

HOW CAN WE UNLOCK LOCAL PEOPLE'S POTENTIAL TO TACKLE LOCAL PROBLEMS? LESSONS FROM BRADFORD

What's the issue?

Public services are being reformed to include a greater range of suppliers, devolve power from central government and engage local communities in their running, at a time of significant cuts to public spending. Can more be done to unlock the potential of local people with local solutions to tackle local problems?

The Bradford Social Future Awards scheme has lessons for commissioners and social entrepreneurs seeking solutions to local needs.

Ways forward

- Social entrepreneurs are passionate individuals with the ideas, knowledge, links, and drive to develop practical solutions to respond to local needs.
- Taking risks on social entrepreneurs and backing them with flexible finance and support is one way of stimulating civil activity and local leadership.
- Social entrepreneurs in the Bradford Social Future Awards scheme valued:
 - flexible finance so they could start up a social venture or pilot new approaches;
 - contact with local authority officers able to signpost them to relevant people and help remove barriers to development;
 - contact with public service commissioners so they could learn more about the commissioning and tendering processes; and
 - opportunities to network with other social entrepreneurs and providers.
- The benefits for local councils and commissioners can include:
 - identifying obstacles that prevent people playing a more active role in their communities;
 - a broader awareness of the diversity of effective practices and local solutions;
 - meeting local needs, including unmet needs around prevention and improving local people's employment, income-generation and housing prospects; and
 - leveraging resources and support from across the council and other agencies.

BACKGROUND

The Bradford Social Future Awards scheme ran between June 2011 and May 2012 to explore how individuals with innovative ideas could create practical solutions to local problems in Bradford. It was part of a ten-year Joseph Rowntree Foundation programme to strengthen civil society and civic culture so that Bradford can become a more equal and dynamic city.

About the Bradford Social Future Awards scheme

The scheme piloted a new way of investing in community-based leadership and creativity around social issues. It was delivered through partnership between UnLtd (an organisation providing support for social entrepreneurs), the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, and JRF. JRF provided funding for twelve awards of £10,000 each and five awards worth between £2,000 and £5,000 each. The scheme was administered by UnLtd, who also provided one-to-one tailored assistance to develop the personal, leadership and project development skills of the award holders. UnLtd also worked with Bradford council, who provided public service advice and expertise to help social entrepreneurs develop their ideas. The non-financial support also included training and networking events to develop the skills of social entrepreneurs and public service staff, peer-to-peer learning and collaboration.

The distinctions between social entrepreneurs, social enterprise, community enterprise and community groups can blur. Therefore, some of the learning from this pilot has relevance to community development work and to capacity building for social or community enterprises to tender for public service contracts.

This paper shares the learning, based on interviews and focus groups conducted by UnLtd's in-house research team with 16 social entrepreneurs, 21 beneficiaries (from three social ventures), and key staff from the three delivery partners. It is not an independent evaluation but rather an insider account of the strengths and difficulties. It includes a section on what, with hindsight, the partners could have put in place to improve support and outcomes.

Social entrepreneurs

UnLtd invests money and support in social entrepreneurs, and invests directly in individuals, not in their ventures. In UnLtd's experience social entrepreneurs are people with:

- vision, passion, ideas and a can-do attitude;
- commitment to their local area and good local connections;
- confidence in their own abilities, risk-taking and resilience;
- different ages, educational and ethnic backgrounds;
- different skills, attributes and motivations, influenced by local challenges and opportunities as well as cultural and historical traditions.

(UnLtd, 2012)

Social entrepreneurs set up their ventures to address social problems, often using business methods (Ashoka, 2012; Ellis, 2010). All this makes social entrepreneurship a diverse field with a range of applications. Ventures vary widely in their aims, operational capacity, geographic reach, business models and profit orientation (Peattie and Morley, 2008). Some seek to grow and expand; others prefer to remain small-scale.

The wider context: challenges and opportunities

Since 2010 local authorities have faced real-term reductions of 28 per cent in their budgets (LGA, 2010a) creating a funding deficit of £6.5 billion in the current financial year (2012/13) (LGA, 2010b). At the same time, local authorities also have new obligations to diversify service provision and devolve more power to citizens and communities (e.g. Community Right to Challenge, Community Right to Bid, and the Public Services (Social Value) Act). The Civil Society Red Tape Taskforce (Cabinet Office, 2012) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG, 2011) have issued helpful guidance asking local authorities to consider social, economic and environmental value when commissioning services, although greater use of payment by results risks making it harder for small and local ventures to win contracts (Social Enterprise UK, 2011).

