



**School for Social Entrepreneurs: nef evaluation  
report**  
October 2006

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# 1. Executive summary

The School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) aims to address inequalities and social exclusion by supporting social entrepreneurs in transforming their talent into real social outcomes. It does this through encouraging students to pursue effective and sustainable solutions to poverty and disadvantage in local communities.

The most important activities involve identifying, encouraging and developing social entrepreneurs and guiding them through a programme of personal and project development based on 'learning by doing' and 'just-in-time' support. The goal is to enable social entrepreneurs to establish effective, sustainable community projects and initiatives that meet social and community needs.

In addition to the original London School, there are four member schools located in the East Midlands, Aston, Fife, and Belfast and, with a sixth launching in Liverpool in autumn 2006. As of July 2006, over 250 students have completed the SSE programme.

The social entrepreneurship landscape has changed tremendously since SSE was founded in 1997. Overall we can say that SSE has influenced the rising tide of social entrepreneurship and demonstrated its effectiveness at:

- Meeting the needs of social entrepreneurs through the successful delivery of programme elements.
- Building the capacity of the individuals and their organisations to create change.
- Creating sustainable community solutions and wider community impacts.

This report presents the findings of research undertaken to evaluate and measure the quality and impact of the SSE. It has been carried out by **nef** in response to the stated primary purpose of SSE's evaluation brief which was broadly to focus on "the effects of the core SSE programme and its delivery". It builds upon the work of previous evaluations surrounding personal and organisational development and attempts to construct a fuller understanding of SSE's impacts.

For the detail of how and to what extent SSE is effective the evaluation focused on addressing seven research questions, and in doing so found the following:

### **Research Question 1**

#### ***Is the SSE unique compared to other organisations?***

We asked fellows why they had chosen the SSE over other institutions and the majority answered precisely because of its uniqueness. For the earliest graduates, this was because the SSE was the *only* organisation available to support social entrepreneurs when it first began, blazing a trail that others have since followed. For the later students, the indications are that its uniqueness lies in the depth and duration of support, the high levels of personal support and the inspirational mixture of people and lasting support networks.

While no other organisation offers the action learning model and programme offered by the SSE, other organisations share ground with the SSE, but there are some significant differences.

- Other *third sector support organisations* may use 'expert witnesses', one-to-one tutoring or group working, but **nef's** research found no others that shared the SSE's focus on an individual journey (and self-actualisation) as well as organisational development.
- *Business support agencies* generally offer support on business plans, finding capital and developing legal structures, before signposting onto further business development. Though the support is in real time, the SSE programme elements such as the peer support and learning, the personal support, and the ability to understand sector-specifics, are often missing.
- *Academic learning programmes* generally require a first degree (or other educational qualification) to enter, and the style tends to be focused on taught content, rather than facilitating learning by doing. Whilst this model works well for some, it would exclude many social entrepreneurs from participation based on requirements for entry and the focus on written work.

### **Research Question 2**

#### ***Is the SSE helping the students to meet their own objectives?***

The SSE *is* meeting the diverse needs and objectives of students across the UK from a wide range of thematic and geographical areas:

- Ninety per cent of students felt that the programme they undertook was well suited to their needs.

#### *Depth of support*

Students consistently acknowledge the success of Action Learning Sets, Expert Witness Sessions, Project Visits, Personal Tutors and the Residential as well as the influence the programme has had on both their personal and organisational development.

#### *Supportive environment*

The SSE provides a supportive environment for students giving them a space to reflect and to be with like-minded people who understand them:

- Ninety-three per cent of students agreed that the SSE provided them with a supportive environment.
- Ninety-two per cent of students agreed that they were provided with space to reflect.

The SSE is a crucible for forging project ideas, where students are challenged and tested with 'supported freedom' so that those ideas are ready for presentation to the outside world.

#### *Contacts*

Students attending the SSE *will* make useful contacts:

- Seventy-six per cent of the students questioned made more than four useful contacts, and fifty-three per cent made more than ten.

