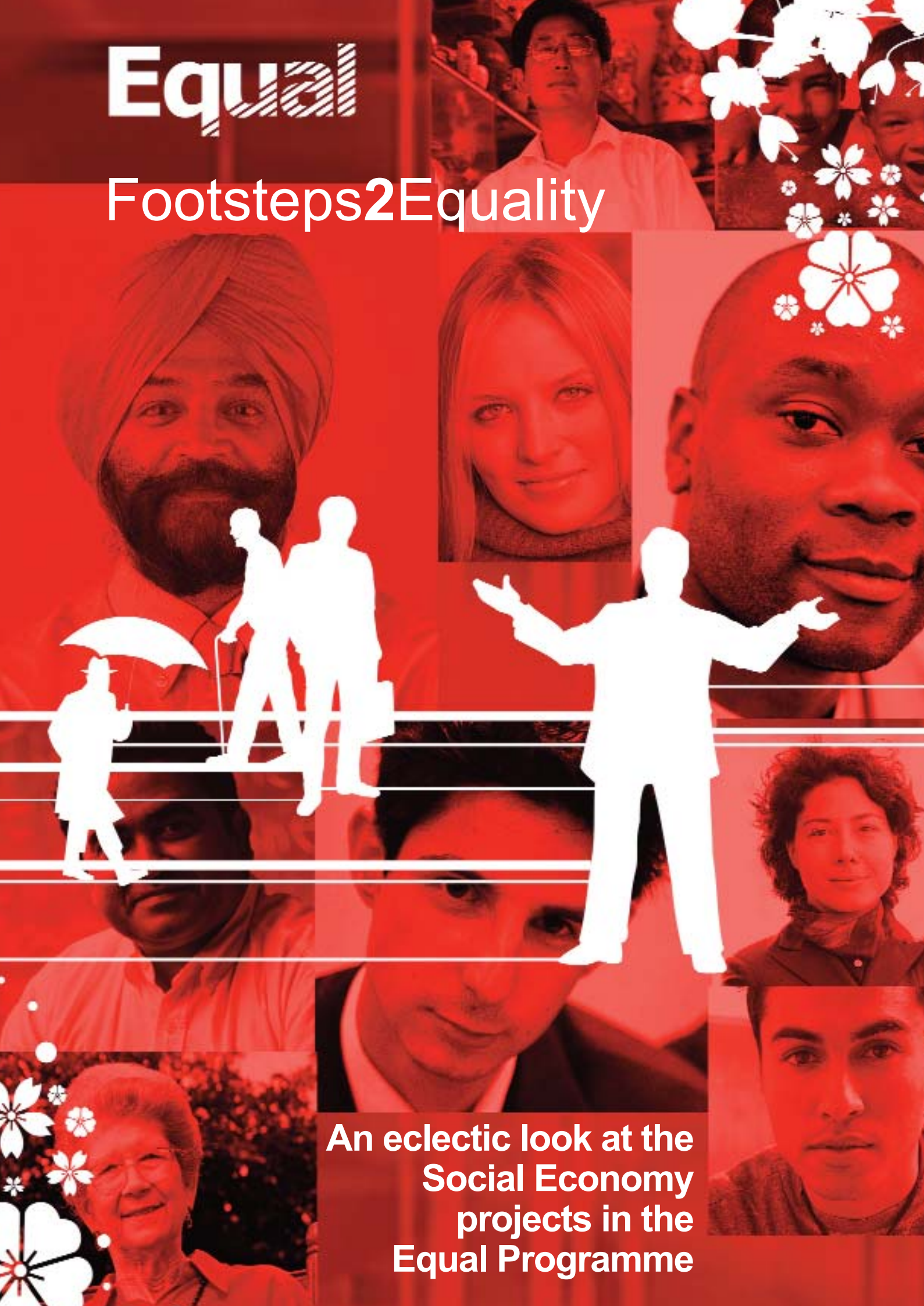


Equal

Footsteps2Equality



An eclectic look at the
Social Economy
projects in the
Equal Programme

Footsteps2Equality:

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Social Economy
projects in the
Equal Programme



Footsteps2Equality

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Foreword by Ed Milliband MP and Minister for Third Sector

Forty years ago this year, the American politician Robert Kennedy visited South Africa and gave a speech that still echoes today. Citing examples of individuals who made a stand, he attacked the corrosive danger of futility – “the belief there is nothing one man or one woman can do against the enormous array of the world’s ills”.

The Equal programme, and the partnerships outlined in this book, show what can be achieved by people who refuse to surrender to futility. Animated by social and ethical purposes, delivering a double bottom line of both profits and social impact, successful social enterprises demonstrate some of the best of business acumen and social conscience.

They are part of a growing trend. From Make Poverty History to the environmental movement, and from the increase in the numbers volunteering to the rapid growth in fair trade, social conscience is finding new and stronger expressions. Because the values represented by the social enterprise movement are widely not narrowly shared, consumers increasingly want to know that corporate social responsibility is built in to what companies do.

Social Enterprise also challenges government. We need to make it easier for social enterprises to work with the public sector, with longer term funding and standard contracts to minimise bureaucracy. We have made progress on these issues, but I know there is more to do. And we are working to improve the business environment for social enterprises, identifying and fixing market failures such as access to finance.

All of us, in government, social enterprise and wider society, need to do more to bang the drum for social enterprise. Social enterprises must be relentless in proving the value of their work. Government must do more to explain what social enterprise is and celebrate what it can do.

This book demonstrates that, with the right conditions in places, social enterprises can compete on the basis of business success and social conscience. I congratulate them on their successes.

Ed Milliband



Foreword by Ian Forsyth, Head of Equal GB

I am very pleased to welcome Footsteps 2 Equality – A look at the Social Economy work of the Equal programme in Great Britain. Funded through the European Social Fund, Equal (www.equal.ecotec.co.uk) tests and promotes new means of combating discrimination and inequalities in the labour market. Equal funds activities implemented by stakeholder groups called Development Partnerships (DPs) bringing together public, private and voluntary sector organisations to develop ideas and shape activities. Equal operates across eight themes; all of the DPs described over the next few pages have been Strengthening the Social Economy – Theme D of the Equal Programme.

