

The Social Enterprise Partnership Quality & Impact Project is a national initiative aimed at helping social enterprises to find the tools and resources to prove and improve their quality and impact. We are researching, developing, piloting, and rolling out 'tools' or methods to help social enterprises in their efforts to strengthen their businesses and demonstrate the 'added value' they generate for customers, communities, funders and other groups.

Welcome to another edition of **imPROVEit**. In this issue, we strive to give you a sense of 'ground level' proving and improving work and up-to-date developments.

Firstly, we catch up with the DTI Social Enterprise Unit's new Director, Hilary Brown, in the middle of her first week in the job. The Divine Chocolate Company also gives us an exclusive front line update concerning their work with the Strategy Map and Balanced Scorecard. We report from Nottingham and find out what happened when twenty-two social enterprises converged on the Old Market Square to take part in a social economy trade fair. We've also got information on the development of a new web based tool to assist social entrepreneurs to measure their social impact and introduce you to our new 'Jargon Smasher'. We hope this will help you tackle some of the slippery terms involved in 'proving and improving'.

As always, we like to hear about how this news brief can be of best use to you and your colleagues – and you can tell us what your organisation has been 'proving and improving' -we'd love to feature your work right here.

Martin Cooper

[Lisa Sanfilippo](#)

Editor

Editor

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A view from the DTI top



Fresh into her post as the new director of the DTI/ SBS Social Enterprise Unit, Hilary Brown shares her views 'proving and improving' with our roving reporter.

"I believe that there are real economic and social gains for organisations that use appropriate mechanisms to evaluate their impact and improve their performance."

Brown expresses her 'delight' in being able to fund the SEP Quality and Impact Project as well as the LBS/ **nef** partnership to develop a web-based social value/SROI Primer. She has expressed early enthusiasm about helping to give social enterprises the resources, tools and knowledge to prove their added value and build on their quality.

"I look forward to the continuing success of the Quality and Impact project, which is a key component helping the Unit to 'establish the value' of social enterprise and helping to 'make social enterprises better businesses' – two of the pillars of the Unit's 'Strategy for Success.'"

imPROVEit looks forward to continuing conversations with the Social Enterprise Unit both to help establish the value of the sector, and build the profile and recognition of social enterprise within government at all levels.

Lights, camera, enterprise! Social enterprise hits the (computer) screen with social enterprises in the directors chair



In mid-September, social enterprises from across the UK – including the Furniture Resource Group, Scotch Bonnet Catering, Unique Coffee Bar, Nornir Ltd., Ouseburn Trust, and Hill Holt Wood helped to 'workshop' a script for a new drama. Will there be a new BBC series on social enterprise? Well, no. But a new short film helping social enterprises to untangle the world of impact measurement will hit the World Wide Web in early November.

The 'Social Impact Advisory Group' of ten social enterprises and three support agencies helped London Business School and **nef** to develop a script as one part of an innovative new suite of online resources for explaining how social outputs and impacts can be measured, and the basic concepts involved in measuring 'social return on investment' – SROI. Stephanie Robertson of London Business School, who is leading the work on the web-tool said:

"We hope this tool will be useful for all organisation seeking to measure social outputs and impact. By thinking through how well we are meeting our objectives and the value of our work, we can be bolder in our communication about the importance of our social impact upon our communities and the environment."

Keep reading *imPROVEit* and we'll let you know when you can surf on over and be one of the first to have a look.

Introducing...the 'Jargon Smasher'

imPROVEit's roving reporter caught up with several social enterprise managers who revealed the extent to which social entrepreneurs and others can feel weighed down – or just plain irritated – by the amount of jargon involved in measuring quality and impact. Building upon some of the ideas put forward by the 'Primer' (see above), we introduce you to the *imPROVEit* 'Jargon Smasher': a special feature of this news bulletin that will help you to tackle some of the slippery terms involved in 'proving and improving' and to hopefully ease the irritation. So if outcomes and impacts are giving you a headache, be sure to have a look at forthcoming issues.

Value is in the eye of the stakeholder

On 10 September, social enterprises from around the local area gathered in Nottingham's Old Market Square for a 'Social Enterprise Trade Fair'. *imPROVEit* talked to the organiser of the event, James Linnington of Nottingham City Council's Social Economy Team, Seean Maxwell manager of Youth Inclusion Project (YIP) and Malcolm Paulus, manager of Urban Social Enterprise. We asked them about the aims of the day, what the direct results were – also known as the outputs –and what they think the outcomes, or more ongoing results of the day were. Through this lens, we can learn about different stakeholders see the impact of the trade fair.