With networks and contacts playing a crucial role in the success of social entrepreneurs, these contacts and the benefits they bring are a vital part of the SSE's theory of change.

#### *Increased confidence*

There is a great change in the confidence students feel whilst attending the SSE:

- Eighty-eight per cent agreed that whilst attending the SSE they experienced a growth in confidence.
- Sixty per cent agreed that their confidence continued to rise even after having left SSE due to the long lasting support network, friends and contacts made whilst there.

#### *Increased credibility*

The SSE opens doors and increases the capacity of organisations to effect change, giving students better positioning to funders, local authorities and other key decision-makers.

- Sixty-six per cent of respondents rated their perception of their organisation's credibility as 7 or above on a scale of 1-10. In all but a handful of cases they attributed this directly or indirectly to their experience at the SSE. It was clear also that fellows believed that their association with the SSE and its reputation in the sector increased their credibility with other organisations.

### **Research Question 3**

***Is the SSE meeting its own objectives, particularly in terms of maintaining itself as a sustainable organisation that grows and adapts?***

The SSE is maintaining a 'cycle of growth' and delivering the programmes in a spirit of co-operation and learning, not imposed from above. The 'cycle of growth' refers to the gradual accumulation of contacts (and therefore experience) that feeds back into delivering elements of the SSE programme – not only in Expert Witness sessions and Project Visits, but for tutors and core staff who themselves are able to identify with the students' values and needs.

In turn this body of knowledge and expertise is able to contribute to the growth and sustainability of organisations, as well as their impact in wider communities.

#### **Research Question 4**

##### ***Is the SSE meeting its objectives in terms of bringing about sustainable, effective change in communities?***

SSE fellows' organisations are alive and surviving, growing, reaching out and are beginning to create a 'social transformation' by inspiring and transforming others.

##### *Alive and surviving*

Eighty-five per cent of respondents stated that the project or organisation they were working on whilst at the SSE was still in existence. SSE fellows' organisations are over one-and-a-half times more likely to be in existence after eight years than conventional businesses.<sup>1</sup>

##### *Growing*

These organisations are experiencing financial and organisational growth in a variety of ways, such as by generating employment, creating volunteer posts, and reaching thousands of users. On average, SSE fellows' organisations are effectively trading and gaining a five-fold increase in turnover.<sup>2</sup>

##### *Reaching out*

Evidence from case studies demonstrate that SSE fellows and their organisations are able to see that they are creating effective long-term impacts within the wider communities that they serve; these impacts are diverse in addressing varied economic, social and environmental issues from a range of perspectives and places. This has led to observable positive outcomes for those communities, and also beyond, with social entrepreneurs reaching out to challenge 'decision-makers' and influence public policy.

##### *Self seeding*

SSE fellows can see that they are inspiring others in their immediate community. This is done indirectly by demonstrating confidence and success in their community, and also directly by recognising and encouraging other people with the necessary potential to develop their own capabilities.

#### **Research Question 5**

##### ***Can meeting or not meeting these objectives be attributed to the SSE?***

Whilst full consideration of all attribution issues is not within the scope of this evaluation, it is clear that for some social entrepreneurs the SSE acts as a 'fine-tuning greenhouse', giving them the ability to move forward with their project in a variety of ways and to create a greater impact than they would have otherwise. For others, the SSE is nothing less than the difference between existence and non-existence of their project or organisation and profound change within their own lives.

## Research Question 6

### *Is the SSE good value for money?*

This evaluation can begin to give an indication of whether the SSE is good value for money by considering some of the areas where the SSE helps students and their organisations create value relative to the amount of money invested in the training for those students.

The cost of putting a student through the SSE programme varies across the UK schools and by year and by intake. Based upon SSE data across these variables, an average cost per student across the network of schools is **£6,000**.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Jobs created*

Using this estimate cost per student and measuring the potential monetary value of the jobs created by the SSE as compared with the money invested to create those jobs, the value would be a ratio of **1:1.5**.<sup>4</sup>

Over time, this investment increases its rewards in terms of jobs created and value for individuals. For the 5 organisations that graduated in 1999, 35 jobs had been created by 2006 when this survey was carried out, which represents an average of five per year. This yields a ratio (**1:6.3**) that suggests that **for every £6,000 invested, £38,131 is received in wages**<sup>5</sup> through jobs created, with a proportion of this also benefiting the Government in terms of income tax and national insurance contributions.

