

## CASE STUDY

### Selling Added Value: training on Social Return on Investment for social enterprises

The Social Enterprise Support Centre (SESC) in Yorkshire and Humber developed the Selling Added Value course, originally with funding from the Learning Skills Council, to enable social enterprises to grow by demonstrating their added value in terms that are relevant to buyers.

The Capacitybuilders Social Enterprise programme enabled SESC to develop the course further and begin to roll it out, increasing awareness of the social accounting tool Social Return on Investment (SROI) and measure achievements of social enterprises using this tool. The Selling Added value project under Capacitybuilders also aimed to identify two other support organisations to train in delivering the Selling Added Value course, spreading the course to other areas and regions.

#### Selling Added Value project activity so far

Selling Added Value ([www.sellingaddedvalue.co.uk](http://www.sellingaddedvalue.co.uk)) is a course which aims to give social enterprises social accounting skills in order to compete for work and contracts on added value.

This requires social enterprises to identify the benefit of their services, the impact of those benefits and the value of that impact. The course helps social enterprises map the added value and impact that they achieve directly against targets set by procurement officers and commissioners. Bringing together commissioners, practitioners, and providers ensures there is a better idea of what everyone is looking for in the tendering process.

Throughout the project, eight courses were run, with over 70 social enterprises trained and impact maps produced. Three infrastructure support organisations were recruited, and three business coaches trained in the Selling Added Value Course and how to deliver it across the region. The course is a stepping stone to a social accounting approach/SROI, and has proved very useful as an introduction, as not many organisations know where to start in the field.

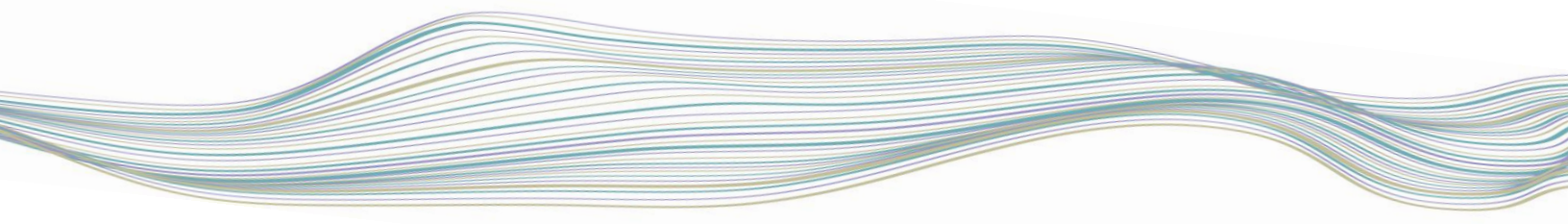
Throughout the Selling Added Value project, SESC were able to develop close relationships with the social enterprises on the course, widening their reach and increasing their support work within the social enterprise sector in the region.

#### Challenges and Insights from the Selling Added Value Project

- When considering social impact, small social enterprises often underplay what they do, and take for granted their added benefits to the community. Selling Added Value enabled them to identify and capitalise on that.

#### *The Selling Added Value course objectives are:*

1. Using existing social accounting tools, produce a short and effective social statement for social enterprises based on their added value.
2. Provide pathways for social enterprises that use the minimum amount of time and resources or that provide full social audits, as required.
3. Define benefits in both qualitative and quantitative ways.
4. Develop and pilot some consistent indicators for added value (including sector specific indicators where appropriate).



### ***Social Return on Investment (SROI)***

SROI measures social, environmental and economic outcomes and uses monetary values to represent them.

This enables a ratio of benefits to costs to be calculated. For example, a ratio of 3:1 indicates that an investment of £1 delivers £3 of social value.

An SROI analysis can encompass the social value generated by an entire organisation, or focus on just one specific aspect of the organisation's work, and can be an in-house exercise or led by an external researcher.

- When offering training courses, it is important to attract the right audience. Free training did not necessarily attract organisations that were well enough established to benefit from the Selling Added Value course content. Revising the recruitment process, reducing the course duration to a day and introducing a charge improved the quality of organisations participating and will help the programme become self-sustaining into the future.
- Having multiple staff attend training courses helps to embed the learning within the organisation, and means it is more likely to be utilized. It is often difficult for small businesses to commit several staff to attend training, especially if it was spread over a couple of days. Shortening the course helped to combat this.

### **The future of Selling Added Value**

Despite the end of Capacitybuilders funding, Selling Added Value will be continuing as a training course. The long term vision is for more funders and commissioners to recognise the real social value of social enterprises, rather focussing solely on the cost of a service. The successful achievement of key social outcomes should be the focus, with more emphasis on joined up thinking and multiple beneficial outcomes.

The increasing awareness of SROI approaches will improve the commissioning process and should ensure that organisations which can demonstrate they are achieving benefits over and above the contract outputs will be more successful and sustainable in the future.

The Selling Added Value programme has proven to be a valuable introduction to Social Return On Investment, training over 70 organisations during the course of the project. It has improved understanding of the true value that organisations are creating through the delivery of their services and helped them quantify this in a simple impact map. Having the ability to convert these benefits into monetary value helps commissioners and funders understand the real value of the service being delivered. The Selling Added Value programme has sharpened organisations contracting and tendering skills which can only improve their sustainability in a very difficult financial climate.

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