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# The diverse world of social enterprise

## A collection of social enterprise stories

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to highlight the diverse world of social enterprise.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This paper profiles 11 different social enterprises from around the world. These range from a profit-achieving business in a very competitive industry, but one with strong social principles, through a profitable workers' co-operative to ones needing to find financial sustainability if they are to continue their social aspirations. The paper discusses a number of key issues in defining an organisation as a social enterprise and highlights the central issue of measuring success and impact.

**Findings** – In some of the enterprises the important contribution of a pivotal social entrepreneur is apparent. The need to create and add value for customers and clients is always apparent, as is the need to find effective routes to market. It can be concluded that whilst certain beliefs and principles are routinely evident, social enterprises most certainly cannot be described as “one-size-fits-all”.

**Originality/value** – The paper presents a collection of social enterprise stories.

**Keywords** Entrepreneurialism, Business enterprise, Social problems, Corporate social responsibility

**Paper type** Research paper

### Introducing social entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a way of thinking and behaving that has opportunity as its heart. Entrepreneurs recognise, create, engage and exploit opportunities. Creativity and innovation are fundamental. Entrepreneurs know how and know where to secure the resources they will need, and they frequently accomplish this with effective networking. Risks have to be understood and/or managed – and inevitable setbacks have to be overcome. The outcome is new value for customers and clients – whether it be financial, social, aesthetic or environmental capital, or a combination of more than one. In this respect social “capital” is defined as something of perceived benefit to individuals and communities, which others might term “social value”. Given this, the value of social networks – sometimes itself a definition of social capital – might be termed human capital.

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Social enterprises – defined simply – are organisations seeking business solutions to social problems. They need to be distinguished from other socially-oriented organisations and initiatives that bring (sometimes significant) benefits to communities but which are not wanting or seeking to be “businesses”. In this respect these latter organisations are more likely to remain dependent on gifts and grants rather than develop true paying customers. Sometimes the market for the products or services is individual consuming customers, people who are choosing their offerings in preference to those of rival organisations, which may or may not share the same social commitment. In other instances, there are just one or a few customers who offer the social business a commercial contract to deliver a service, often using public funds to do this. This is actually a tricky one to categorise. Whilst there are customers who must be satisfied if they are to remain committed into the future – and a revenue stream as distinct to a grant – large contracts may not be renewed because public funding dries up and not because the social business has delivered poor service. In this respect it mimics a grant. In all cases, their employees or members can be fully-paid at a typical market rate, paid more modest sums or even be volunteers.

We might, then, list the following as determining characteristics for a social enterprise, and it is these which have guided the selection of our cases:

- They have a social purpose.
- Assets and wealth are used to create community benefit.
- They pursue this with (at least in part) trade in a market place.
- Profits and surpluses are not distributed to shareholders, as is the case with a profit-seeking business.
- “Members” or employees have some role in decision making and/or governance.
- The enterprise is seen as accountable to both its members and a wider community.
- There is either a double- or triple-bottom line paradigm. The assumption is that the most effective social enterprises demonstrate healthy financial and social returns – rather than high returns in one and lower returns in the other.

Who, then, are the 11 cases? *Genesis* is an outstanding example of a “project” that has serially provided more and more community-based services by seizing opportunity after opportunity – and establishing on-going financial sustainability. *Suma* is a workers’ co-operative in the competitive food distribution business. It is profitable but clearly delivers on its social agenda. *KaBoom!* shows how corporate donations can be harnessed to deliver social returns, but only with local involvement from the recipient communities. There is a belief that things should not be completely free. The central social entrepreneur is an archetypal entrepreneurial fixer or arranger. *Play Pumps* is an African initiative, which uses a mixture of donations and loans to create sustainable activities for providing fresh water. It uses “free labour” by harnessing the energy of young people at play. Trade Plus Aid features an outstanding social entrepreneur who has committed to helping third world communities earn revenues from their production skills by providing them with a route to market. All surpluses are returned to either countries of origin or others in greater need. *Cafedirect* again provides market opportunities to third world producers and charges above-average prices (which customers are willing to pay) to ensure community benefit. *Honey Care* is a model

framework for helping small village communities produce honey which can be sold both in the country of origin and elsewhere at the expense of imported honey from the developed world. *Easybeinggreen* has energy-saving advocacy at its core, but offers relevant products and a paid-for installation service to fund the overall activity. *Trinity Partnership* illustrates how services can be provided by a mixture of trading and contracted activity. *Train 2000* is an interesting example of how funds can be drawn down to provide services which generate economic activity and benefit “for society” and in the process save on benefit payments. Finally the *Merseyside Dance Initiative (MDI)* provides an example of a publicly funded social initiative that has delivered on its social agenda but has come to realise that it must increase the percentage of its income that comes from paid services and trading.