#### *Turnover: value for money for students and the communities their organisations serve*

Evaluation data shows that since 1999 fellows' organisations have together increased their cumulative turnover by £2,357,400.<sup>6</sup> This gives a ratio of **1:17** representing a return in terms of organisational turnover of £102,496 for each £6,000 invested in a student.

These indications of whether the SSE is value for money highlight in monetary terms the large benefits to the SSE's stakeholders from the investment of £6,000 in each student. Necessarily, this calculation, whilst providing a useful indicator, does not reflect the full value created by the SSE. The wider value and those outcomes most difficult to monetise are explored in non-monetary terms in the rest of this evaluation report.

## Research Question 7

### *What does this evaluation say about some of the primary critiques of the SSE's approach?*

There exist several well-known critiques of the SSE's approach to support and creating change in communities as well as more general critiques of the broader contribution of social enterprise to society and the economy. Our findings provide information that can effectively address some of the critiques of the SSE's approach as well as contribute to the wider debate.

#### *Lack of accountability or the 'heroic individual' claim*

Individuals at the SSE are accepted on the programme partly on the basis of being able to demonstrate ownership and personal experience or understanding of the issues that their initiative is aiming to address. While this 'ownership' is important it can also represent a peril: that of taking too much ownership, and becoming a lone crusader.

Once on the programme, however, students come into contact with people with different backgrounds and viewpoints that can challenge and test their approaches, and help to check this tendency through peer review. SSE students are accountable to one another which may, in turn, serve to ensure a greater degree of collaboration in future (see 8.4 / 9.5).

*Too much flexibility, or the 'curriculum needed for learning' myth*

The SSE's approach effectively addresses individual's diverse needs which arise from their different work contexts. The focus on personal development ensures that the individual and the organisation have the opportunity to grow organically according to their particular challenges rather than through a rigid 'tick-box' approach to each issue. The absence of a formal qualification enhances the freedom and flexibility that is vital to the SSE's approach.

The SSE focuses on personal development for a good reason – it is this level of attitudinal, confidence-building support that can represent the difference between success and failure for an initiative that is relying on the inspiration and dedication of an individual to make it happen. That fellows' organisations are over one-and-a-half times more likely to survive than mainstream businesses highlights the real benefit of this approach.

*From local to national, or the 'community activism' claim*

Sometimes SSE fellows are described as being simply local community activists working for local people solving local problems. This evaluation aims to contribute to the debate as we find that whilst social entrepreneurs are working locally they often face challenges produced by processes beyond their immediate sphere of control. Some fellows are seeking to counteract disempowerment by 'scale jumping' to assert their specific concerns and actively seek to shape and change public policy at local and even national and international levels.<sup>7</sup>

There is also danger that the 'local-people-solving-local-problems' view may strengthen a dangerous assumption that social enterprise is the panacea that will solve social ills on the ground, thereby relinquishing responsibility for addressing these ills directly, or more importantly their underlying and systemic causes.

The SSE programme is designed and delivered in a way that is sensitive to the diverse needs and attitudes of the students who are striving to achieve positive change for communities. The spirit of the SSE experience is in the way it seeks, through the endeavours of its students, to reverse trends of social exclusion, poverty and disempowerment at local, national and international levels. SSE guides students through a process of personal transformation, organisational development and by supporting a community of social entrepreneurs as part of a network that can work on a long-term basis to create wider and lasting change.

## 2. Introduction

This report presents the findings of research undertaken to evaluate and measure the quality<sup>8</sup> and impact of the SSE. It has been carried out by **nef** in response to the stated primary purpose of SSE's evaluation brief which was broadly to focus on "the effects of the core SSE programme and its delivery".

