

TSRC Advisory Board 28.09.09

Issues raised in group discussion about **Social Enterprise**

The two groups discussed a range of issues in response to a short overview of the past year's outputs and proposed plans of the strand. The following points were identified as potential issues to consider:

- The issue of finance and gender- do women social entrepreneurs face similar issues to women mainstream entrepreneurs
- How gender and ethnicity shapes social enterprise
- Policy interest and discourse of social enterprise-. How do policy makers see the difference between third sector and social enterprise. Is social enterprise seen as more professional, business like and value for money. Or is social enterprise the halo effect
- Does business support understand the concept, what roles do local governments have, what role should it have and what role for Business Link
- The informal aspects of social enterprise especially amongst ethnic minority groups
- How will TSRC define social enterprise, especially those organisations which are private limited companies. There is a risk of conflating social enterprise with the private sector. It is about how priorities of social and profit are ordered but this is hard to identify. How will research differentiate between coops that have community benefits and those that aim to serve a narrow range of members.
- When examining impact, how will research examine poverty and regeneration of neighbourhoods. How is social enterprise different to other parts of the third sector.
- Drivers of innovation: is it forced by operating on a shoe string, are their innovation ceilings that come when no further investment. How do people replicate and is this possible when there is a single strong leader. Commissioners see innovation as way of saving money, rarely invite solutions but militate against innovation
- How effective is Social Enterprise (as a business model in itself)?
- Business support for social enterprise – how different is this for a 'normal' charity compared to a Social Enterprise?
- Business Link/ voluntary sector how do they work together?
- John Mawson discussed the influence of government policies and regional tiers (e.g. RDA) in the delivery of government policy. What is the future if the Conservatives won the next election.
- Reflect on the future of the economy both regionally and nationally and the tensions between mainstream, voluntary sector and social enterprise.
- He stated that Social Enterprise transforms the way in which business is managed with full engagement of the labour force.
- He thinks it is important to consider what has happened over the past 200 years (history/trajectories) with regard to mutuals/co-operatives/guilds.
- Importance of geography and locality (urban and rural)

- The need to understand the definition of Social Enterprise – what do policy makers mean by the term and what are their views.
- Better understanding might lead to collaborations and opportunities for funding.
- Psychology of the individual social entrepreneurs