The Social Economy DPs are using fresh approaches to build the capacity of social enterprises to support their local community and improve the quality of jobs. They are working at local, national and European levels to test these innovative approaches and influence key policy areas affecting social enterprises, such as public procurement, access to finance, workforce development and impact measurement. One of the main strengths the Equal programme has been its focus on innovation which allows DPs to develop and test fresh approaches which can be taken forward and used in mainstream delivery.

This booklet provides you with an opportunity to read about the lessons learned from Round 1 DPs, and see the exciting work planned by Round 2 DPs. We hope this publication will act as a 'footprint' to show the achievements of Equal in the social enterprise world. Further information on the achievements and outputs of Equal DPs is available on www.equal-works.com.



Round 1: 2001-2005

EQUIPE

Lead Partner: University of Gloucestershire
Geographical Area: GB National
Website: www.equipe.org.uk
Email: jbinmore@glos.ac.uk

About EQUIPE

EQUIPE brought childcare, playwork and social enterprise together to provide better services for communities. It achieved this by strengthening the childcare/playwork sector's ability to provide a comprehensive, high quality service that meets the needs of the community, and improves the quality of the sector's jobs.

EQUIPE used the technical support of organisations already providing advice and guidance to the social economy and its network of established partners working at the neighbourhood level to engage with communities, provide assistance in business planning and strengthen infrastructure for providing services in the sector.

Project aims

- Improve the services available to individuals in the childcare sector by sharing knowledge and good practice on the social economy
- Drive the creation of sustainable social enterprise in the sector nationally
- Carry forward the professional development of the workforce in the sector

Activities

The main partnership activities included a series of nine regional road shows around three themes

- Carry on Playing - this looked at ways of sustaining the children's play and childcare sector through social enterprise.
- Career into Play - looked at how to up-skill the children's play and childcare sector through projects that improve the quality of jobs, promote continued professional development and improve the training infrastructure.
- Boosting Childcare and Play - examined ways of developing the children's play and childcare sector adopting a bottom up market led approach and reflects the empowerment component of the **EQUIPE** programme.

Partners in the project

- Big Wide Talk
- Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs
- Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change
- Gloucestershire Resource Centre
- Joint National Committee on Training in Playwork
- London Play
- Milton Keynes Play Association
- Single Parents Action Network
- SkillsActive
- Social Enterprise London
- Suffolk Social Care Services
- University of Gloucestershire



Impact

A selection of Initiatives resulting from EQUIPE includes:

- In partnership with Bates, Wells and Braithwaite, Playwork Partnerships at the University of Gloucestershire developed 'Getting It Right Legally'; a report on the status and structure for voluntary and community childcare organisations (see www.equipe.org.uk for downloadable version).
- Social Enterprise London and Suffolk Social Care Services looked at ways of establishing a collection of services and networks of existing childcare providers in order to ensure future sustainability.
- Big Wide Talk's Playing with Words project researched the potential of the project's local community groups to develop social enterprise to increase their sustainability.
- The University of Gloucestershire developed a Diploma of Higher Education and a BA Honours in Playwork, which used distance learning as a means of providing accessible materials for playworkers, offering a range of stand-alone modules to encourage incremental learning.
- Asian Play explored multicultural play by looking at Indian arts & crafts, Dewali and Bangra dancing. In conjunction with the West Midlands Centre for Playwork Education & Training's innovative Asian Playworkers project, it raised the profile of play in Asian communities. This project delivered an introduction to Playwork course (Take 5 for Play) to predominantly non – English speaking communities. It proved to be a huge success as it recruited over 100 beneficiaries, training them to become assistants in out-of-school play settings.
- Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change's Playing It Up project improved the provision of play opportunities and play training to adults, young people and children living in social housing in disadvantaged neighbourhoods - as part of a broader programme to increase employment options through community development.

ALLIANCE OF COMMUNITIES AND ENTERPRISE

Lead Partner:	Gloucestershire County Council
Geographical Area:	Gloucestershire
Website:	www.communityenterprise.coop
Email:	helen.mccomb@co-operativefutures.coop

About Alliance of Communities and Enterprise

The Alliance of Communities and Enterprise (ACE) Development Partnership has made a measurable and visible impact on the social economy in Gloucestershire, by providing funding for 70 projects to develop community-owned enterprise in the local social economy.

ACE focused on overcoming disadvantage, expanding opportunities, and the better use of resources.

Projects covered diverse areas such as childcare, a school uniform exchange scheme, waste reprocessing and renewable energy, land-based co-operatives, credit unions, and leisure/creative opportunities for people recovering from stressful life situations.

ACE also provided an important opportunity to look at the social economy generally and review its policy context as well as examine procurement issues, networking, skills development and support needs in the sector.

Partners in the project

- Gloucestershire County Council
- Furniture Recycling Project
- Forest of Dean District Council
- Business in the Community
- Fair Deal in the Forest
- Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum
- Business Link Gloucestershire
- Disability Action Gloucestershire
- Linking Communities
- Globes
- Gloucestershire Rural Community Council
- Forest Regeneration Partnership
- Co-operative Futures
- Fair Shares
- Gloucestershire Neighbourhood Projects Network
- The Prince's Trust
- Social Enterprise Centre
- Art Shape Ltd.
- Gloucestershire Reintegration Service
- Gloucestershire Food Links
- Lydney Area in Partnership



Impact

The programme has left an important and visible legacy as the network of organisations generated by the programme - now named Community Enterprise Gloucestershire (www.communityenterprise.coop) will continue as a voice for the social enterprise sector in Gloucestershire. Substantial work was completed to help the Gloucestershire credit unions to develop new 'branding', promotional materials, websites and directories.

The resources funded by the **Equal** programme have helped to support several initiatives, markets and opportunities identified by partners. For example, support received through **Equal** enabled the Alliance of Communities and Enterprise to fund eleven research projects and seventeen feasibility studies which identify new social enterprise ideas. The studies include:

- Coney Hill Community Centre – A study investigating the feasibility of creating a new community centre, offering services such as a café and healthy living centre. The study investigated whether the centre could become a focal point for the community.
- Pedigree Cotswold Lamb – This related to a new group of farmers marketing rare breed Cotswold Lamb co-operatively to local restaurants and hotels, aiming to keep the breed more viable and safe from extinction.
- Artshape – Creativity in Social Care – research and development of a course for care home workers to develop their creative skills for the benefit of the people they care for in homes and sheltered housing.
- School Uniform Exchange – A study exploring extending a county-wide volunteer-run enterprise for families offering nearly new uniform items through a mobile, cost effective service.
- Gloucestershire Credit Unions – looked at whether the work of Gloucestershire's Credit Unions could be extended, offering people in the county greater access to community banking.