### What is the School for Social Entrepreneurs?

The SSE addresses inequalities and social exclusion by supporting individuals in order to transform their talents into real social outcomes. Over the course of a year the SSE identifies, encourages and develops the capacity of a selected group of social entrepreneurs whilst guiding them through a programme of personal and project development based on 'learning by doing' and 'just-in-time' support.<sup>9</sup> The goal is to enable them to establish effective and sustainable community projects and initiatives that meet social and community needs.

In the context of the different levels of support available to people working in the third sector the SSE claims to be offering a combination of personal and organisational *support* alongside personal *development* for individuals. Personal and organisational support includes access to new networks and advice from experts and people with experience in the field which can have a direct impact on how a project idea becomes a reality. Personal development deals more with building the necessary skills and knowledge for an individual to succeed whether or not their idea becomes a fully fledged organisation, whilst at the same time concentrating on helping them to identify their own strengths and limitations. For social entrepreneurs, organisational support and personal development are inseparable as the latter has an associated impact on the former.

The original London School was established by Michael Young in 1997, and has since been joined by four other member schools in East Midlands, Aston, Fife, Belfast, with a sixth launching in Liverpool in September 2006. The SSE also ran 12 one-year millennium programmes around the country in 2000–01 in locations across the UK. To date over 250 students have taken the SSE programmes and currently over 50 students are attending the 2006/07 programmes.

## Telling the SSE story

The SSE is more than a training organisation; it has a far more ambitious objective that looks beyond the transfer of skills and knowledge to individual students, to one of creating longer-term, positive social impacts for communities and the wider world. Consequently the theory about how that objective is reached is long and complex and therefore not one that a simple measurement of quantitative data can adequately assess. The SSE story represents a rich tapestry of individual causes and effects that individually are not sufficient, but that together are deemed necessary for bringing about change. As such this evaluation explores the path from the arrival of a potential student, to the change that student's endeavours eventually brings about in the wider world as a result of the experience they have had at the SSE.

This analysis leads us to two overarching questions. First, an intrinsic question about whether the SSE is fulfilling its objectives for supporting individuals (i.e. doing what it says on the tin), and secondly what we can conclude about the role of the SSE in creating sustainable change in communities. The primary purpose of this evaluation was to test the efficacy and transformative effect of the SSE approach and methodology both on the social entrepreneurs who go through its programmes, on the organisations they are associated with and on the communities they serve.

Underpinning the evaluation were the following research questions:

1. Is the SSE unique as compared to other organisations doing similar work?
2. Is the SSE helping the students to meet their own objectives?
3. Is the SSE meeting its own objectives, particularly in terms of maintaining itself as a sustainable organisation that grows and adapts (described by the SSE as a 'cycle of growth')?
4. Is the SSE meeting its objectives in terms of bringing about sustainable change in communities?
5. Can meeting/not meeting these objectives be attributed to the SSE? What are the other factors that could be contributing to these?
6. Is the SSE good value for money?
7. What are the primary critiques of the SSE and/or its 'model'? Are they reasonably addressed by the SSE?

As the SSE's own assertion is that the focus of the core programme is on outcomes rather than processes, we believe these research questions can be better answered by exploring separately each step in the organisation's theory of how it brings about its objective – the change in the wider world. Ultimately the extent and nature of this is the main criteria that the SSE uses as its indicator of success. And so this report is laid out in terms of describing the SSE's actions and activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts, and making the link between each.

## Methods

This required employing a combination of research methods that included a range of participative evaluation techniques designed not only to explore the personal and organisational transformative effect the SSE intends to have but to do so in a way that contributed to building skills and capabilities of the SSE staff, students and fellows involved.

In addition to more traditional methods, such as a questionnaire and case studies, **nef** facilitated three separate impact mapping workshops (drawing on the theory of change technology developed and promoted by the Aspen Institute in Colorado). This involved using a participative discussion tool adapted by **nef** known as a Storyboard in order to identify the most appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators of change. A stakeholder-based approach to measurement aims to provide a richer understanding of the multiple ways in which the SSE claims to create change. **nef**'s focus on outcomes and impacts as well as on outputs seeks to ensure that the evaluation tests the effects over time and captures any change that would not normally be measured in more traditional analyses.