Local authorities are responding to these challenges in different ways such as: partnerships with social enterprises (e.g. the LIFE Programme partnership¹ between Participle and Swindon Borough Council); community-led commissioning (e.g. Lambeth Borough Council's cooperative model of commissioning² which enables residents to support needs assessments and lead commissioning processes); training commissioners (e.g. the School for Social Entrepreneurs³ which works with Suffolk County Council and others to use bottom-up ways to shape services and work with social entrepreneurs); lowering procurement thresholds and advertising tendering opportunities locally.

In Bradford the local authority has continued to develop new approaches, including through devolving budgets and decentralising service provision. Bradford council's sustainable community strategy has promoted partnership with the voluntary, community and business sectors, and improved engagement with, and empowerment of, local communities. This has included the Bradford Active Citizens campaign. The challenges facing Bradford are well known: unemployment is a persistent issue, especially for the growing population of young people, who also suffer from low (but improving) levels of educational attainment. The district is also known for its ethnic diversity and changing immigration patterns. As elsewhere in England, social housing stock has not kept pace with need, and the private rented sector has grown. Some residents face poor housing conditions and, increasingly, homelessness (Bradford Observatory, 2011). Many local residents are already active in addressing these challenges, with a fifth of residents engaged in volunteering, community groups or civic roles. There is also evidence of increased political engagement among Muslim women and young people, as seen in the Bradford West 2012 by-election.

Bradford Social Futures: the pilot

The pilot sought local people with an entrepreneurial solution to a current social problem. Applicants were asked to provide evidence of social need or demand, scope for sustainability and a refined business model (it was envisaged that applicants would be at a fairly advanced stage). The initial search was advertised in local media and attracted more than 70 applications. Of these, few applicants had developed their business model to the required level so the pilot amended its offer, providing five additional awards of up to £5,000. This took the total number of awards to 17, and meant the social ventures were at very different stages of development.

Start-ups: these social entrepreneurs had either recently set up their venture, or the award was instrumental in enabling them to do so. They typically had limited or no revenue, were small scale and had limited prospects for short-term sustainability without additional investment.

Pilots: these social entrepreneurs had developed pilots under the auspices of a larger organisation with a track record of delivery. They typically had access to other financial and human resources. They used their award to pilot and test a new product or service.

The Bradford scheme took a risk in supporting those whose ventures were at different stages of development. This demanded more bespoke support to a more diverse group than anticipated. The ventures differed in their purpose, organisational forms and operational practice, as Table 1 shows. In this pilot, different types of support were contributed by the partners:

UnLtd provided development support and bespoke assistance to the entrepreneurs. UnLtd allocated a part-time officer to help with technical functions so ventures could grow and progress, including financial and project management and business development skills. Some support was informal and pastoral (e.g. around personal effectiveness and leadership). Many of the entrepreneurs were at early stages of development and needed more intensive support than anticipated, stretching staff capacity.

Bradford council provided public service advice and expertise, helping several entrepreneurs to develop their ideas further. Bradford council identified a principal contact (who also managed the delivery of the sustainable community strategy, and was in turn supported by senior council staff, including a strategic director). This was helpful given wider council restructuring at the time. This person was able to: signpost to relevant departments and external agencies; work with UnLtd and JRF to deliver networking and information events, including one on procurement; and provide support and advice to entrepreneurs who requested it.

JRF provided access to finance for the early stage cash injection that many social entrepreneurs need to test or develop their ideas. This was provided in the knowledge that there were no guaranteed returns on this investment. Essentially this was taking a risk on individuals who seemed to have what it takes to inspire local social change, and piloting this as an approach that could help unlock local potential. The finance came in the form of a non-restricted grant that provided working and growth capital to the individual entrepreneurs. The JRF programme manager was also well placed to signpost social entrepreneurs to other players in the district.