'Taking part in the study was empowering for the credit unions. Two of them found they were paying excessive audit fees, they've saved over £3000 a year by changing their software.'

Helen McComb,
Chair, Gloucestershire Credit Union Forum

THE SEEM EQUAL DP

Lead Partner: Social Enterprise East Midlands
Geographical Area: East Midlands
Website: www.seem.uk.net
Email: jennifer.inglis@seem.uk.net

About Social Enterprise East Midlands

Social Enterprise East Midlands (**SEEM**) was created in 2002 with a mission -‘To create an environment in the East Midlands where social enterprise is encouraged to develop and enabled to grow’.

SEEM brought together key stakeholders in the East Midlands social enterprise sector with that collective mission.

Project aims

The **SEEM Equal DP** had two main objectives:

- To improve and increase infrastructure specific to social enterprise.
- To demonstrate the potential of social enterprise to combat labour market discrimination

Activities

The **SEEM Equal DP**

- Funded the creation of new ways of supporting a wide range of existing social enterprises and specific groups of people who have a disadvantage in the labour market to enable them to participate in and develop social enterprise.
- Provided resources to local partners including social enterprises, to expand their own portfolio of social enterprise activity, creating jobs for target groups within their organisations. Target groups include those with learning disabilities, those in rural isolation, ex-offenders, ex-substance abusers and black and ethnic minority groups.
- Boosting Childcare and Play - examined ways of developing the children’s play and childcare sector adopting a bottom up market led approach and reflects the empowerment component of the **EQUIPE** programme.
- Has improved the capacity of those partners involved in business support and training to work together to respond to the needs of new and existing social enterprises.

Partners in the project

- Amazon Initiatives
- Ashfield District Council
- Co-options Co-operative Ltd.
- Credit Union Network for the East Midlands
- Development Trusts Association (East Midlands)
- East Midlands Co-operative Council
- East Midlands School for Social Entrepreneurs
- Groundwork Cresswell
- Leicester Community Action Network
- Leicester and County Co-operative Development Agency
- Leicester Housing Association (Village Companies Project)
- Lincoln Co-operative Development Agency
- Northamptonshire Co-operative Development Agency
- Nottinghamshire Rural Community Council
- Peak District Rural Deprivation Forum
- Social Enterprise East Midlands
- Social Firms East Midlands
- STRIDE
- Tuxford Mine of Information
- VOICE East Midlands



Impact

Over the duration of the project the DP has

- Established a high profile at policy level regionally, reflected in development of Social Enterprise Strategy for region and strong links with East Midlands Development Agency.
- Created new businesses and high quality new employment for disadvantaged people.
- Designed an Equal Opportunities Toolkit for Social Enterprise.
- Developed the “shop in a box” concept to bring social enterprise to rural communities.
- Published a guide to supporting Social Firms for Social Enterprise Business Advisors.
- Published research on Black and Minority Ethnic led Social Enterprise.
- Published research on Investment and on Business Support for social enterprise in the East Midlands.
- Developed quality and impact measurement within six social enterprises (in partnership with the Social Enterprise Partnership).
- Shaped the successful delivery of a £2 million grant fund for social enterprise.
- Increased co-operation between organisations in the region to develop the social enterprise movement.
- Established an investment and business support signposting service to assist social enterprises to find the right business advice.

The Social Enterprise East Midlands’s Annual Review 2004 – 2005 said of the support through the **Equal** programme and from other funders

‘This support has given SEEM the resources and opportunity to operate, enabling us to provide infrastructure services to the sector resulting in increased social enterprise activity across the region.’

Social Enterprise East Midlands’s Annual Review 2004 – 2005

Round 1: 2001-2005

SSEER

SUPPORTING THE SOCIAL ECONOMY IN THE EASTERN REGION

Lead Partner: Business Link Hertfordshire
Geographical Area: East of England
Website: www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/home?site=37
Email: elainem@exemplas.com

About Supporting the Social Economy in the Eastern Region

Supporting the Social Economy in the Eastern Region (**SSEER**) is a regional partnership of a group of agencies that work to develop new business support activities to strengthen social enterprises.

Project aims

SSEER had three aims:

- Develop a strong business support framework through collaboration and integration of specialist social economy and mainstream business advisors
- Promote networking, inter-trading and sharing of best practice
- Create innovative community finance institutions

Activities

Some of the many activities undertaken by **SSEER** include:

- Training for mainstream business advisers to increase their awareness of the needs of social enterprises.
- Business training for social enterprises.
- Developing mainstream business support tools to make them accessible to social enterprises.
- Helping credit unions to create economies of scale and become more sustainable.
- Researching the finance needs of social enterprises.
- Setting up a Finance Think Tank group to identify the specific needs of social enterprises to access appropriate finance.
- Research into clusters and supply chains.

Partners in the project

- Bedfordshire County Council
- Cambridge Housing Society
- Harlow District Council
- Suffolk Regeneration Trust
- The Guild
- Anglia Polytechnic University
- Cambridge Co-Operative Development Agency
- Primetimers
- InCredit
- Dacorum CVS
- COVER
- Harlow CVS
- East of England Development Agency
- Business Link Norfolk
- Hertfordshire County Council
- GET Group
- Industrial Common Ownership Finance Ltd
- Harlowsave Credit Union
- Harlow Co-operative Development Agency
- Suffolk County Council
- Suffolk ACRE
- Bedfordshire Chamber
- Business Link For Cambridgeshire
- EmployAbility



Impact

SSEER developed the social enterprise strategy for the region, one of the few regional social enterprise strategies which has been written by the social enterprise sector itself.

One of the most significant outcomes to emerge from the **SSEER** Development Partnership has been the establishment of a regional social enterprise network, Social Enterprise East of England (www.socialenterprise-east.org.uk/). In line with other regions in England, and with national networks in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, this network will provide the link between national policy initiatives and regional and local needs, both through its own activity and through support and co-ordination for sub-regional networks. It already has links with a number of national representatives, including:

- The Quality and Impact Project run by the Social Enterprise Partnership.
- Social Enterprises with a Wider Market Focus, run by Co-operatives UK.
- Social Enterprise Coalition.

The website www.nearbuyou.co.uk is another key output, being the first social enterprise trading website in England.