### ***The language of outputs, outcomes and impacts***

When we talk of outputs, outcomes and impacts resulting from the SSE's endeavours it is important to note that an **output** is the thing over which the organisation has *more control*, and which creates the environment for one or more outcomes (and therefore value) to a particular stakeholder.

An **outcome** is something over which there is *less control* (inevitably there will be other interventions and conditions which will also be contributing to bringing it about) and is the demonstration of value to the stakeholder which is in line with the objectives they had for engaging with the organisation.

An **impact** is the extent to which an outcome can be attributed to a particular intervention. Strictly speaking this should attempt to take into account what might have happened anyway, offset against any negative effects that may result.

It is hoped that the findings from this evaluation will address the primary purpose of the original brief by answering the research questions whilst providing a set of recommendations that will inform:

- The SSE's strategy for attracting new funding, and in demonstrating accountability to current funders.
- What goes into marketing and recruitment literature in order to promote the work of the SSE to potential students, media and bodies of influence.
- The SSE's plans to develop and improve the service it provides.
- The growing body of research on social entrepreneurship.

## 3. Background

### 3.1 The social enterprise climate

Social entrepreneurship and social enterprise are oft-used terms in today's political discussions. They haven't always been. These are relatively new names for a phenomenon that has been going on as long as people have been steering new courses to create change in their communities.

*... As Labour came to power, social entrepreneurs was a phrase being thrown around by Third Way thinkers looking for new ways to regenerate society.*

*Their argument was simple. Society has problems. Neither government nor business had shown they could fix them. Perhaps it was time to invest in people at the coalface.*

*BBC News, June 2003<sup>10</sup>*

Today, social entrepreneurship and social enterprise, as concepts, are not only fighting for recognition, but are also fighting against institutionalisation. The SSE's model highlights social entrepreneurship's potential for innovation, for harnessing local action to meet needs and solve problems in creative and active ways. Others – including politicians and support agencies – may seek to replicate and recreate the successes of former socially enterprising efforts, but in doing so may focus more on organisational structures, earned income percentages and institutionalisation.

In trying to take the idea 'to scale' or replicate it, social entrepreneurship has become increasingly seen by government as synonymous with 'social enterprise' as a business model. Social enterprise is often seen as an entity blending trading in the marketplace with social innovation. Definitions of social enterprise since the establishment of a Social Enterprise Unit within the UK Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) have focused on where social enterprises put their profits (i.e. back into the business, rather than in the hands of shareholders) and how much income an organisation derives from trade (many definitions say a social enterprise must earn 50 per cent or more of its income from trade) or

what structure it is, rather than the nature of the innovation, its spirit and its ethos.

The SSE model focuses more intensively on building individuals' capacity to meet needs and to develop solutions whilst also exploring the organisational aspects of putting socially enterprising ideas into practice. While there is space in the market for support that focuses on a more organisational/institution-building model, with its emphasis on the individual and people-powered sustainability, the SSE occupies an important niche in the sector.

### **3.2 What is the nature of good support for a social entrepreneur?**

The SSE's experience is that social entrepreneurs cut across sectors (voluntary, social enterprise, public and private). Anyone establishing a new initiative will endeavour to choose the models, structures and financing that will best enable them to achieve their goals. In order to do this the SSE asserts that social entrepreneurs in particular need a rich combination of advice, information and support. But although these things are necessary for those goals to be reached, it is the ends (the outcomes/impact) not the means (the process) that must be of paramount importance to the SSE when judging its success.

Investigating the first step in the SSE's theory of change meant identifying the needs that students and fellows expressed as priorities for their learning and development when they joined the programme. The findings endorsed the SSE's experience that creating new organisations to address disadvantage is a personal process. Social entrepreneurs accepted on the programme often have personal experience of the issues they are trying to solve; they identify with the project they are establishing and take personal risks to make it happen. The selection process for new students is careful to identify that this degree of ownership exists.