Whilst there are common themes and issues, the examples are quite different – but they all serve to highlight the diversity of the social enterprise sector and demonstrate the very significant contributions these organisations make to the “world around us”. Sustainable communities worldwide and a sustainable environment are critical issues. They can be served in many ways. Enterprises which themselves are self-sustaining play a crucial role. In every case they need an entrepreneur at their heart and they need to build a synergistic network of interested parties or stakeholders. They also need to deliver – and be recognised for delivering – value.

### **Genesis social enterprise**

Genesis is the known identity of His Upper Room Trust (HURT) which was initiated in 1989 and built on Christian foundations by eight people motivated to make a difference in their community. The central social entrepreneur and driving force is Steve Holmes. HURT is now a company limited by guarantee with charitable trust status; its objectives are primarily linked to developing and sustaining communities through capacity building activities; and Genesis serves as a case study in the East Midlands for sustainable community delivery and social enterprise delivery. Its assistance is sought both nationally and internationally.

Initially the small group acquired and managed a chicken farm, with a residential unit attached, to provide support and meaningful occupational discipline for homeless 15-25 year olds.

Seven years later the trust obtained support from the local Training and Enterprise Council to buy a substantial but derelict eighteenth century Coach House in Alfreton. This Coach House was renovated and adapted for work with teenagers, and to provide a banqueting hall to serve the wider community. The project included training and work experience, lunches for the elderly and private dinner functions. The success of the hall would become crucial to further initiatives.

In 1998, the trust acquired an old church building to be a resource centre. After renovating the building, the Trust was able to extend its youth programmes and it began to offer child care with pre-school, out of school, breakfast and holiday clubs. This was quickly extended to two neighbouring villages. The successful outcome was recognised and the story told in national a publication – which in turn led to an invite to a reception hosted by the Prime Minister.

Meanwhile, adjacent to the resource centre was a large bus depot, which had been empty for seven years and which was in a state of disrepair. The trust approached the owners to rent a small part for a sports hall – but instead was offered the opportunity

to buy the – an all or nothing deal. Possessing only limited resources, the trust agreed to rent the whole site with an option to buy. And thus the Genesis Social Enterprise Centre was born.

Grants – including ones from the East Midlands Development Agency and the Coalfields Regeneration Trust – were secured and the bus depot was redeveloped sequentially to provide a family entertainment centre (including a children’s soft-play area, a full size sports hall, tenpin bowling, café, and community rooms), a youth centre in The Angel (an onsite dry pub), business incubation units and a conference centre. As the site developed, Connexions Service and the County Adult Education Service chose to re-locate to the Genesis Centre.

More recently a consortium of local schools has joined with Genesis to develop an onsite “Vocational Warehouse” training centre to prepare some 160 pupils with basic trade skills for future development and employment.

As a result of increased collateral the trust has now been able to buy the site. Economically the centre is viable and sustainable.

A few years ago Steve Holmes agreed with the view that NHS dentistry was failing many people, and so, in pursuit of an opportunity, in the last 18 months Genesis has incubated a new Industrial and Providential Society, obtained a Corporate Licence (the first in 50 years), registered with the General Dental Council as East Midlands Dental Association, and – using the name Genesis Dental Care – has launched a new initiative which is set to become the UK’s 3rd largest dental corporate within three years.

At Genesis, things never seem to stand still for long! As a result of the County Adult Education Department re-locating to the Genesis Centre, the nearby Alfreton Hall was vacated and offered to the trust. This new opportunity has allowed a long held dream to look truly feasible, and so, during 2006, Genesis will be launching the International Academy for Christian Entrepreneurs (I-ACE). The academy is developing both short and residential programmes to inspire and equip motivated people to make a difference in their community.