'The SSEER project has had an enormous influence on social enterprises and support organisations in the Eastern region. For the first time it enabled people to come together and share ideas and this has resulted in the regional and sub-regional networks being set up that will carry this work forward into the future. It has enabled us to be innovative and test ideas and we have been able to develop ideas in the wider context of our transnational partnership. The regional network is becoming a major influence in the future planning of support for social enterprises in the region.'

Nicky Stevenson
The Guild in Norfolk

Round 1: 2001-2005

TGDP

THAMES GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

Lead Partner: London Borough of Greenwich
Geographical Area: South East London
Website: www.greenwich.gov.uk
Email: Kingsley.otbushin@greenwich.gov.uk

About Thames Gateway Development Partnership

The Thames Gateway Development Partnership (TGDP) was a dynamic cross-border initiative operating in South East London. With partners on both sides of the Thames, the TGDP sought to tackle all forms of social exclusion in the labour market. The TGDP is spearheaded by the London Borough of Greenwich in co-operation with the boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Bexley, Hackney, Havering, Lewisham, and Newham.

The partnership impacted on the social economy by working with a number of local voluntary projects to help them develop into social enterprises. Within the TGDP all the local partners work at borough level with marginalised or disadvantaged people. It was the mission of the TGDP to help these organisations become financially sustainable whilst remaining committed to their social purpose.

Project aims

The DP's aims were:

- To develop a common understanding of the social economy at European level.
- To develop best practice models to support and promote the social economy and influence policy.
- To improve and share skills, expertise, and knowledge of third sector organisations.
- To develop a non-financial partnership support mechanism.
- To raise the professional profile of workers within third sector organisations.

Activities

Activities undertaken by the partnership include:

- European Community Co-operative Observatory– A European-level Community Enterprise offering a range of services and support in the development of sustainable social enterprise development.
- Certificate in Community Enterprise - new skills-based, European-level qualification, accredited by the University of East London. Staff and volunteers of local groups have benefited by taking part in this specialised training course which concentrates on the development of skills as business managers.
- Development of best practice models, including business support, legal and fiscal framework, development of a local government support strategy.

Partners in the project

- London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
- London Borough of Bexley
- London Borough of Havering
- London Borough of Hackney
- London Borough of Newham
- London Borough of Lewisham
- London Community Recycling Network
- The Ahoy Centre
- The Riverwood Project
- The Archway Young People's Motorcycle Project
- Bexley Community Media Association
- Timeline Credit Union
- Deptford Action Group for the Elderly
- The Forum @ Greenwich
- Independent Photography
- University of East London
- Local voluntary and community sector organisations across all seven boroughs



Impact

Greenwich council has used **Equal** funding to help a number of local projects which work with marginalised groups to become more sustainable and less grant-dependent. Some of the projects supported include:

- The Ahoy Centre - project offering excellent sailing facilities on the Thames for disadvantaged groups.
- BCMA - a new community media association offering media training, soon to be broadcasting its own radio station across the Thames Gateway.
- Deptford Action Group for the Elderly - is a pro-active organisation, working to improve the quality of life for local pensioners.
- Independent Photography - enables people to engage with digital lens based media arts through a range of creative programmes and activities.

Round 1: 2001-2005

SOLENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

Lead Partner: Portsmouth Housing Association
Geographical Area: South East England
Website: www.phagroup.org.uk
Email: Geoff.phillpotts@phagroup.org.uk

About Solent Community Development Partnership

The Solent Community Development Partnership strengthened the social economy through tackling nationally and locally identified skills gaps for people working (paid or unpaid) in the Social Enterprise Sector. The outcomes provide individuals skilled in working in community economic development and voluntary work.

Project aims

The aims were:

- To address an identified skills gap in the Solent local social economy by providing individuals skilled in working in community and voluntary work.
- To provide a new, formalised progression route for trainees to further training and/or employment.
- To provide access to qualifications and employment for people facing disadvantage and discrimination.

Activities

The programme provided a formalised progression route for residents to move to further training and/or employment in the third sector through the development of accredited taster courses. Over 250 people gained units towards NVQ and Open College Network qualifications in community work, with provision of work placements enabling residents to gain relevant experience. It focused on socially deprived residents in the disadvantaged urban areas of Portsmouth and Southampton and in the rural/small town setting of the Isle of Wight.

Partners in the project

- Gloucestershire County Council
- Portsmouth Housing Association
- Training for Work in Communities
- Kitemark Training
- Community Solutions
- Portsmouth City Council
- Southampton City Council
- Community Development South East



Impact

Some of the achievements of the Solent Community Development Project include:

- Actively involving trainees in participatory group training, NVQ portfolio development and the planning, conduct and evaluation of project workshops and conferences as well as visits to and from Sicily as part of the transnational element of the project.
- Outreach work and extra support for: ESOL trainees (immigrants learning basic English language skills), people with literacy and dyslexia problems, trainees with visual impairment and for people in isolated rural areas.
- Using innovative techniques such as methods of engaging with people from disadvantaged communities, linking of participatory group work to NVQ delivery, using work placements, and collaborative work and through use of the Achieving Better Community Development model of planning and evaluation.
- 'Talking the talk and walking the walk', a report published by the partnership, detailed lessons learnt in engaging with disadvantaged groups, particularly in linking participative group work to NVQ delivery. It also suggested a need to simplify the language/approach of NVQ and the National Occupational Standards in Community Development work.

Comments from Participants who have received training through the Solent Community Development Partnership:

'It helps you know what you're talking about and gives you the confidence to say it.'

Trainee employed part-time in a voluntary organisation

'Being given this opportunity has proved to myself that my disability has not blocked me from travelling abroad and I intend to travel and see more of the world in the future.'

Trainee with sight impairment

THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

Lead Partner:	Social Enterprise Partnership GB Ltd
Geographical Area:	GB national
Website:	www.sepgb.co.uk
Email:	Gerold.schwarz@sepgb.co.uk

About The Social Enterprise Partnership

The Social Enterprise Partnership (SEP) involved a far-reaching programme of work to upgrade business development and support to the social economy sector, to help social enterprises grow their business operations and to measure, prove and improve their quality and impact. SEP aimed to address identified barriers restricting the successful growth of the social enterprise sector, notably under-investment, insufficient access to training and support, the lack of appropriate quality mechanisms and impact measurement tools.