Additionally, the SSE has noticed that before taking part in a programme potential students feel isolated and in need of personal as well as project support. The SSE maintains that this is rarely recognised in traditional training and organisational development, which tends to focus on imparting technical knowledge and skills; the SSE places individual and peer support at the centre of its activity. The latter is particularly important as people dealing with new situations and new information tend to gravitate more to the peer group than the expert as a source of advice and knowledge.<sup>11</sup> This wider need for contacts and connections means that the SSE concentrates on providing continued support for a sustained period by creating the right environment and the mechanisms for supporting those networks to thrive long after graduation.

### **3.3 The SSE competitors' landscape**

The SSE was founded in 1997 by Michael Young, the 'serial social entrepreneur' behind the Consumer Association, the Open University and the Institute for Community Studies (now the Young Foundation). At the time, the SSE was a groundbreaking and truly unique idea. In fact the social enterprise sector as it is now known was in its infancy,

and social entrepreneurship was just beginning to surface in many contexts where it has now taken firm root. In the past decade, other organisations have come to share increasing ground with the SSE, influenced by its innovation and the rising tide of social entrepreneurship and enterprise as a way to spark innovation and meet the needs unidentified or unmet by the state, marketplace or within civil society.

While no other organisation offers the Action Learning Model and programme offered by the SSE, other organisations share ground with the SSE. Broadly these come under three headings:

1. Third sector support organisations.
2. Business support agencies.
3. Academic learning programmes.

### **1. Third sector support organisations**

Voluntary and community organisations receive support, advice, and training from organisations that have grown up for this purpose – ‘infrastructure’ organisations. These often provide a range of organisational development materials, seminars, and training sessions. Some of these focus on organisational development, tackling topics that pertain to incorporated, formal organisations which range from financial sustainability and funding to working with boards of trustees and meeting the needs of service users. Programmes often focus on managers within established organisations, and generally aim to professionalize the functioning of staff and organisation alike. National examples of these are programmes offered by the National Centre for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and the Charities Evaluation Service (CES) and smaller regionally based arms known as Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) which often exist at a very local level throughout every region of England.

In addition, since the SSE’s founding in 1997, a range of social-enterprise focused infrastructure organisations have sprung up across the UK. These provide similar support to that found in the voluntary and community sector, also focusing on organisational development and sustainability. They include *regional* organisations such as Social Enterprise East Midlands (SEEM) and RISE (“the voice for South West Social Enterprise”) and *sub-sectoral*, building upon a particular organisational model such as the Development Trusts Association, Social Firms UK and Co-operatives UK.

In general, these bodies provide support to individuals (managers or staff) of existing or newly formed organisations. The emphasis is often on training, which is provided either in a teacher–student relationship or in a more participative group-work setting. Organisations like Community Action Network (CAN), Changemakers and its parent, Ashoka have programmes that focus on the development of the individual, and also offer various forms of ongoing support.

And so, in comparison with the SSE, although some of these organisations provide sessions with ‘expert witnesses’ or people who have developed social enterprises or worked in voluntary organisations themselves, it is rare to find one that combines

personal and organisational development within an action learning context in the same way as the SSE.

## **2. Business support agencies**

A second model, business support, is focused primarily on developing new businesses and on helping existing enterprises to grow. Although this structure was undergoing changes during the evaluation period, contracts to provide 'business support' are generally funded through the DTI via Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) to organisations called Business Links. These agencies generally offer support on developing business plans, finding capital or loans, and developing legal structures. Users are then signposted onto (often) paid consultants who assist them further with aspects of business development.

This model has often been critiqued in social enterprise circles for its inability to cope with social innovation, and to identify new ways of meeting social needs, rather than pursuing solely financial sustainability. Other business development organisations such as the Women's Employment Enterprise and Training Unit (WEETU) in Norwich and Black Business in Birmingham provide specialist support that is targeted at groups that find mainstream business support insufficient to meet their needs. This model also differs from the SSE in that it most often relies on one-to-one advice from an expert as well as training sessions and consultancy.