### **Suma**

Suma is an independent wholesaler of health and whole foods. Since, 2001 it has operated from a large purpose-built warehouse in West Yorkshire (in Elland, near Halifax) from where it distributes over 7,000 different products to some 2,500 supermarkets, small retailers, caterers, hospitals, schools and prisons. It owns its own transport fleet. Many of these products are specially sourced to Suma’s own specifications. Suma, which prides itself on its ethical practices, fair trade and wage equality, was a pioneer of recycled toilet tissue and dairy free margarine. It avoids the ubiquitous “pills and potions” of the healthfood industry and instead focuses on recognised alternative remedies. Suma was an early importer of fair-trade coffee in the 1980s and it refuses to stock and distribute products from countries where human rights are known to be abused.

The company began as a one-person business in 1974 in Leeds. The founder traded from his home, but the business grew and soon transferred to its own premises. In 1977, the founder sold the business to his seven employees, who established a workers’ co-operative – which Suma still is today. Early growth continued and Suma acquired a three-storey warehouse in Leeds, but in time this proved inadequate.

In the early days the partners would “close” for an afternoon a week whilst they openly and freely discussed strategy and operations and sought to make decisions by consensus. But “decisions taken one week were reversed the next.” Acrimony ensued. In reality individual employees would simply make day-to-day decisions and carry them out. Despite the lack of proper organisation Suma survived – to face much stronger competition in the 1980s as the health food industry attracted new entrants.

The business moved to Halifax but employees left as customers were lost both to rivals and because of the economic recession. Suma eventually reorganised and created an elected six-person management committee to routinely run the business on behalf of the members. There is no “elite management team” and the committee meets weekly. However, there are specialist “company officers” in personnel, finance and operations who support the management committee. They join the weekly meetings but cannot vote. The 100 + employees are multi-skilled and all own a share of the business. Suma has adopted common ownership, such that employees own a share of the business whilst ever they work for it, but if they leave they do not take any shareholding with them. There is no chief executive and any employee can put a proposal forward for consideration by the committee. Mondragon has acted as a role model for Suma for many years.

All employees are paid the same basic wage but allowances reflect different work patterns and hours. The intention is that the overall wage bill meets the industry average but that money is then shared out in a different way. Other benefits, such as maternity rights, are better than typical practice. Employees typically do more than one job in any week. A driver, for example, will drive for three Days and work in the warehouse for the other two. Office staff also carry out manual tasks one Day a week.

Although the business is much larger it persists with its democratic practices as far as possible. “The General Meeting . . . which meets six times a year . . . is the Boss”. At these meetings there is still a desire to reach a consensus on strategies, plans and policies.

The company’s philosophy is rooted in ethical practices and it believes its reputation to be its greatest asset. Because workers can either uphold or destroy that asset, it is critical to maintain their support:

Working at Suma is quite unlike other businesses . . . our workers must be more self-motivated and take more initiative . . . workers support each other to fulfil daily tasks and get home on time.

These claims would imply the company has a strong intrapreneurial heart and philosophy. At the same time there is a clear recognition that customers come first and employees are expected to work overtime flexibly to make sure deliveries go out on time.

Suma always has a waiting list of applicants for any job vacancies and, although there have been short-term setbacks, the business has grown and prospered for over 30 years. The industry it competes in is characterised by low margins and fierce rivalry – Suma believes it provides better customer service and strives to improve and innovate continuously.

### **KaBoom!**

KaBoom! was set-up in America in 1995 by Darell Hammond and a partner who were able to raise and invest \$25,000. Hammond was a 30-year old dyslexic who had not completed college. Brought up as part of a large family in a children's home he possessed enormous energy and the courage to overcome setbacks. He was passionate about children having the opportunity to play freely and express themselves.

KaBoom! is a non-profit organisation dedicated to ensuring every child, through the participation of their communities, has healthy play opportunities. "Hammond was concerned with the Dangers from children playing in streets, alleys and disused buildings and wanted to create new playgrounds."

By 2002 KaBoom! was operating with a \$5m budget and employing 17 full-time staff. In just seven years 65,000 volunteers had helped to build 338 new playgrounds across the US, mainly in urban and low-income communities. The business model is simple. An interested community needs to provide a 'Community Partner', such as a YMCA, who will work with KaBoom! and help raise the necessary corporate sponsorship – typically \$40,000-\$50,000 – to build the playground. Home Depot, similar to B&Q in the UK, was the first corporate sponsor. It is also expected the Community partner will sort out the land required and contribute towards the total cost of the playground. A small team of community volunteers then works with KaBoom! for around six months to secure the remaining funding required and design and plan the playground – which is then built in a single day with anything between 50 and 500 volunteers. Anyone who has seen the movie *Witness* and recalls the barn raising by the Amish community will see the parallel. KaBoom! provides the training and materials and in effect project management.