Project aims

The project had four main objectives:

- To raise awareness of social enterprise and its contribution to economic activity and social inclusion by demonstrating practical ways to build the sector.
- To improve the performance of social enterprises to ensure a thriving, expanding, community of successful social enterprises in the future.
- To make the social enterprise support system more effective. Without effective support systems there will be no rapid growth in the social enterprise sector.
- To make the social enterprise support system more effective. Without effective support systems there will be no rapid growth in the social enterprise sector.

Activities

The SEP Development Partnership comprised four national central projects grouped within two themes, seven regional SEP projects, and a transnational programme of learning.

At a central level the national project activities fell into two themes –quality and impact and business development and support.

Quality and Impact - as the leading UK programme in the field of impact measurement for social enterprise, SEP conducted a series of pilot projects to develop and test a series of social accounting tools. More information can be found at: www.proveandimprove.org/new/index.php

Business Development and Support - within this theme, there were three projects:

- Training – SEP worked with SFEDI and training experts to develop two new professional development programmes for business advisors to the social enterprise sector and social enterprise managers.
- Consultants register: SEP developed a national register of consultants for the social enterprise sector which is available at www.setas.co.uk/consultant_search.asp
- Disincentives Research: With King's College London, SEP examined disincentives in the UK benefits systems for potential social enterprise employees and the report is available at www.sepgb.co.uk/downloads/disincentives.pdf



Partners in the project

The following partners established a limited company, Social Enterprise Partnership (GB) Ltd, to deliver the project:

- Co-operatives UK
- Development Trusts Association
- New Economics Foundation
- Social Enterprise London
- Social Firms UK
- The Social Enterprise Coalition

Impact

The project has helped to strengthen the social enterprise sector, raise its profile more generally and also increase its impact on social inclusion. The main areas of programme innovation included bringing together national and regional social enterprise sector organisations and the development of new tools, materials and research. In particular, the research work on quality and impact measurement was a key output for the partnership which can be used throughout the social enterprise sector.

AGORA – REVITALISING TOWN CENTRES AND RETAIL DISTRICTS

Lead Partner: Manchester Metropolitan University
Geographical Area: National across England
Website: www.agora.uk.net
Email: C.parker@mmu.ac.uk

About AGORA

AGORA aims to reverse economic decline by training local stakeholders in social enterprise management models. Led by Manchester Metropolitan University and The Association of Town Centre Management, this two year project will empower local communities in predominantly deprived areas to manage their town and/or district centres following sustainable social enterprise management models.

This community-led approach will build on the experience of existing town centre management schemes to develop innovative social economy models of place management that ensure local people have a vital input into the regeneration of their local centres.

Project aims

The project aims are:

- To create an AGORA observatory that measures and builds understanding of place management with specific reference to the role of social enterprise.
- To develop and support 8 AGORA pilot communities that will test out alternative social enterprise approaches to place management in predominantly deprived retail-focussed areas.
- To augment and support existing training and education infrastructures to deliver training and qualifications relevant to the needs of those involved in place management.
- To construct a pan-European network, linking policy and practitioner audiences interested in the social, economic and environmental health of towns and cities.

Partners in the project

- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Association of Town Centre Management
- Department of Trade and Industry
- MyKnowledgeMap Ltd
- Skillsmart Retail
- Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council



Impact

Initial research undertaken by the Retail Enterprise Network (Manchester Metropolitan University) in partnership with the Association of Town Centre Management has provided evidence that local shops and services are often the heart of communities. The partners believe that the future development and management of an area should be undertaken by the individuals who benefit from its regeneration i.e. those that trade, live, work or shop within it. To demonstrate that this approach is effective the partnership has established eight pilot areas in England to test the theory.

‘Truly viable town centres need to meet the needs of the whole community in a sustainable manner. AGORA will offer this alternative through applying the principles of social entrepreneurship to town centre management.’

Cathy Parker, Director of the Retail Enterprise Network

BLACK COUNTRY COMMUNITIES IN THE LEAD

Lead Partner: Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Geographical Area: Black Country
Website: www.blackcountrylead.org
Email: waltersanthony@walsall.gov.uk

About Black Country Communities in the Lead

Black Country Communities in the Lead (LEAD) is an initiative designed to impact upon the social economy by helping to empower residents across West Midlands to develop community businesses and social enterprises through community building. The partnership will work to foster the skills necessary for people to live, work, and develop, their geographical or interest community.

Target groups include disadvantaged geographical and interest communities, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and people with mental health problems.

Project aims

The project aims are to:

- Develop locally-led partnerships to work closely with regional partnerships.
- Identify and develop skills to work in the local community as volunteers and in paid work.
- Identify and develop skills to develop social enterprises, particularly those with a strong social inclusion remit.
- Identify the skills gap for future work in the area.
- Develop skills for taking part in e-government and citizenship.
- Develop toolkits which will facilitate the creation of social enterprises.

Activities

The partnership is seeking to provide the following:

- Participative action research to identify need and empower the beneficiaries.
- Support and advice for developing enterprises.
- Marketing for social enterprises.
- Procurement support and advice.
- Advice and support for a range of interest communities including people with disabilities, people with mental health problems and BME groups.
- Advice, support and identification of skills to be involved in health, environmental and housing issues; and
- Support for e-governance and citizenship.



Partners in the project

- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- Black Country Knowledge Society
- Black Country Small Business Ltd
- Walsall Community Arts
- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
- Access to Business
- Aegis Associates
- Groundwork
- Halesowen College
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
- The Lighthouse Project
- Wolverhampton Training and Learning College
- Walsall PCT
- Sandwell College
- All Saints Action Network
- The NET

Impact

LEAD will be identifying new models of work that will ultimately feed into the 30 year regeneration strategy developed by the Black Country Consortium (BCC). They will also be impacting on local governance by fostering sustainable social capital.

Round 2: 2004-2007

REALISE

REAL EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOOD IN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Lead Partner: Suffolk County Council
Geographical Area: Suffolk
Website: www.realisesuffolk.org.uk
Email: Adrian.Scarratt@socserv.suffolkcc.gov.uk

About REALISE

The **REALISE** Partnership is working to improve the employment prospects for disabled people in Suffolk. The partnership focuses on developing social enterprises, which offer employment and training opportunities to disabled people

Project aims

REALISE has three main objectives:

- To develop and implement modern services for disabled people, which will provide:
 - More realistic working environments
 - Realistic training opportunities linked to jobs in mainstream employment
 - Employment linked to sustainable business activities
- To form an 'umbrella organisation' which supports and provides disabled people with quality employment and training services and helps to create jobs for them in social enterprises.
- To generate a realistic strategy to support employment within social enterprises and social firms for disabled people through the different agencies involved and address areas in need of improvement.