Table 1 – Social entrepreneurs supported by the Bradford Social Future Awards scheme

Social entrepreneur and their venture	Venture description	Award size	Main beneficiaries	Venture scale	Policy relevance
Amjid Hussain, Bradford Moor Women's Market	Bradford Moor Women's Market gives local women the opportunity to test-trade their home-made products in a safe, local environment	£10,000	Women BME groups	Pilot	Engaging women from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and faith communities in civil and/or civic participation
Conor Ibrahim, Arkan Creative	DVD of a play exploring issues around extremism linked to an educational package for schools and colleges in Bradford	£10,000	Children and young people	Pilot	Preventing violent extremism
Dave West, Little Germany Action Ltd	Little Germany Action provides representation and a forum for residents and businesses living and working in the Little Germany area	£10,000	Area residents	Start-up	Regeneration and economic recovery
Gary Staniforth, Hidden Voices	Hidden Voices is a magazine written and produced for and by Bradford's homeless	£10,000	Homeless people	Start-up	Tackling homelessness
Gavin Farrar, Confianza	Confianza set up an employability programme to help those with a history of mental health issues get back to work	£10,000	People with mental health issues and/or learning difficulties	Pilot	Offering alternative routes into employment for marginalised communities.
Graham Morgan, Project HE:RO	Health mentors increase physical activity in primary school children and alleviate some of the problems associated with over-active children	£10,000	Children and young people	Pilot	Improving health outcomes

Social entrepreneur and their venture	Venture description	Award size	Main beneficiaries	Venture scale	Policy relevance
Liz Firth, Women of Faith	Women of Faith is a network of women from all faiths across the Bradford district	£10,000	Women faith groups	Start-up	Engaging women from BME and faith communities in civil and/or civic participation
Jane Hughes, Zest for Life	Zest for Life offers a package of practical and local support for people who are recovering from major surgery or diagnosis of a serious disease in Bradford	£3,000	People with health issues	Start-up	Improving health and wellbeing outcomes
Javaad Alipoor, Northern Underground	A series of workshops based on the Theatre of the Oppressed methodology, aimed at giving excluded young people a voice in their communities	£2,500	Young people with complex needs	Start-up	Improving outcomes for young people with complex needs
Judy Connor, Reuse It Yourself (ReY)	A community arts space bringing artists and designers together to work collectively using recycled and reused materials	£3,000	Area residents	Start-up	Sustainable development and the green economy
John Hanson, How to Live Healthy	Short talks to older people on healthy eating followed by gentle exercise activities	£1,800	Older people	Start-up	Reducing loneliness, isolation and inactivity
Juli Thompson, Inn Churches	Providing temporary bed spaces for homeless people using churches and faith spaces	£10,000	Homeless people	Start-up	Tackling homelessness
Linda Jackson, Roots to Success	Creating land-based educational opportunities for young people to gain personal and employability skills	£10,000	Young people with complex needs	Start-up	Offering alternative routes into employment for marginalised communities
Nadim Nawaz, Callerz	Home-based work for people who are housebound	£10,000	People with physical disabilities/ housebound	Start-up	Offering alternative routes into employment for marginalised communities
Shakeel Aziz, STAR Youth Project	Workshops addressing the issue of sexual grooming	£10,000	Children and young people	Start-up	Tackling child sexual exploitation
Shona Grange, Not Over the Hill Yet	Using underused spaces to get older people to contribute to their community and become more involved	£2,200	Older people	Start-up	Reducing loneliness, isolation and inactivity
Wahida Shaffi, The City Circle ⁴	Providing a safe and inclusive space for Muslim women and women of other faiths to come together for creative dialogue on a range of local and national issues	£10,000	Women faith groups	Pilot	Engaging women from BME and faith communities in civil and/or civic participation

Working with social entrepreneurs: some pointers

The development support, flexible finance, and public service expertise provided by the delivery partners (outlined above) were valued by the social entrepreneurs. Below, we outline how, with the benefit of hindsight, the scheme could have made more impact, and make suggestions for local authorities and service commissioners interested in working with social entrepreneurs (or, indeed, more generally with social and community enterprises and community development work).