Hammond's early projects attracted considerable media attention – which, to be fair, he sought with enthusiasm! – and by 1998 there was more sponsorship on offer than community readiness and capacity to take it up. In 1999, existing projects were even being cancelled. As well as the new builds, KaBoom! was supporting an even greater number of rehabilitation projects for existing but disused playgrounds. Hammond himself had become something of a trouble-shooter, flying from project to project. He responded – and in turn saved KaBoom! – by recruiting and building a much stronger team of managers.

Interestingly, and perhaps not surprisingly, KaBoom!'s success attracted competition from a number of for-profit organisations who realised the value of the opportunity Hammond had opened up. One of the project contributions KaBoom! had made was a series of manuals for its Community Partners and, somewhat ironically, these were proving invaluable for its emerging competitors.

There were always three strands to KaBoom!'s activities – lead, educate and advocate. Leading encapsulated the project management. Education embraced helping communities to find sponsorship and recruit volunteers. Advocacy involved spreading the word about the value of play and acting as a champion for projects in a wide variety of places. This cause-driven element in part required grant funding, which was quite different in nature from the sponsorship linked to individual and identifiable builds.

By 2002 KaBoom! was wondering whether it should refocus its efforts and concentrate more on advocacy and less on leading and education. Were it do this it would need to develop new skills and create a different business model.

There are some important lessons for social enterprises in the KaBoom! story. First, it is invariably necessary to raise money before one can spend it on projects of this nature. Second, it is crucial to build effective networks and partnerships. Thirdly in projects like this there are key elements and contributions – envisioning, enabling and enacting. Sometimes one individual will perform all three, but more typically there will be a team involved. Someone has to build that team.

### **Play Pumps**

Play Pumps is a South African social enterprise with a different perspective on children playing and having fun. It is based on the belief their energy can be captured and used to create community value.

In rural areas in developing countries there is no piped water routinely available. The main source of fresh water is boreholes where springs, streams and rivers are missing or unsuitable. Water is raised using hand pumps and many women and children invest hours of time fetching and carrying water for their family's needs. Individually we each need a minimum of 5 l a day. If petrol or diesel is available and can be afforded, motorised pumps can be used – as long as they can be maintained for a lengthy period of time – otherwise communities have to rely on hand pumps. Typically a hand pump will deliver 150 l/hour to ground level, and that water will need using relatively quickly as there is unlikely to be anywhere to store it hygienically. Installing a hand pump costs in the region of 10,000 South African, something over £1,000. For between three and five times that amount a Play Pump could be installed.

The idea of the inventor was to build a special playground roundabout to be the main power source and encourage children to have fun spinning it round and round – which is something young children have always enjoyed doing! Clean borehole water is pumped up and collected in large aboveground storage tanks. Because there is no engine, maintenance is straightforward and relatively inexpensive. The equipment used is standard windmill equipment which is readily available and does not require special sourcing. Below the ground is a positive displacement cylinder using rising rods and pipes – which very simply converts the rotational movement of the roundabout into a vertical movement. Each rotation of the roundabout can pump up to 4 l of fresh water, allowing for some 1,400 l/hour to be raised into the storage tank if the depth does not exceed 40 m. The system can support raising water 100 m but obviously the capacity is substantially reduced. Storage tanks will typically hold up to 5,000 l on a 6 m high stand. Water is drawn by a simple tap arrangement. The outer skin of the storage tank can also be used for advertising, and the revenue from this will certainly pay for all the maintenance and may, over time, repay the cost of the installation. The advertising works as women will generally be the ones to come and collect the water.

Women do not have to labour as they do with hand pumps. Children have fun. Communities get fresh water. And the project is self-sustaining.

The South African government has funded a project in KwaZulu Natal to install Play Pumps in school playgrounds wherever this is appropriate and water can be harnessed and drawn. Clearly this is an invention that has relevance for other countries in Africa and Asia.