So what happened?

James Linnington told us what made the market unique: each of the social enterprises could provide detailed information about the products and services, as well as where the organisation originated and how it had grown from its community roots. He goes on, "in total there were 22 stalls in the market square with over with 14 organisations from within the city boundary, the rest being a mixture of social enterprises from the county and dedicated support agencies, notably the Renewal Trust and Business Link. Stalls at the fair ranged from ICT enterprises promoting reconditioned computers and websites, such as [Urban Social Enterprise](#); to childcare training and nursery providers like [Greenfields](#); to sellers of organic vegetables and preserves like [Ecoworks](#); as well as Credit Unions like [Bulwell Credit Union](#). We even had an urban clothing stall run by Youth Inclusion Project ([YIP](#))."

Aims of the Day

Social economy support organisations also think about *their* quality and impact. James Linnington highlights his aims for the fair: "increase awareness of social enterprise within the city and within the City Council; provide opportunities to meet procurement officers from Nottingham businesses; provide the opportunity for social enterprises to network with each other and create new business contacts; provide the social enterprises with the opportunity to generate new business leads and generate potential income on the day."

Proving Quality and Impact?

Did the fair achieve its aims and how was the experience for the social enterprises in proving and improving their work overall? *imPROVEit* asked the event's organiser, as well as some of the social enterprises that participated, about how these aims were met. Linnington told us that based on feedback during and after the event, "Many of the organisations are providing services of a high enough standard that they were receiving interest and queries from both the public and private sector." The fair benefited from a good stallholder turnout and 'high footfall', perhaps due to the outdoor location and more informal setting than in previous years. To add glitter, the event was attended by the Lord Mayor, who spent over an hour talking to all the stallholders, taking time to find out about what they did and more about the social economy sector in Nottingham - this helps to meet Linnington's goal of "getting the social enterprise message across".



From the Horses' Mouths – The Trade Fair's Value to Social Enterprises

Feedback from stakeholders can highlight the strengths of an activity, and show how it can be made even better in future. Seean Maxwell of YIP tells *imPROVEit*, "We have got the support of the community in St. Ann's and the wider area - the impact that we have on young people was a real selling point for the products." The impact on sales hasn't stopped there. "We have just had a similar stall at an urban music festival where we could tell our story to our potential customers - we're on a roll now with sales!"

Malcolm of Urban Social Enterprise told us about the importance of communicating what their organisation was about, but for him the event "was particularly useful for talking to other stallholders". He also pointed out some lessons for the next go-round from his perspective: "With the timing and people being away on holiday, or just coming back, and with the students having only just returned, it wasn't great for numbers or sales". Malcolm's experience leads him to believe that for business to business procurement to be made even easier, it may be even better

to hold the next trade fair long after the holiday season – to give businesses time “to sort themselves out and to be receptive”.

Seen from YIP offered up other effects that the fair had upon the social enterprises and *their* stakeholders: “The day was second to none. The main thing was seeing the impact on hard to reach young people as we sold products. After taking them through the process of designing, making and selling the product - for them to subsequently realise the eventual rewards of their hard work in financial gain is phenomenal”.

Much like ‘beauty is in the eye of the beholder’ we see from the example of the Nottingham Social Enterprise Trade Fair that the value of these events is often ‘in the eye of the stakeholder’. The City Council met its targets, provided value to social enterprises, and got some feedback about unintended yet important impacts, as well as some viewpoints that help the organisers to both ‘prove and improve’.

For more information about social enterprise in Nottingham www.see-nottingham.co.uk – a dedicated website for Nottingham (and soon Nottinghamshire) social enterprises.

Simply Divine: Front line update

The Divine Chocolate Company is at the beginning of its engagement with the Social Enterprise’s London’s groundbreaking programme to help social enterprises to use the Strategy Map and Balanced Score Card to manage and measure. In partnership, SEL is working with and building upon the OS & G Co-op’s knowledge of the balanced scorecard. Day Chocolate Company/ Divine Chocolate Sales and Marketing manager, Louise Mollring told *imPROVEit* how it was working out.

