

## **Equal Theme D – Social Economy (Action 3)**

### **SEC National Mainstreaming Partnership 2005 – 2007**

#### **Introduction**

In early 2005, the Social Enterprise Coalition, at that time already a partner in a Round 1 Equal programme (the Social Enterprise Partnership<sup>1</sup>), was asked to lead a national programme in the second Round which would build on our experience of promoting key findings and lessons learnt to mainstream policymakers. A national mainstreaming programme would also serve to support the thematic networking process across the whole of the social economy theme of Equal, which participants from Round 1 felt had been under-resourced and under utilised during their project lifetime.

The overall aim of the partnership was to increase awareness amongst national policymakers and opinion formers of key issues affecting social enterprises. By actively facilitating peer networking on a national scale and involving the apex organisations of the social enterprise movement at a strategic level, i.e. the Social Enterprise Coalition, key lessons learned and successes from the equal programme would be nationally recognised and used as evidence in policy making.

The mainstreaming programme was jointly funded by ESF (managed by the DWP Equal Unit) and the Cabinet Office – Office of the Third Sector (formerly the Social Enterprise Unit in the DTI).

#### **Programme Objectives**

The mainstreaming partnership had four key objectives:

1. To increase opportunities for networking and peer review amongst development partnerships in the social economy theme;
2. To inform and influence the policy work of government departments;
3. To profile key success stories and lessons learned from the Equal programme in the national media and amongst key opinion-formers with little knowledge of social enterprise; and
4. To develop a bank of resources building on learning from the Equal programme.

'Partnership' in this programme meant working closely with the ten Theme D development partnerships (DPs) in Round 2 and, where relevant, drawing in expertise and input from the Round 1 DPs. Partnership also meant bringing the Equal programme work into the wider social enterprise context and facilitating the development of networks and knowledge exchange. By working closely with the relevant government department for social enterprise, the Cabinet Office, the Coalition was also well placed to profile key findings to national policy makers and ensure that programme activities could link in with developments across the sector such as the Third Sector Review jointly undertaken by HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office.

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<sup>1</sup> The Social Enterprise Partnership comprised the following organisations: Co-operatives UK, Development Trusts Association, New Economics Foundation, Social Enterprise Coalition, Social Enterprise London, Social Firms UK

The Coalition's role was to use learning from equal to create the market conditions for the sector to flourish as well as increasing the opportunities for social enterprise to deliver public services in particular sectors, for example as health and social care. We took a very pragmatic view that the programme should not be marginalised from the fast changing world of social enterprise.

## **Programme Activities**

Programme activity was structured around the four objectives with key activities and outputs under each heading. Here is a summary of achievements:

### 1. Peer networking

In Round 1, the Thematic Networking Group (TNG) was under-utilised as a forum for debate, shared learning and influencing policy. The Coalition played a key role to work with the Equal Support Unit to structure Round 2 TNG meetings for maximum opportunities for learning, in particular by assisting in the agenda planning and sourcing of speakers. The Coalition also spoke at and contributed to the design of the final Equal-Works conference and participated in EU level events which brought together the DPs for transnational learning.

It was widely felt by DPs that an additional dedicated forum for shared learning was needed and in response to that, the Coalition organised four independent and highly successful DP networking events. These were well attended by DPs and provided an opportunity to learn about each others' work in detail and explore opportunities for joint working.

Programme communications were focused around a quarterly bulletin which not only documented the activity of the Coalition, but also provided an opportunity for the DPs to share their own achievements and promote upcoming work in a calendar of events. The bulletin was distributed via the Coalition's email newsletter which has a distribution list of circa 5000 people.

### 2. Policy influencing

The Coalition provided most of the DPs with access to policymakers who would otherwise be inaccessible and guided the programme to focus in particular policy areas where we felt there was most opportunity to influence. The programme focused primarily on health and social care, public procurement and business support policy areas. Additional areas of interest included finance, the environment, impact measurement, workforce development and social inclusion.

The plan of activities was organised around a simple policy development process which included policy working groups, development of policy papers, and presentation of key messages to policymakers. In addition, the programme responded to Government consultations, using key messages from DPs and from the policy work supported by this programme. Other outputs included the production of publications, in particular for procurement and health and social care.

### 3. Profile raising

The programme sought to use a range of opportunities to raise the profile of Equal and the work of the DPs. For example, the development of case studies, podcasts, leaflets and postcards, conference exhibition displays, and website pages. Products such as flyers and USB keys containing case studies were distributed at national and regional events and publicity was generated on a number of programme outputs.