### **Trade Plus Aid**

Trade Plus Aid began more by chance than design in 1992. Charlotte Di Vita, then aged 25, was in Ghana when drought ruined thousands of farms – something she realised when she was waiting to see a doctor for treatment for the severe dysentery she had contracted and witnessed the death of a baby in its mothers’ arms. Wanting to help in some way, she had an idea when the local elders refused her offer of money to buy seed. She suggested to local tribal chiefs that she would spend her £800 savings on seed for them if they would make her 800 pendant-size carvings. The deal was struck. Back in London, and calling on her friends to help her out, she began selling the pendants at Camden and Portobello Markets, plucking a price of £6.99 each out of thin air. Somewhat to her surprise, the carvings sold quickly and easily. The risk she took had paid off, and she was encouraged to want to do more. She envisioned a seed bank from which local farmers could borrow seed without any payment until they harvest their crops. To progress her idea, she negotiated an alliance with an established mail order business in Japan – and pendant sales were strong once the infrastructure and supply chain was in place. Her seed bank was started in 1995. The venture grew rapidly with a comprehensive Japanese mail order catalogue, which included jewellery, clothing and toiletries from various countries in Africa and South America. Unfortunately the 1995 earthquake at Kobe, in Japan, destroyed the warehouse that Di Vita’s partner owned; the mail order company was in trouble and the Japanese market disappeared overnight. Exhibiting courage in the face of setbacks, she managed to survive and rescue the business by spending hours and days searching out new mail order buyers in America and Germany – but they would only buy her supplies at cost.

Many of the third world village supply groups she helped establish are now trading independently; they no longer need her help. “A good year is seeing my groups become self-sufficient, not increasing my turnover”. The ever creative Trade Plus Aid, however, continues to experiment with new initiatives. Di Vita was able to raise money from business people around the world – who believe in what she does – to establish a 140-employee factory in China for producing hand-enamelled teapots. She started selling these at the Victoria and Albert Museum and various up-market department stores. Underestimating demand once forced her to resort to airfreighting. A similar venture was started to produce wind chimes in South Africa. Altogether some 500 employees now work in her factories in China and South Africa. In the UK, Trade Plus Aid relies more on volunteer helpers than it does on paid employees and Di Vita herself takes only a limited salary from the operation. In 2003, Charlotte Di Vita agreed a world-wide licensing deal for her Collection (as it is now called) of gifts with leading giftware company Goebel – this guarantees a minimum revenue of US\$1.3m over four years.

In 13 years Di Vita’s efforts have enabled over \$5m to be returned to producer communities around the world – Africa, South America and the Far East – in payment for their handicrafts. Her charitable trust (founded in 1997) has also funded special projects in various countries.

Charlotte Di Vita’s most recent new project was developed with the encouragement of Nelson Mandela. Entitled “Twenty First Century Leaders” her project invites famous people – leaders, sports stars, musicians, and actors – to provide a simple design that reflects their message of hope for the world, together with a stick diagram



self-portrait. These are then used as designs for plates, mugs, t-shirts and any other relevant product where she can secure a licence agreement with a suitable manufacturer. In the case of the plates, the illustrated message is on the front, the stick diagram on the back, and they are being sold as limited edition collectibles. In the case of wrist-bands and other smaller items, the production runs are unlimited. The surpluses from all sales of every item will be “handed back” to their designers, who will choose which charity will receive them.

### **Cafedirect**

Founded some 15 years ago, Cafedirect is a successful Fairtrade social enterprise which now boasts a UK turnover of £23m and a market share in the roast and ground coffee market of 8.1 per cent. This makes it the sixth largest coffee brand in the UK. In addition, its Fairtrade tea brand – Teadirect – launched in 1998, is ranked ninth in the UK’s top tea brands. Teadirect sales grew at a rate of 30 per cent in 2005.

A Fairtrade enterprise is defined as a:

... trading partnership based on dialogue, transparency and respect that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to and securing the rights of, disadvantaged producers & workers- especially in the Southern hemisphere.

The story began in 1989, when the International Coffee Agreement collapsed and international coffee prices slumped to a 30-year low. Twin Trading, a non-Governmental Organisation based in London – and founded a few years earlier with a mission to reduce the inequalities of world trade – sought to work with marginalised coffee farmers. In 1991, Twin Trading allied with Equal Exchange, Traidcraft and Oxfam to form Cafedirect. The mainstream proposition was to create a quality Fairtrade coffee brand.

To meet the internationally recognised Fairtrade standards a Fairtrade minimum price had to be paid to producers, which covers the cost of sustainable production and living. On top of the Fairtrade minimum price a social premium is paid so that producers can invest in community infrastructure projects, such as digging water wells, building schools, providing health care and working on income generating projects for women.