Flexible finance and approaches to support

One of the main lessons from the pilot is about the high value of low-level but flexible finance to meet social entrepreneurs' requirements for growth or working capital. Without the cash injection provided by the non-restricted grant, most of the individual award holders would not have been able to commit enough time to getting their venture off the ground, or piloting a new product or service.

The informal and bespoke development support was also highlighted by award winners as having a positive impact on their ventures and/or their personal development. Flexibility was needed in ways of working. Creative and community-level styles of working used by some social entrepreneurs can potentially come into conflict with more bureaucratic processes common to larger institutions, like local authorities. For non-financial support to be most effective, it needs to be flexible and demonstrate an understanding of the conditions under which social entrepreneurs and their ventures operate.

A named contact with senior-level support

In Bradford, the Social Future Awards scheme benefited from having a named contact within a small, dedicated team located centrally in the council. This provided an alternative route into the council for local social entrepreneurs (who would otherwise typically access a local authority via frontline services). It also improved the co-ordination and effectiveness of the support provided as an authority-wide perspective could be provided, alongside signposting to relevant departments and specific individuals. There was strong support for the pilot from senior decision-makers at the council, who also encouraged other departments to cooperate and respond. Having a central contact did put additional pressure on a small team however.

“Normally routes in for people working in small, local projects would be through our frontline services ... whereas this has been through a part of the council that has a broad view of all services and is therefore able to easily connect to the most appropriate function for the social enterprise. It's been a really good opportunity to connect into something in a different way.”

Council officer

Direct contact with commissioners

In Bradford, support requests were collated and filtered by UnLtd before being discussed with the council. This reduced administration for the council but slowed down how responsive it could be to requests, particularly if it needed further clarification. The use of intermediaries may sometimes have complicated communications between the council and social entrepreneurs. More positively, the networking and information events provided opportunities for direct interaction between the council and the entrepreneurs. These improved the council's understanding of what social entrepreneurs needed. Through this, the council staff could be more targeted and effective with their support.

Removing barriers to development

Social entrepreneurs can also face barriers to developing their ventures. We found that a close relationship between the council and social entrepreneurs could help remove bureaucratic blocks. For example, Amjid Hussain worked with Bradford Moor Women's Market, which gives local women the opportunity to test-trade their home-made products in a safe, local environment. He was concerned that the requirement to submit a new temporary application for each market would prevent local women from taking over its running. The local authority subsequently supported his application for a longer-term license agreement, enabling Amjid to hand over ownership to a group of local women.

In another example, members of Bradford council's occupational health team provided advice and support to social entrepreneur Jane Hughes in developing her venture Zest for Life, which supports local people in recovering from major surgery or serious illness. She provided council staff with two free short-term places for them to see how it works, and has since been added to their list for referrals, enabling her to reach more people.

Removing barriers is not straightforward, however, and councils must be realistic about what they can help with and the time it will take. Local authorities are publicly accountable, and the political processes they have to engage with potentially conflict with the working processes of entrepreneurs. The case study of Gary Staniforth below provides a useful illustration of the time it can take for certain outcomes to be achieved – his attempts to access empty retail space extended beyond the timetable for the pilot, with the council committing to honour all outstanding requests beyond their formal engagement. This also highlights the importance of managing expectations – working with social entrepreneurs does not always mean providing access to assets and changing commissioning processes, but can include sharing information and opening doors.

Opening doors to other resources

Councils are well-placed to identify and help get access to different assets and resources, including knowledge of who is who. Sharing resources, such as through providing a list of key contacts, can support social entrepreneurs and stimulate local links and partnerships. In this pilot, Bradford council agreed to compile a list of key contacts, which included local service commissioners as well as voluntary and community sector organisations. Additionally, the named principal contact (see above) was well placed to put social entrepreneurs in touch with colleagues in other departments as well as some external agencies. This enabled award winners to access additional support and resources from other agencies, as well as contribute to and influence decisions in the district (such as through service provider forums and consultations). (Such a list can be helpful to a wide range of local people, not only social entrepreneurs. However regular updating is necessary).

Meeting local needs

In this pilot, social ventures relieved pressure on discretionary services or provided preventative or early intervention support. With further austerity measures in the pipeline, and opportunities afforded by legislation such as Community Right to Challenge, it may be that small social ventures could have a bigger role in meeting local needs in the future, including filling gaps in statutory service provision.