Activities

Two main areas of activities are undertaken as part of the project:

Development of service - The partnership has identified seven existing work projects and social enterprises which will run pilot projects in order to achieve their first objective.

They are testing new approaches linked with the development of their trading and business activities in order to create sustainability.

Development of expertise - **REALISE** is fostering social enterprise expertise in the area of management qualification, procurement and empowerment

Partners in the project

These include pilot work projects and social enterprises/social firms, disability rights groups, experts in the field of social enterprise/social firm development. It also includes strategic partners such as:

- Suffolk Learning & Skills Council (LSC),
- Jobcentre plus
- Suffolk County Council
- Primary Care Trusts and the NHS Trust



Impact

The partners involved have never before worked together in a structured process to develop and improve training and employment for people with disabilities. **Equal** funding has provided this opportunity and will ultimately aim to create sustainable social enterprises for disabled people within Suffolk. The partnership that has formed includes organisations from all levels (operational, funding, political) and the structure of the DP involves partners equally and will ensure that resources are allocated at all levels of the partnership.

'Social Firms Eastern Region is committed to developing and improving the employment opportunities for disabled people and became a partner in REALISE to further this aim.

As a result of REALISE events and activities there is an increased awareness of the real possibility of employing people with disabilities in Suffolk. Two pilot projects are working with us to develop new Social Firms (businesses that employ disabled people), through the REALISE programme.

In addition, Social Firms Eastern Region is participating in the creation of the umbrella organisation to assist the externalisation of projects as they become businesses and the future development of new social enterprises. The progress along the path to create this important legacy of the REALISE project is encouraging. We see it as the most important outcome of the project because it will provide the foundation for development and growth after the project is over.'

Karen Anderson, Social Firms Eastern Region

INSPIRE

Lead Partner: North East Social Enterprise Partnership

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About INSPIRE

The overriding objective of the **INSPIRE** Development Partnership is to further develop the regional infrastructure of the social economy by fast-tracking the development of the North East's Social Enterprise Sector through the pursuit of two objectives:

- **INSPIRE** North East: The establishment of a social enterprise research and development unit and the creation of new replication methodologies / partnerships that strengthen the social economy
- **INSPIRE** Europe: a European Social Enterprise Network

Inspire aims to meet these objectives through supporting social enterprises and relevant support agencies, particularly those working with disadvantaged groups, to develop innovative market-orientated social enterprises. The first stage in this process is developing partnerships with relevant research bodies, inventors, market intelligence agencies and local and regional support agencies.

Once ideas are identified, Inspire will set up Replication Partnerships to help social enterprises implement similar business models. This will enable them to grow rapidly, exploit new ideas, achieve greater strategic focus and gain the necessary scale of operation without losing their community roots and ability to empower those disadvantaged in the labour market.

Activities

The Development Partnership's initial target was to identify six business ideas which they could replicate and has identified a model for replication. The partnership has developed this model with Sunderland Home Care Associates (SHCA), a cooperative who provide home care services to older people. This has involved setting up the Care And Share Associates (CASA) with staff from SHCA and support from NESEP members Social Enterprise Sunderland.

INSPIRE is also working on a North East-based project to help communities nationally develop their own renewable energy systems from wind, hydro wood and other sources. The project, called Community Energy, involves a range of North East community groups who will be pilots for a national programme if the project is ultimately successful. Community Energy will take a share of the profits it generates, but unlike a private business, it will be owned by the community groups it works with and its profits will be used to help other communities generate renewable energy systems.



Partners in the project

- North East Social Enterprise Partnership
- Economic Partnerships Limited
- Comecon Limited
- Development Trusts Association North East
- One North East
- Stride
- Social Enterprise Sunderland
- Dixon Berriman Associates
- Care and Share Associates
- Community Ventures Limited
- Social Firms North East

Impact

INSPIRE is the first ever research and development unit focused specifically to matching good business ideas to social enterprise opportunities to benefit disadvantaged communities in terms of quality jobs and economic inclusion. The new context-orientated approach involves pulling disadvantaged groups and social enterprises together with partners who have a remit related to linking employment and social inclusion strategies together, such as the Regional Development Agency.

BEST PROCUREMENT

Lead Partner:	Social Enterprise East Midlands
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About BEST Procurement

SEEM and its partners have developed a programme of work to simultaneously develop the public market for social enterprise and social enterprise's capacity to deliver to this market, called **BEST** Procurement (Benefiting the Economy and Society Through public sector Procurement). Its main goal is to improve the relationship between public expenditure and social outcomes within the East Midlands Region, positioning social enterprise as a key delivery vehicle in achieving this.

Project aims

The partnership aims to accomplish the following:

- Create new market opportunities within the public sector appropriate to social enterprise.
- Develop the capacity of the social enterprises by providing targeted support to help develop appropriate business models, win and sustain contracts.
- Achieve real improvement in society, in particular equality in the labour market through improving and creating quality, inclusive employment opportunities.
- Achieve an increase in the number and quality of public sector procurement strategies and practices achieving economic, social and environmental objectives concurrently.

Activities

The partnership undertakes activities on both the supply (with social enterprises) and demand side (with Local Authorities, the NHS and others).

It also undertakes research into the barriers and opportunities in this field, observing and drawing on practice from the partnership's activities.

The following are some examples of services offered to social enterprises by the **BEST** Procurement Development Partnership

- Culture Change - Evaluate and improve social enterprise's readiness for 'fitness to trade.'
- Contract Finder - Provides updates of contracting opportunities.
- Equality of Employment - This service helps enterprises to assess and benchmark their employment practice and identify areas for improvement. It also provides tools to develop and hone practice and policy relating to Equal opportunities, diversity, work-life balance and other important ways of working.
- Sales Broker – The sales broker helps social enterprise to achieve increased sales of goods and services to public sector purchasers through various methods such as reviewing marketing material.