Whilst the support occurs in real time as businesses develop, the SSE's approach offers additional elements which include peer support and learning, personal support, and the ability to handle sector-specific business structures and social innovation.

## **3. Academic learning programmes**

The third model – the academic/qualifications-based model – shares features with the SSE, in developing the ability of social entrepreneurs to innovate and start new initiatives and reflect on practice, but is substantially different in its style of delivery and models of learning. nef's research identified two types within this model.

- 1. Masters' degrees** such as Cambridge Judge Institute of Management's social enterprise course as well as more flexible social-enterprise focused programmes like the University of East London's modular course with a progression from certificate to Master's degree. Voluntary Sector Masters' programmes also cover aspects of social enterprise to a greater or lesser extent. These include programmes like those offered by London South Bank University, the Open University, and the London School of Economics.
- 2. MBA programmes** with modules on social enterprise and social entrepreneurship, such as those offered by London Business School and Oxford Business School's Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship.

In contrast with the SSE's model, these are more academic. They also provide a formally recognised qualification or certificate at the

completion of the course. They range from more theoretical to more practical, from year-long taught courses to executive-style, intensive residential modules. They generally rely upon universities' accepted teaching and assessment frameworks, including written coursework and papers, and group projects.

These postgraduate courses require a first degree or equivalent experience. Across the range, there is a broad divergence in terms of competitiveness based upon both academic marks and personal characteristics. Whilst this model works well for some, it would exclude many social entrepreneurs from participation based on requirements for entry and the focus on written work as a route to assessment and qualification.

## 4. Methodology

### Research approach

The methodology for this evaluation was developed in close consultation with the SSE and is rooted in a set of principles that underpin **nef**'s approach to measurement. These principles can be summarised as follows:<sup>12</sup>

- **Looking beyond outputs** – **nef**'s approach aims to evaluate the longer-term change and impacts of the SSE on the individuals, and the organisations and communities they serve and to address the change that is not normally captured by traditional output analysis.
- **The story behind the numbers** – This is about knowing how (not just whether) the SSE brings about change, and requires an effort to understand the narrative of how outputs lead to the longer-term outcomes and impacts.
- **Have a conversation** – A search for a meaningful narrative requires a dialogue, rather than a mere extraction of data. By providing a common language, measurement becomes a tool for enhancing participatory democracy.
- **The process is as important as the outcome** – If it includes all of the above elements then measurement can build confidence and ownership and contribute to the sustainability and effectiveness of an initiative.

The participative approach employed for this evaluation integrated learning and aimed to develop skills for the individuals and organisations involved as well as for staff at the SSE. It represents measurement with the dual aims of proving *and* improving.<sup>13</sup> This aligns with the SSE's ethos of action learning. The evaluation was undertaken through six stages deploying both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis.

#### **Stage One: Source research**

A review of available data from previous research and evaluations was conducted. This was in order to situate the evaluation by establishing:

- How the actions and activities of the SSE contribute to its mission and vision, whilst upholding its values.

- How the SSE will best make use of the findings.

This evaluation is rooted in a stakeholder approach to measurement. As such, working closely with the SSE, **nef** began by mapping the SSE's stakeholders to know who is affected by or affects the SSE in all of its activities.

### **Stage Two: Storyboard**

Following the identification of stakeholders, **nef** and the SSE arranged three focus groups in order to describe (from different perspectives) the organisation's hypothesis for how it creates change. To structure these workshops, **nef** used an approach known as a Storyboard which incorporates 'Theory of Change' technology developed by the Aspen Institute in Colorado.<sup>14</sup> The exercise consists of an eight-question framework for instigating conversation and understanding how (not just whether) particular activities address an identified need and lead to a particular outcome or impact.<sup>15</sup> These sessions addressed the evaluation focus of uncovering the impact of the year-long programme on the students in terms of personal development and whether the SSE's methodology is most effective and most appropriate for social entrepreneurs.