Social value and social entrepreneurs

Social value is intrinsic to the work of social entrepreneurs. The Bradford pilot showed that social entrepreneurs can improve lives and encourage others to play a more active role in their community, exposing them to new experiences and developing their confidence and skills. Working with social entrepreneurs is one of many ways in which local councils and other commissioners may seek to improve outcomes and engage with local communities. This pilot showed it has potential, especially for those interested in supporting local innovation. One suggestion from the pilot was that social entrepreneurs and community-based groups should be involved in designing commissions so that commissioners could benefit from their insights and knowledge.

Thinking differently about commissioning

The pilot prompted questions for commissioners about opening up commissioning to reach small social ventures and community-based organisations, and broadening local authority perspectives of the diversity of effective practices. Local authorities can find it difficult to buy services from small, local social ventures, given the attractions of larger suppliers with greater working capital, cashflow and ability to absorb financial risks. Other approaches might include: tendering out work in smaller contracts; recognising that payment by results may exclude small ventures and community-based groups; identifying where and how to take more risks to encourage greater innovation. We suggest that such approaches could easily be accommodated by requirements on local authority and other commissioners around *social value*. Bradford council is exploring the possibility of running more commissioning workshops, where social entrepreneurs pitch their ideas and services to different council departments. The council has also created a 'City Centre Growth Zone' offering discounted business rates to those providing training and employment opportunities for local people.

With hindsight...

JRF, UnLtd and Bradford council could have improved support for new social entrepreneurs through:

- Careful consideration of how much human resource all partners could allocate. (In this pilot, the staffing levels for support were insufficient for the number of start-up ventures.)
- Clarity about what support was and was not available. (In this pilot, some people wanted office space, but Bradford council could not offer it).
- Direct contact between the council and entrepreneurs. (In this pilot, requests for council support were mediated by UnLtd. Council officers would have welcomed a better sense of the likely needs of social entrepreneurs, which could have come through more direct contact).
- A consistent feedback loop from all parties about what was working and what needed improving.
- Increasing the range of opportunities and support for potential service providers, especially small local organisations, to be ready to take on commissions and contracts for service delivery.
- More networking and information events so council officers could work with social entrepreneurs to remove blocks and barriers to progress, and for peer support and information exchange.
- Taking a long-term view where social entrepreneurs work with marginalised individuals, as outcomes can take time or may not be realised.
- Auditing skills and identifying the support needs of social entrepreneurs early on.
- Auditing skills and resources of other local agencies for more effective access to other support.
- Providing a list of key contacts within the council, other public agencies and voluntary and community sector groups to enable direct links and connections to be made more easily.

Bradford Social Futures: the outcomes

In Bradford, outcomes secured through the social ventures included:

- influencing the way other service providers work with groups (e.g. local colleges with unemployed young people);
- improved employment prospects through training and learning opportunities;
- securing housing for at least one beneficiary; and
- improved access to good information and being signposted to relevant services.

Some of the people who received support from the social ventures described how they benefited from improved self-confidence, work ethic and sense of ownership over their personal circumstances; received better support than from other service providers; and felt valued and listened to. The two case studies below illustrate the process and outcomes from two social ventures. Since the pilot, a small number have found routes to sustainability. Others came to an end, whether through a change of direction for the entrepreneur or simply because of lack of finance.

One of the most significant impacts of the pilot has arguably been on council practice in Bradford. Bradford council acknowledged that (in common with many other local authorities) they were set up to engage with, and buy from, larger suppliers rather than the community-level social ventures supported during this pilot. This experience for Bradford is well timed, as more work is now taking place to increase knowledge of the breadth of opportunities in the market and to support potential service providers, especially small local organisations, to be ready to take on council commissions.

Case study 1: Tackling homelessness

Homelessness has a negative impact on people's mental and physical health. Supporting homeless individuals is also expensive for service providers, costing in the region of £24,000–£30,000 per person per year (DCLG, 2012).

Gary Staniforth found himself homeless several years ago following a breakdown in his domestic situation. After campaigning on the steps of Bradford City Hall for several weeks, demanding support for single homeless people, Gary was rehoused. He continued to campaign for the rights of homeless people and, working with a local creative organisation, he delivered creative writing and photography workshops with homeless people to give them a voice and raise awareness. He had found writing helped him reflect on his life and situation when he had been homeless.