By 2003 Cafedirect had achieved impressive sales and distribution in a highly competitive UK coffee market; and in 2004 it successfully raised £5m through a public share issue and became a public company. There are 4,500 shareholders; coffee farmer producer groups have inclusive ownership of a 5 per cent shareholding. The founder members retained 40 per cent of the shares with the remaining 55 per cent sold to new investors, comprising individuals, institutions and Cafedirect employees.

The company now buys coffee from 34 different producer organisations spread across Africa, The Caribbean and Latin America. It is bought directly from these coffee groups and the resulting Fairtrade premium paid by Cafédirect is ensuring that over 250,000 families receive a decent income from Fairtrade. In addition to the Fairtrade price, Cafedirect pays for producer support and development and in 2005 invested £540k in this key social development. In a competitive industry, Cafedirect now distributes a product range of 41 products – primarily coffees, teas and drinking chocolate. It has to compete against global giants and needs creative and innovative

marketing, effective PR activity, strong networks and partnerships. Fairtrade social enterprises such as Cafedirect and the similar Day Chocolate Company (which makes Divine and Dubble Fairtrade chocolate):

... represent the interests of those who wish to demonstrate that it is possible and desirable to grow an alternative model of doing international trade.

Cafedirect's success shows that:

... consumers can engage and support a trading vision that delivers high quality products in the UK to the tangible benefit of the least powerful and most vulnerable people in the trading chain.

### **Honey Care**

Honey Care is another story from Africa, but this time from Kenya. It concerns job creation and a reduction in the need for imports because local suppliers can satisfy a market.

Honey Care manufactures and supplies high-quality Langstroth hives (which it believes to be superior to rival products used more extensively in Kenya) and related bee-keeping equipment to organisations, communities and individuals throughout Kenya. Either a cost-share or a loan agreement can be utilised here. A field team helps the partners to set-up their hives correctly, trains them in bee-keeping and harvesting the honey (which takes around three days initially), provides on-going technical support and then buys the finished product from them. Four types of honey – Acacia, African Blossom, Highland Blend and Wild Comb – are then sold through traditional retail outlets. Traditionally Kenya has been an importer of honey from countries such as Australia, America and Mexico. There is also a market for other products such as Bee's Wax.

In effect the "network" comprises a large number of joint ventures, with Honey Care having been successful in raising the money necessary to launch the venture. This has required (international aid) grants as well as loans.

A single Langstroth hive can produce between 45 and 60 kilos of superior grade honey per year in Kenya, although in some developed countries the yield is around 80 kilos from a similar hive. Honey Care pay above-average prices to buy the honey from suppliers, mainly because it is of superior quality. Honey Care is a relatively young venture and not yet of a size where it can consider exporting but this is definitely in the long-term plans!

### **Easybeinggreen**

The vision for Easybeinggreen is clear and simple – to see that 70 per cent of Australian households reduce their energy and water consumption by 30 per cent over a ten-year period. The founders believe that there can be a radical and positive impact on the environment without people having to change their lifestyles markedly. Home-owners can actually save money through being more energy and water efficient. The social entrepreneurs behind Easybeinggreen are Nic Francis (who has been a pioneer of similar work in the UK), Chris Tierney and Andrew Laing (both with a background in the oil industry, in particular BP), but there is now a staff complement of 16.

The organisation provides advice as well as products. For a consultancy fee (of under £100), an Easybeinggreen adviser will visit homes in Australia, identify

opportunities for energy and water savings and explain how these could be accomplished.

A whole range of possible products can also be supplied to customers who then want to buy from Easybeinggreen, although clearly they can buy elsewhere if they prefer. These include solar panels for either or both electricity and hot water, means of capturing and using rainwater, insulation products, double glazing and draught sealing. Rainwater can readily be used for toilet flushing, watering gardens and topping up swimming pools without the treatments that would be required if it was to be used for drinking. Some of the products are supplied directly, others by referral to partner businesses. Further advice can relate to how people might simply use energy, water and lighting more efficiently.

Although the company's business model is based on advising and (ideally) trading, it also pursues an advocacy role and helps lead opinion on energy and water saving. In part it does this through a regular subscribers' newsletter.