Media articles relating to the policy development work under the programme were placed in national and international media, for example on social franchising, renewable energy, and social inclusion. Promotional events such as the final conference for C3 DP and the joint conference on social franchising with INSPIRE DP were used to generate interest across a wider policy audience.

Finally, DP successes (outputs and events) were showcased in our bi-weekly newsletter.

#### 4. Bank of resources

Specific pages on the SEC website were developed to showcase the work of the DPs and the wider policy development work supported under the programme ([www.socialenterprise.org.uk/equal](http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/equal)). Originally, it was our intention to capture all key DP outputs on our own website, but this needed reassessment following the development of the Equal-Works initiative ([www.equal-works.org.uk](http://www.equal-works.org.uk)). The Coalition programme sought to promote Equal-Works to all DPs and other stakeholders looking to find programme outputs and we reviewed and signposted DP resources to wider social enterprise audiences via the newsletter.

### **Outputs and achievements in mainstreaming**

Key outputs and achievements in the mainstreaming programme include the following:

- Meetings with key stakeholders in the social economy to explore opportunities for mainstreaming and also to present the objectives of the programme
- Visits to DPs and collaborative work on promotional activities such as national and regional conferences; facilitation of DP networking days (outside the TNG domain)
- Presentations to UK and EU audiences on the Equal Social Economy programme
- Development of strong working relationships with key Government Ministers and officials resulting in invitations to participate in Government working groups and policy meetings; participation in major Government consultations and events on the Third Sector (social economy)
- Distribution of Equal promotional materials at key events; publication of media articles
- Policy campaign plans developed in health, business support, local government services
- Equal Thematic mainstreaming strategy reviewed and updated
- Policy reports and publications published and disseminated to wide policy audiences
- Development and dissemination of marketing materials
- Placement of policy messages in non-Equal campaigns and publications
- Promotion of Equal funded organisations to apply for national awards

Significant achievements in changing the policy landscape include the influencing of content in a Department of Health white paper (early 2006) using findings from an Equal programme working group; and the publication of a policy paper on business support and subsequent consultation response on business support simplification. The policy development work in business support informed relevant sections of the Cabinet Office's Social Enterprise Action Plan in October 2006 and was a catalyst for subsequent meetings with business and enterprise ministers and regional development agencies on the specialist support needs of social economy organisations.

Policy activity by the Coalition started under the Equal programme will continue beyond the lifetime of the programme as these are still of major interest to both the social enterprise sector and national, regional and local government or other public agencies.

## **Impact and sustainability of the National Mainstreaming Partnership**

The development partnerships were our key stakeholder group and at the end of the programme they were surveyed about the Coalition's role in a national mainstreaming programme. There was much positive feedback on the Coalition's programme, in particular that the networking events greatly helped them to share ideas. In addition, DPs felt that the Coalition's policy development work created dialogue between them and national, regional and local public bodies and tapped DPs into other networks and avenues. The DPs found it extremely useful to have national body not only to discuss issues with, but also to provide a platform for their work.

It was also commented that the wider Equal programme in general was so demanding that it was easy to forget the bigger picture; SEC helped DPs to regain focus on this. Those involved in the first round of Equal felt that a similar mainstreaming programme would have meant a greater impact of their programme given the results and outputs delivered by the Coalition. The DPs felt that it would be both helpful and useful to continue sharing knowledge and best practice in a network. It was requested that the Coalition review community tools to keep the DP network alive beyond Equal.

Policy impact was captured in two surveys of key opinion formers and policymakers across three types of organisation: regional development agencies, local authorities and public health bodies. The results of these surveys has indicated a significant increase in awareness of and understanding of social enterprise on the basis of the dissemination of the programme's policy papers and publications as well as key events organised within the programme.

In the final survey of public bodies, 90% of local authorities and 81% of health bodies claimed awareness of social enterprise had increased over the lifetime of the Equal programme. 50% had attended a policy working group / consultation event or other Equal event organised by the Coalition. 81% said the Equal events/publications had increased their knowledge of social enterprises and as a direct result 58% had increased engagement with social enterprises (if not already engaged). More details about this impact are given in the final evaluation report.

Programme sustainability will be achieved through the Coalition's commitment to continued work in the key programme policy areas. Expertise from the organisations within DPs will continue to be used in policy and research work. Key outputs from the Equal programme will also be profiled and signposted in future Coalition publications where relevant.