Partners in the project

- East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA)
- Sustainable Development Research Centre
- Forum for the Future
- Development Trusts Association (East Midlands)
- East Midlands NHS Procurement Hub
- Greater Nottingham Primary Care Trust
- Nottingham City Hospital
- Leicester Community Action Network
- Voice East Midlands
- Mutualadvantage
- Leicester and County Co-operative
- Institute of Sustainable Development in Business
- Social Firms East Midlands
- Nottingham City Council
- Northamptonshire County Council
- North West Leicester District Council
- Coalfields Regeneration Trust
- Northamptonshire Co-operative Development Agency

Impact

Even during its early stages, **BEST** Procurement has had significant impact at strategic level. The partnership has contributed to publications by the New Economics Foundation and the Social Enterprise Coalition, responded to consultations from the Sustainable Procurement Taskforce and won support from the East Midlands Regional Assembly and Government Office for the East Midlands.

Another example of impact by **BEST** Procurement is in the area of health. This includes the new Procuring Sustainable Health Project which is working with Trusts and the developing East Midlands NHS Procurement Hub, to enable buyers to create opportunities for social, environmental and health improvement through NHS contracts. It will equip buyers to review whether demand can be reduced or eliminated, develop sustainable specifications and tender evaluation criteria, and promote long-term development of local suppliers.

From using fresh local produce to supporting social enterprise, the project aims to re-direct health spending into the local economy to address health inequalities, and reduce the impact of production, transportation, usage and disposal on the environment and peoples' health; ultimately reducing the demand on public health services.

CULTURAL SHIFT SOUTH EAST

Lead Partner: South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA)
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About Cultural Shift South East

Cultural Shift South East was developed in response to the need for capacity building and understanding across a broad number of markets and sectors. It is a regional **Equal** funded Development Partnership aimed at stimulating understanding about the role and potential of social enterprise to deliver in key markets. The DP works with change-makers across the public, private and voluntary/community sectors to support them in championing social enterprise as a service delivery mechanism and help them to dismantle systemic barriers to working in cross sector partnership.

Activities

The partnership is currently undertaking the following activities as part of the Cultural Shift South East Development Partnership:

- **Demonstration** – The partnership is working with a range of UK and international teams to demonstrate the process of market engagement with social enterprise. In the UK these teams will focus on three project ideas aiming to engage cross sector partnerships to support social enterprise through facilitation, purchasing and investment.
- **Networking** - The networking function of the Development Partnership will offer social entrepreneurs from all backgrounds opportunities to come together to find social enterprise solutions to key issues of service delivery and product development in a wide range of markets. This process will be supported by facilitated events, mentoring opportunities and the development of resources. Market specific networks will also be established to support the development of social enterprise in key growth areas.
- **Research** - The Cultural Shift South East Programme will undertake a process of action research, identifying the cultural and systemic barriers to cross sector partnerships and social enterprise. This process will develop a number of practitioner resources to help overcome barriers such as partner engagement, investor development, overcoming state aid barriers etc. Cultural Shift South East seeks to link research to practical action, networking resources to assist the development of new markets with the public and private sector.
- **Influencing** - It is central to the aims of the programme. The partnership will be using the outcomes of Cultural Shift South East to seek to stimulate a cultural change in local, regional, national and European policy.



Partners in the project

- South East England Development Agency
- Portsmouth City Council
- Portsmouth Housing Association
- HMP Standford Hill
- Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, Said Business School, University of Oxford
- RAISE
- Business Link
- Co-ops South East
- The Development Trusts Association
- The Countryside Agency
- Government Office for the South East
- Oxford Swindon and Gloucester Co-op
- Social Firms South East
- South East England Regional Assembly
- Unltd
- The NHF Social Enterprise Development Group
- European Institute of Social Services

Impact

Ultimately the partnership aims to stimulate social change and service improvements in the South East through socially entrepreneurial partnerships between the public, private and voluntary and community sectors.

Round 2: 2004-2007

SEASY

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ACTION SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Lead Partner: Sheffield Community Enterprise Development Unit
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About Social Enterprise Action South Yorkshire

The overall plan of Social Enterprise Action South Yorkshire (**SEASY**) is to develop, support and promote a thriving social enterprise sector in South Yorkshire, which can ultimately help bring excluded groups of people back into the labour market.

SEASY aims to ensure that South Yorkshire's Social Economy maximises opportunities for benefiting from public sector contracts, procurement and regeneration initiatives, through work to:

- Build its capacity, expand, train, support, develop and diversify its workforce and social enterprises.
- Scale up its operations in new partnerships and joint venture companies with the public and private sectors.
- Strengthen its profile and credibility through new accounting for quality mechanisms and improving public sector procurement opportunities.

Activities

SEASY is focussing activities on three main strands

- Workforce development and capacity building for social enterprises, for example, breakfast clubs providing business management training for social enterprises, a virtual school for the built environment, a graduate gateway into social enterprise and mentoring support for social enterprises.
- Developing a new accounting for quality model, incorporating the best of social audit, social licenses, social accounts, and other quality assurance systems to demonstrate added value and social impacts.
- Developing new business models for public/private/social enterprise partnerships, including Joint Venture Companies and routes to public sector procurement contracts.

Partners in the project

- Sheffield Community Enterprise Development Unit
- Groundwork Sheffield
- Social Enterprise Europe
- The Graduate Gateway
- Barnsley Black and Ethnic Minority Initiative (BBEMI)



Impact

SEASY's partners are leading on the establishment of a "Task Force" for public contracting which includes lead Social Enterprise agencies and the four local authorities in South Yorkshire in one working group.

SEASY is also establishing a longitudinal study of the journey taken to the stage of commercial trading by individuals and organisations most distant from the market, with a particular focus on BME beneficiaries.

Very importantly, **SEASY** will help a number of cutting-edge social enterprise development agencies to work together to bring about considerable added value and synergy through partnership work and co-ordinated efforts across South Yorkshire.

' SEASY aims to provide long term solutions to growth, employment and skills gaps in social enterprise that will create a thriving social economy, fit for purpose and attractive to the open marketplace.'

Dave Thornett,
Chief Executive of Sheffield Community Enterprise Development Unit and lead partner
for the SEASY Development Partnership

Round 2: 2004-2007

C3:

A COMPETITIVE, CONFIDENT AND CREDIBLE SOCIAL ECONOMY

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About C3 - A competitive, confident and credible social economy

C3 works to develop tools and pilot new models that support a wide range of social economy business advice and development organisations, to build in key elements of performance improvement, and quality management approaches into their work. This will enable the social economy sector to become more credible and competitive, leading to a fuller and more confident engagement in wider market opportunities. The approach will be developed throughout the West of England.