“The vision of The Day Chocolate Company is to improve the livelihoods of small-scale cocoa producers in West Africa through their own exciting Fairtrade chocolate brands in the mainstream market. This vision is clear and so far, successful – now we can map how we do it!”

“Being a fairly small company with a very big mission is exciting but challenging and requires one thing above all – focus! We believe that the Strategy Map may be a useful way to look at how our internal processes link back firmly to our goals to make sure we deliver our mission more effectively. We also hope to find new ways to measure the success of this through the Balanced Score Card pilot. We’re at the beginning of the process so remaining open minded about where it might take us!”



Louise Mollring + Strategy Map

* JARGON SMASHER ALERT! *



Strategy Map: A Strategy Map is a diagram that describes how an organisation creates value by connecting strategic objectives in explicit cause-and-effect relationship with each other in the four Balanced Score Card objectives (financial, customer, processes, learning and growth).

www.valuebasedmanagement.net/methods_strategy_maps_strategic_communication.html

The social enterprise balanced scorecard developed by SEL and OS&G Co-op tailors the strategy map to include different perspectives: (financial, customer & community, internal businesses processes, and resources & skills). The value of the strategy map is in looking at how what we do in each area has an effect on the social/economic/environmental bottom line AND the financial sustainability bottom line.

Send us your news...

Post your upcoming events, publications, reports, news, proving-and-improving-related jobs, partnership opportunities, and other important goings-on here. You can email us now: Lisa.Sanfilippo@neweconomics.org

Coming attractions...

October

- **Throughout October/November** *'Social Enterprise Visit Programme', UK.*
Social Enterprise Visit Programme aims to share and spread best practice among practitioners by arranging visits to successful social enterprises such as Pack IT, Reclaim and Get Ethical. For more information and hosts: <http://www.socialenterprisevisits.com>
 - **14/10/2004** *'Proving and Improving', South Yorkshire Regional Seminar, Sheffield.*
Review the developments of the international, national and regional social accounting agenda; hear first-hand from a range of South Yorkshire based social enterprise and community organisations how social accounting has benefited them; examine other Quality and Impact tools available, share ideas, experiences and best practice.
<http://www.3bees.org.uk/seminar.htm>
 - **15/10/2004** *'Approaching Quality: Making the Right Choice For Your Organisation, NCVO and CES, London.*
The world of quality is getting ever more complex, and the topic can seem bewildering. This event will provide you with an informed decision about the way forward.
<http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/asp/search/ncvo/main.aspx?siteID=1&slD=5&viewType=1>
 - **26/10/2004** *'Making a difference? Proving your worth in the social economy – quality and impact measurement tools', London SE Network, Chocolate Factory 2, Wood Green, London.*
The event will concentrate on the issues of quality and impact measurement and promises to be extremely worthwhile for social enterprises seeking to communicate their social aims both internally and externally.
<http://www.sel.org.uk/> and <http://www.sel.org.uk/ftp/Oct2004.pdf> for flyer.
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You heard it here...

The Queen's Award

The Queen's Award celebrates and recognises the activities of individuals who are making outstanding contributions to the development and promotion of an enterprise culture in the UK. Nominations for social enterprises are encouraged! Closes 31 October 2004.
www.queensawards.org.uk/individual/Home.html

Through The Eyes Of The Consumer

National Consumer Council has produced a report looking at social enterprise through the eyes of the consumer. The publication looks into how the sector can make its case for consumer support, presenting the scenario for a social enterprise or community benefit label. The publication is available online at: www.ncc.org.uk/responsibleconsumption/social_enterprise.pdf

About the Q&I Project and team...



The Quality & Impact Project is one of the national strands of work of the Social Enterprise Partnership (GB) Ltd., a partnership among Co-operatives UK, the Development Trusts Association, **nef** (the new economics foundation), Social Enterprise Coalition, Social Enterprise London, Social Firms UK.

The Q & I Project is managed by Lisa Sanfilippo, with contributions from Petra Kjell, Richard Murray, Hetan Shah, and Steven Wraith. Special thanks go to our volunteers Martin Cooper and Heather Savory, as well as to Jessica Bridges-Palmer for her contributions.



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EQUAL

nef (the new economics foundation) is an independent think-and-do tank that inspires and demonstrates real economic well-being. We aim to improve quality of life by promoting innovative solutions that challenge mainstream thinking on economic, environment and social issues. We work in partnership and put people and the planet first.



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www.neweconomics.org/gen/m1_i2_join.aspx

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