Practical experience and learning from the project management framework established in this programme is being used by SEC as a model of excellence for future projects and engagements. The programme manager will be employed as the organisational projects and programmes manager to implement and manage a new framework on the basis of experience gained through the Equal programme.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Programme Outputs**

New studies, policy and research reports, publications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>More for your money</u> - reprint (Dec 05) x 3000</li> <li>2. Health policy paper (Dec 06)</li> <li>3. Third Sector consultation response (Oct 06)</li> <li>4. Business Support policy paper (Oct 06)</li> <li>5. <u>Healthy Business</u> (Mar 07) x 10,000</li> <li>6. Health Commissioning consultation response (May 07)</li> <li>7. Climate change consultation response (May 07)</li> <li>8. Health Commissioning policy paper (Aug 07)</li> <li>9. Lisbon Agenda consultation response (Aug 07)</li> <li>10. Sustainable future consultation response (Sep 07)</li> <li>11. Business support simplification consultation response (Sep 07)</li> <li>12. Procurement key issues paper (Dec 07)</li> <li>13. Models of Efficiency paper (Demos) Dec 07</li> </ol>
New evaluation reports	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interim report (Apr 07)</li> <li>2. Final report (Feb 08)</li> </ol>
New marketing materials, exhibitions and other resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>USB key</u> (Jan 06) – x1000</li> <li>2. <u>Postcard</u> (Jan 06) – x1000</li> <li>3. Conference banner (May 06)</li> <li>4. <u>Local Government Services leaflet</u> (May 06) – x3000</li> <li>5. Round 1 Case studies (Dec 06) x6</li> <li>6. <u>Podcasts</u> (2007) – x7</li> <li>7. Podcast DVD (Jan 07)</li> <li>8. Exhibition wall map (Jan 07)</li> <li>9. <u>Equal flyers</u> (Jan 07) x1000</li> <li>10. Equal pages for SEC website (05-07)</li> <li>11. Press articles (05-07) – x20+ (to be confirmed by Katy)</li> </ol>
New databases (communities of interest)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Business Support</li> <li>2. Procurement</li> <li>3. Finance</li> <li>4. Impact measurement</li> <li>5. Workforce development</li> <li>6. Health</li> <li>7. Equal learning network</li> </ol>
Workshops, events or conferences	<p><b>Working groups</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Procurement (Jun 05)</li> <li>2. Health (Nov 05)</li> <li>3. Finance (Nov 05)</li> <li>4. Business Support (Feb 06)</li> <li>5. Health (Feb 06)</li> <li>6. Workforce development (Jul 06)</li> <li>7. Impact measurement (Jul 06)</li> <li>8. Business support (Aug 06)</li> <li>9. Business support (conf calls – Jan-Mar 07)</li> </ol>

	<p>10. PPP – Demos (Apr 07)</p> <p>11. Health (May 07)</p> <p>12. Business support (Jul 07)</p> <p>13. Procurement (Nov 07)</p> <p><b>Policymaker meetings</b></p> <p>14. Liam Byrne (Jan 06)</p> <p>15. Department of Health (Jan - March 06)</p> <p>16. John Hutton (Oct 06)</p> <p>17. Tony Blair (Nov 06)</p> <p>18. Parmjit Dhanda ( Nov 06)</p> <p>19. Hilary Armstrong (Nov 06)</p> <p>20. Ronald Cohen (Jan 07)</p> <p>21. David Miliband (Mar 07)</p> <p>22. Ed Miliband (Mar 07)</p> <p>23. Margaret Hodge (Mar 07)</p> <p>24. Margaret Hodge (May 07)</p> <p>25. Finance (May 07)</p> <p>26. Margaret Hodge (Jun 07)</p> <p>27. BERR (Jul 07)</p> <p>28. Stephen Timms (Nov 07)</p> <p><b>Promotional Events</b></p> <p>29. HMT/ Cabinet Office events x9</p> <p>30. VOICE Conference x2 (06, 07)</p> <p>31. Healthy Business launch (Mar 07)</p> <p>32. C3 Final conference (Dec 07)</p> <p>33. INSPIRE social franchising conference (Dec 07)</p> <p><b>DP networking Days</b></p> <p>34. Sep 06</p> <p>35. Jan 07</p> <p>36. Jul 07</p> <p>37. Dec 07</p>
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