Spurred by these experiences he launched Hidden Voices magazine, to campaign on homelessness through print. As a result of the Social Future Awards, Hidden Voices developed from a billboard campaign into a company limited by guarantee. Gary has extended his networks and recruited a board of trustees, capitalising on their knowledge and experience, and accessing resources and facilities. He has also started to work with the City Centre Management Team to get a retail unit, from which he will continue to run his drop-in workshops.

Local homeless people, ex-homeless and service providers are all engaged in producing the magazine, from writing design to sales and advertising, with weekly drop-in sessions. All profits are reinvested into the magazine and related activities. The project has worked intensively with Bradford's homeless population since 2010. This venture has had a significant impact on their confidence and wellbeing, as illustrated through the case of David.

Before working with Hidden Voices, David was long-term homeless with a history of street crime, for which he had been arrested several times. He has also had a long-term alcohol addiction. Gary found out more about the issues David faced, eventually inviting him to be a street vendor.

"I explained to [Gary] that I had not slept in a bed for 18 months and was a street drinker ... through advocacy and discussion of Gary's own personal issues, I built trust within our relationship and ultimately a strong rapport."

Through involvement with Hidden Voices, David has found a new focus, come to terms with his addiction and turned his back on crime. Through the networks that Gary established, David was also connected to a range of other support agencies in Bradford, who have helped him find a flat and investigate courses in cookery and literacy. He also feels a stronger part of the community, meeting a wider range of people of different backgrounds and ethnicities.

Case study 2: Helping older people connect with the community

In an increasingly ageing society, loneliness, isolation and inactivity have the potential to grow among older adults. Loneliness is associated with increased depression and higher blood pressure, which can also lead to inactivity – and with it costs of treatment and absence from work.

Shona Grange is a social worker with years of experience working in Bradford. Following the restructuring of council-funded day care centres, Shona felt there were fewer opportunities for older people to get together, particularly in the rural areas of the Bradford district. She felt this would result in increased isolation, inactivity and a reduction in informal support opportunities.

In response to these changes Shona developed Not Over the Hill Yet (NOTHY) to help older people stay active. The scheme made use of spaces in working men's clubs and social centres – spaces where older people would feel most comfortable. Through the Social Future Awards the venture was piloted in Shipley and the Worth valley, running twice a week in each location. Shona used a type of 'time-bank' model, where participants could swap their knowledge and their skills with others in exchange for receiving help themselves. It also encouraged older people to take responsibility for managing and running group sessions.

"[It's about] how people can network with each other to actually meet their social needs. So it isn't just about thinking about people being in day centres – it's about how can we help people to access things that are in the community."

In late 2011 Bradford council invited Shona to present her 'co-productive model' for meeting the needs of older people. This fed into the commissioning of a service for better use of the community's assets, including the talents of older people themselves, to improve outcomes. After the social care provider Creative Support successfully won the contract, Shona was approached to develop her model further and roll it out across the district.

The service, now known as Community Links, has since improved older people's engagement with each other and their communities. Many participants have experienced isolation, depression or bereavement, and this project provides them with a source of self-esteem and a sense of purpose. Participants reported feeling more motivated to leave the house and get active, and improved health outcomes.

Shona hopes that this project will save the council money and has since developed more contacts within adults and community services, receiving more than 70 referrals from them by mid-2012. Although neither these relationships nor her new role came directly through the Social Future Awards, she feels that her award had given her an opportunity to pilot and test her idea further, as well as encouragement that the concept was feasible.

Conclusion

The Bradford Social Future Awards scheme provides useful lessons for commissioners and social entrepreneurs seeking to co-create solutions to local needs. Some social entrepreneurs can succeed in winning contracts to deliver commissioned services. But this should not be seen as the only desirable outcome of engagement between local authorities and social entrepreneurs. Many community-level social entrepreneurs – as demonstrated through this pilot – can contribute to the objectives of local authorities more broadly.

The individual award-holders supported through this scheme were at very different stages of development and operating very different business models. Some of the ventures were (or could evolve into) social enterprises or community groups that could tender for public service delivery, if routes to tendering were sufficiently accessible and inclusive. Others offered entrepreneurial solutions to social problems, albeit in ways that would not neatly fit with mainstream concepts of public service delivery.