### **Trinity Partnership and social enterprise**

Trinity Partnership is a development trust promoting social enterprise through community economic development in the rural and urban areas of East Lancashire, UK. It was founded as a youth club by the Methodist Church in Clitheroe in 1963. Since, then commitments have multiplied in terms of size and diversity, making it one of the largest social enterprise companies in Lancashire in the UK. Trinity Partnership, as a charity and company limited by guarantee, supports and operates a range of established community businesses – including:

- Ribble Valley Community Transport
- Childcare
- Database IT Training Centre
- Trinity Learning Group
- Trinity Youth Club
- Stage & Screen Arts & Social Enterprise Centre
- Jigsaw Pantry
- Jigsaw Environmental
- Jigsaw Employment Service

In addition, it is co-owner of Prosperity Recycling, a share company that manufactures and retails recycled plastic furniture and fencing, makes shredded cardboard for animal bedding, and manufactures bird, bat, and hedgehog boxes from recycled timber from its factory unit in Accrington. More recently Trinity Partnership has supported the formation of its newest joint venture, Ribble Valley Community Radio – The Voice of the Valley!

Trinity Partnership is committed to triple bottom line principles inherent in the promotion of social enterprise. It prioritises social and environmental objectives alongside the need to make a financial profit for reinvestment back into existing or new enterprises. Whilst Trinity Partnership is unrecognisable from the organisation formed in 1963, it is still driven by its strong ethical value base which promotes work with disaffected individuals and communities in East Lancashire. Since, 1973 it has

concentrated on work with disabled people, promoting inclusion through learning and employment strategies, supporting moves out of welfare dependency into economic independence. Above all, “Trinity Partnership practices what it preaches by employing 23% of its staff as disabled people”. Promotion of best environmental practice has become a priority over the past 15 years, and this is expressed through, for example, Jigsaw Pantry’s organic catering, Jigsaw Environment’s organic horticulture, and Prosperity Recycling’s commitment to reducing landfill through reusing waste products.

Ensuring that its community businesses are profitable remains a priority, but it is the building of an asset-base that has become a key target in organisational sustainability. However, Trinity Partnership’s asset-base remains too small for its needs. It owns a town centre shop which is leased commercially; the Board is currently planning to buy a redundant Church Hall for development as an Arts & Social Enterprise Centre; and intends to buy 13.5 acres of land for a new organic horticulture centre complete with a new green building. Currently, trading activities account for over half the total revenues. The remainder comes from a number of contractual opportunities whereby Trinity is a paid service provider.

Geoff Jackson is Trinity Partnership’s Chief Executive, and his declared mission since 1973 has been the empowerment of people who have been socially, culturally, or economically disaffected. One of his key strategies for achieving this aim has been the building of networks and partnerships as a means of achieving collaboration. A joint venture with Prospects Foundation of Accrington saw the formation of Prosperity Recycling in 2001. A particular success over the past 15 years has been the formation of North West E.Net, a networking company that promotes training and employment of disabled people. E.Net now has an annual turnover of over £1m through a consortium of four member organisations, including Jigsaw Employment Service, that have a government contract to operate the New Deal for Disabled People Programme. More recently Jackson has been actively supporting the development of SELNET as a Lancashire trade association for social enterprise.

But all of these experiences are now providing an opportunity for an even more ambitious partnership operation for Trinity, with the development of a relationship with Includid, an emerging social enterprise in Cape Town South Africa. Three Trinity trustees have supported the formation of the Includid Charity Trust (UK), a group that will be the “basis for promoting mutual beneficial transnational learning experiences in social enterprise.”

### **Train 2000**

Train 2000 Ltd – The Centre for Women’s Enterprise and Employment – was established in 1996, as a social enterprise with the legal status of a non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee. Its primary purpose is to design, promote and deliver a range of high quality business and economic development support services for women, primarily targeting women from disadvantaged communities from across the Merseyside District. The organisation was initially founded by an individual social entrepreneur, an emigrant to the UK, but with the support of other local committee members, drawn from the voluntary, private and education sectors. The rationale behind the set-up of this social business was a recognition that the existing public sector/mainstream business and other economic development support

provision failed to recognise or meet the specific needs of women seeking employment or self employment – as they were mainly inaccessible and inappropriate.

The start up rationale was based upon a combination of instinct, personal experience and anecdotal evidence. However, the growth of the business and its position within the market place has been informed by a growing evidence base which demonstrates service delivery failure by many public sector investment programmes which seek to encourage women back into the labour market via enterprise, education or employment support measures. (The failure of mainstream provision in increasing the level of female entrepreneurship in the UK is well documented and is reflected in national and regional Small Business Service statistics.) Train 2000 has been therefore committed to addressing this under-achievement by:

... developing and delivering innovative and quality driven enterprise and employment services for women whilst also influencing policy in order to improve the economic position of all women.