Project aims

The partnership seeks to achieve the following:

- Improve the competitiveness and raise the credibility of the sector by integrating Performance Improvement into the culture of enterprises in the social economy. This will enable the sector to increase their share of the market, increase their contract readiness, increase and retain high quality staff, benchmark their activities, develop a dialogue of equals with mainstream and private enterprises and improve their ability to attract finance.
- Broaden and deepen the range and quality of support available to social economy organisations, including new services.
- Develop and strengthen the delivery mechanisms of social economy support throughout the West of England.
- Mainstream quality management models and impact measurement systems to help social economy organisations prove and improve their performance and available resources and tools.
- Build on the strengths of other potential support for the sector in the sub-region e.g. linking in with Small Business Service (SBS) development, Rural Renaissance and the Home Office 'Change Up' agenda.

Activities

The partnership is piloting a range of new business support services and providing expert advice in improving the performance of social economy organisations. This includes:

- A suite of Performance Improvement diagnostic and action planning tools (PERform) which use the EFQM Business Excellence Model as a basis. PERform uses a step by step approach to improving the way an organisation works, or strengthening the development of new ones.
- C3 Resources to back the improvement process: on-line access to business support information, reports and case studies.
- An on-line question/answer system which gives access to advice for business queries.
- The C3 Trade Association which is a network of trading social economy organisations, with brand-led marketing and performance enhancing values.
- The Social Enterprise Hub which will co-ordinate and commission business support across the West of England.



Partners in the project

- Bristol Area Community Enterprise Network (BACEN)
- Bath and North East Somerset Council
- Bristol City Council (lead partner)
- Black Development Agency
- Business West
- Avon Co-operative Development Agency (Avon CDA)
- Community Action
- North Somerset Council
- Regional Infrastructure for Social Enterprise (RISE)
- South Gloucestershire Council
- Voscur

Impact

C3 is working to support social economy organisations by promoting continuous improvement and quality standards in the social economy. The main impact will be in helping social enterprises to improve their credibility and presence in the marketplace so that they can:

- Meet their goals and achieve their values
- Offer better products and services
- Attract new investment and develop trading income
- Compete for public and private sector contracts
- Empower more people to participate in the sector

Social Economy Scotland- Round 1 & 2

Social Economy Scotland

Lead Partner:	Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
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About Social Economy Scotland

Building on the success of Strengthening the Social Economy Partnership (2002-2005) in Equal Round 1, which raised the visibility of the social economy in Scotland, the new Round 2 Development Partnership will focus on influencing mainstream agencies in terms of development of the sector. The ultimate aim of the partnership will be to achieve policy impact at local, national and European levels.

Project aims

The development partnership has three main objectives:

- To support small to medium sized social economy organisations with aspirations to reduce grant dependency, enhance sustainability, create new jobs and develop new products and services to better meet the needs of their communities of place and interest.
- To support the development of skills and professionalism in the sector, in order to develop the social economy's role on labour market integration.
- To encourage a dialogue between public agencies and representatives of the social economy (at national, UK and European levels), which fosters mutual understanding and promotes good practice in partnership working.

Activities

The partnership is funding eleven pilot projects, which include the following initiatives:

- Growing the Social Economy with Graduates – A scheme which enables recent graduates to gain experience in the social enterprise sector.
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HISEZ) - This initiative aims to establish a new community interest company known as HISEZ Community Interest Company (CIC), to provide a range of support services to social enterprises in the Highlands and Islands.
- Measuring the Impact of Volunteering on Social Economy Organisations – A toolkit which measures the contribution volunteers make to support the social economy in service delivery, community regeneration and sustainable economic development.
- Public Social Partnership – This initiative will test the development of two Public Social Partnerships models – one thematic (befriending services for the elderly in Renfrewshire) and one geographic (community recycling).



Partners in the project

- Careers Scotland
- Communities Scotland (Social Economy Unit and the Scottish Centre for Regeneration)
- Forth Sector
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Scottish Centre for Regeneration
- Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
- Scottish Enterprise
- Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition
- Social Firms Scotland
- Social Investment Scotland
- Volunteer Development Scotland

Impact

Through the Equal funding it has received, the partnership will be able to disseminate lessons which could inform the existing and future policy direction of actions and resources to grow the social economy in Scotland. Key areas anticipated include:

- Public-social partnership as a model of service delivery
- Evidence of the impact of Best Value in the Procurement process and the matching of markets

Powys Equal Partnership- Round 2

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About Powys Development Partnership

The Powys Development Partnership aims to aid the social economy sector by building its capacity whilst also helping disadvantaged groups in the labour market. It will do this through research and development of pilot projects that address equality of opportunity and social inclusion for individuals, families and communities. These include:

- Sustainable models of social enterprise.
- Integrated and whole community approaches to services that address economies of scale and social inclusion in rural communities.
- The creation of new employment opportunities for beneficiaries within the social economy.

Activities

The partnership will test the potential of social enterprise as a vehicle for social inclusion as part of a range of solutions to economic inactivity within rural Powys. The partnership will investigate ways of working in partnership in rural communities by commissioning work that tests integrated approaches to service delivery for individuals and families. The partnership will also commission work that looks at service as a component of community regeneration.

The partnership will also explore the potential to create job opportunities, for people who have a lived experience of disadvantage and/or discrimination who can add value to the work of these organisations by providing role models to others.



Partners in the project

- Arcady
- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
- Cae-Post Ltd
- Celfogympas
- Cymryd Rhan
- Disability Powys
- Mid Powys Mind
- Perl Trust
- Powys Drugs and Alcohol Centres
- Powys Mental Health Alliance
- Practical Care Solutions
- Social Inclusion Reaching Employment Needs Ltd (SIREN)
- South Powys Letts

Impact

By the end of the programme the partnership is expecting to achieve the following:

- Within each partner organisation the capacity to develop, independently or with others, a social enterprise.
- Demonstrated models of sustainable good practice for integrated service development and community regeneration in rural areas.
- Developed good practice in the recruitment, selection, training and support for people from disadvantaged groups.
- Contributed towards the creation of a culture of empowerment and enterprise in Powys.
- Developed relationships with transnational partners that can facilitate future developments and mainstreaming.
- Been able to influence the way in which policy makers at all levels address issues relating to social enterprise and rurality as well as partnership working to address economies of scale through integrated community working and employment of disadvantaged people.

Equal





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