This pilot scheme showed the benefits – as well as the risks and challenges – of working with social entrepreneurs locally. For councils, the benefits can include: meeting local needs, including unmet needs for preventative support and emerging gaps in service provision; and providing another way for councils to respond to the needs of their citizens, and empower and work with them.

Local authorities and public service commissioners operate within legislative and regulatory frameworks which can make it hard for them to provide what is effectively venture capital to individual social entrepreneurs at an early stage in their development. While commissioning and procurement processes are not designed to give financial backing to enterprise start-ups or development, this pilot provides interesting learning for local authorities and other service commissioners about whether, where and how risks might be taken and new ideas backed.

We hope that others can benefit from this learning as they look for ways to invest in local people with innovative solutions for local problems. At UnLtd, we believe the next step is to build on and broaden the work, and we are interested in working with other local authorities to support emerging social entrepreneurs.

About this paper

The evidence presented in this paper was collected between September 2011 and April 2012. In addition to two waves of interviews with 16 social entrepreneurs, representatives from Bradford council and JRF and two from UnLtd were also interviewed. Three focus groups were conducted with 21 beneficiaries of three of the ventures towards the end of 2011. One award winner was unavailable to take part in the evaluation.

To read the full evaluation report, visit: <http://unltd.org.uk/news/research-publications/>

Notes

- 1 For further information on this programme see www.participle.net/projects/view/3/102 (accessed 18 August 2012).
- 2 For further information on the cooperative council model see www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/CouncilDemocracy/MakingADifference/TheCooperativeCouncil (accessed 18 August 2012).
- 3 For further information of SSE's work in this area see www.the-sse.org/schools/10/east-of-england (accessed 18 August 2012).
- 4 Following a change in personal circumstances Wahida left the programme. A colleague from Bradford Muslim Women's Council, Selina Ullah, took over City Circle.

References

Ashoka (2012) Ashoka website. *What is a social entrepreneur?* Available at: www.ashoka.org/social_entrepreneur (accessed 18 August 2012)

Bradford Observatory (2011) *Housing in Bradford District*. Available at: www.observatory.bradford.nhs.uk/Documents/3_1_5_Housing.pdf (accessed 18 August 2012)

Cabinet Office (2012) *Unshackling good neighbours*. Available at www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Final-Unshackling-Good-Neighbours.pdf (accessed 18 August 2012)

Department for Communities and Local Government (2011) *Best value statutory guidance*. Available at: www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/1976926.pdf (accessed 18 August 2012)

Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) *Making every contact count: a joint approach to preventing homelessness*. Available at: www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/makeeverycontactcount (accessed 18 August 2012)

Ellis, T. (2010) *The new pioneers: Sustainable business success through social innovation and social entrepreneurship*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons

LGA (2010a) *The Spending Review 2010: Briefing*

LGA (2010b) *Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement: Briefing*

Peattie, K. and Morley, A. (2008) *Social enterprises: diversity and dynamics, contexts and contributions*. London: Social Enterprise UK

Social Enterprise UK (2011) *Social enterprise coalition response to modernising commissioning: increasing the role of charities, social enterprises, mutuals and cooperatives in public service delivery*. Available at: www.socialenterprise.org.uk/uploads/editor/files/Policy/Consultations/Modernising_Commissioning_consultation_response_final_Jan_111.pdf (accessed 18 August 2012)

UnLtd (2012) *Social entrepreneurs: the facts*. Available at: <http://unltd.org.uk/2012/11/02/findings-1-social-entrepreneurs-the-facts> (accessed 18 August 2012)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

This summary is part of JRF's research and development programme. The views are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the JRF.

Read more summaries at www.jrf.org.uk
Other formats available
ISSN 0958-3084
ISBN 9781859359600

Joseph Rowntree Foundation
The Homestead
40 Water End
York YO30 6WP
Tel: 01904 615905

email: publications@jrf.org.uk
www.jrf.org.uk
Ref: 2858
©UnLtd 2013

JRF

JOSEPH
ROWNTREE
FOUNDATION



INSPIRING
SOCIAL
CHANGE