In its own words, Train 2000 delivers its mission in three key ways:

- (1) through providing a range of quality, client sensitive enterprise and employment services for women;
- (2) by influencing local, regional, national and international policy and practices in the area of women's economic development; and
- (3) by developing and maintaining Train 2000 as a sustainable organisation able to achieve its mission.

All of Train 2000's activities are underpinned by its stated organisational values, which are:

- to be inclusive, recognising the needs of individual women and particularly ensuring that we reach and respect the needs of disadvantaged and underrepresented women;
- to be innovative, continually improving the way we work and provide services by incorporating new ideas, information and methods;
- to work in partnership, adding value to what we do by working with others to build trust, develop mutual understanding and through reciprocal actions develop social capital; and
- to strive for quality, committing the organisation to improvement and high standards in all aspects of its activities and working environment.

Since, inception, Train 2000 has delivered a range of enterprise and economic development support services and the last three years alone has achieved the following impacts: 377 new businesses created; 565 jobs created; 169 economically inactive women into business; £3.25m savings in benefits; and 705 qualifications achieved.

Train 2000 believes this work over a ten-year period:

... provides the foundations and expertise to drive a truly ambitious programme for change for women excluded from the labour market, not purely in enterprise terms, but also in terms of education and employment and other programmes which can act as stepping stone toward financial independence.

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### **The Merseyside Dance Initiative**

MDI is a cultural social enterprise focusing on dance. Managed by a board of trustees, it has been incorporated since 1993 as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status.

It aims to “promote a local sense of place and space, inclusion and personal development through an approach conducive to the building of social capital.”

This is achieved by utilising the power of the performing arts, specifically dance. Working through dance, the objective is to contribute to the development of local sustainability. The activities of the organisation have to be set against the backdrop of the particular social and economic conditions in Merseyside, UK; MDI thus promotes dance in order to offer participants a means of articulating how they perceive the way they live. In this it offers groups from very different backgrounds the opportunity to explore new ways of working through a creative stimulus.

Over a number of years, MDI has shown that developing a variety of skills and qualities – such as personal growth, self expression, discipline, tolerance and respect – in targeted groups and individuals that may otherwise remain untouched, can have a beneficial effect. Through:

... active participation, research, development, monitoring and evaluation, the organisation has initiated a starting point for communication through a creative process.

It achieves this by “exploring and questioning aspiration, academic achievement, creativity, communication, confidence and discipline”. MDI has found that community dance can meet various needs of the targeted groups and now sees its future in developing inclusion with specific priority groups.

MDI has always focused on different age groups in order to foster inclusivity. With young people the emphasis is on the development of opportunities. Relevant activities provide access to participation and the promotion of dance to offer future generations of dancers career routes and communication skills not always apparent within the educational structure. There is, however, active co-operation with people in the educational sector.

Current funding streams for MDI include – Merseyside local authorities; the Arts Council of England; Government programmes (for example, Sure Start, Creative Partnerships and Education Action Zones); Lottery distribution; private trusts, foundations and donations; and trading income – such as service fees (consultancy, studio income and teaching), and box office revenue from events, performances and commissions.

MDI also has plans to develop funding in other areas in order to create more financial independence and less dependency on grants. These include procurement from local authorities and sponsorship as well as increasing trade income. As part of this, the current legal form is under review; MDI is reviewing new legislation and evaluating the relevance of the new Community Interest Company form that has been created in the UK.

To engage its stakeholders in meaningful dialogue about these issues, MDI has realised that it needs to find a way of measuring outcomes and impacts in ways that are relevant to the stakeholders. The setting up of social audit and benchmarking is under consideration in this context. Feedback so far has been more anecdotal and largely through verbal response, written evaluation, taped feedback and unsolicited

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thank you messages. This feedback has confirmed the value of the work to the groups that have been involved. Dance can be a stimulus for challenging and provoking change in the way people perceive themselves. But the work remains very much connected to the principles of sustainability, so that as well as being innovative and developmental, it must have – and be seen to have – a practical impact on peoples' lives. Directly measuring the impact of arts activities would improve decision making through data based on facts and analysis that could then be marshalled to better position MDI in the market place. Part of this relates to market making – to emphasise the importance of the cultural sector (community safety, employment, educational attainment, health, housing and social inclusion) to funders and sponsors.

The diverse  
world of social  
enterprise

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