The focus groups represented coverage of the SSE's schools across the UK, comprising of as wide a range of stakeholders as possible to establish a multi-perspective and richer understanding of the SSE's theory of change. The three groups were comprised as follows:

1. One with staff of the SSE itself, to uncover their perspective of their theory of change.
2. One with a smaller group of three SSE students who had either just started or finished the programme to gain a further insight and comparison into this narrative.
3. A final larger group of eighteen students, fellows and the SSE Chair to refine the organisation's hypothesis for change through an exploration of their individual stories.

Sessions were also designed to build capacity of the individuals taking part by providing them with an introduction to an evaluation method that they could use with their own projects and organisations. Within the spirit of a conversation evaluation process, the workshops created a space in which participants could not just agree with each other, but misunderstand, question, persuade and disagree with each other in identifying and developing their view of the SSE's theory of change and their relationship with the SSE.

During these sessions, in addition to the **nef** facilitator, a **nef** researcher was present to conduct semi-detached participant observation through recording observations about the workshop process and comments made about the SSE's theory of change that may not have been captured in the Storyboards. These sessions generated a great deal of qualitative data that is drawn on throughout this report.

### **Stage Three: Coding and identification of indicators**

Using the material generated from the Storyboard exercises **nef** and the SSE investigated recurring themes and from these began to develop a list of key indicators to evaluate the SSE's impacts.

In order to do this, completed Storyboards from Stage Two were colour-coded<sup>16</sup> to highlight personal, organisational and wider community impacts as a means of conceptually organising what was a large body of material into a defined set of theoretical memos. The emerging important and recurring themes were then identified from the coded Storyboards and theoretical memos using a process known as 'analytic induction'. This involved highlighting evidence of particular themes from separate Storyboards that, when accumulated, helped refine the overall theory of change for the organisation, thereby providing a framework for defining any subsequent examples.

This culminated in a detailed Impact Map<sup>17</sup> for the organisation based on all of the Storyboards put together. From this a list of possible indicators to measure the SSE's story was drawn up, along with a summary of the themes to look out for and a list of research questions, all of which helped to shape the subsequent stages of the evaluation. These indicators included proxies for the measurement of those aspects of the SSE's impacts that are not immediately measurable, particularly when concerned with complex processes of personal transformation. **nef** returned to coding material when refining indicators such as those for personal development.<sup>18</sup>

### **Stage Four: Questionnaire**

The initial list of indicators was used as the basis for developing a questionnaire to be sent out to all SSE fellows. The aim of the survey was to investigate the personal development of the students during and after they had finished the programme, and the associated impact of the programme on the organisations that the students were leading or establishing at the time, or since they left. It also was designed to provide data for exploring whether the SSE's methodology is most effective for the social entrepreneurs taking part in the programme, as well as to begin to unpack the SSE's impact on wider communities through questions on SSE concepts such as the 'Cycle of Growth'.

The sample framework encompassed all SSE fellows ('graduates' of SSE) totalling 250. The questionnaire format deployed a number of different question types in order to provide different perspectives on finding information that included a mixture of respondent variables for classifying, attitude batteries (e.g. levels of satisfaction) and open ended questions.

**nef** and the SSE collaborated on the development of the online questionnaire.<sup>19</sup> This was sent to a pilot group<sup>20</sup> and revised for sending out to 250 fellows in order that it could be completed throughout June and July 2006.

The evaluation included a commitment to providing anonymity of names and organisations if desired. 64 fellows responded (26 per cent) and completed the introductory section of the questionnaire (questions 1–5).

The majority (63 per cent) of these respondents had attended the London School, with 11 per cent attending East Midlands and 11 per cent attending Fife, with a further 12 per cent attending millennium programmes around the country. The breakdown of the sample is approximately in proportion with the numbers of Fellows that attend each school and is as follows:

- London School 42
- East Midlands 7
- Fife 7
- Millennium programmes 8
- Others 2

Twenty-five of the 64 respondents were fellows who had graduated from the SSE in the last two years. The questionnaire was completed by fellows from every year that the programme had been running, back to SSE's first cohort in 1998.

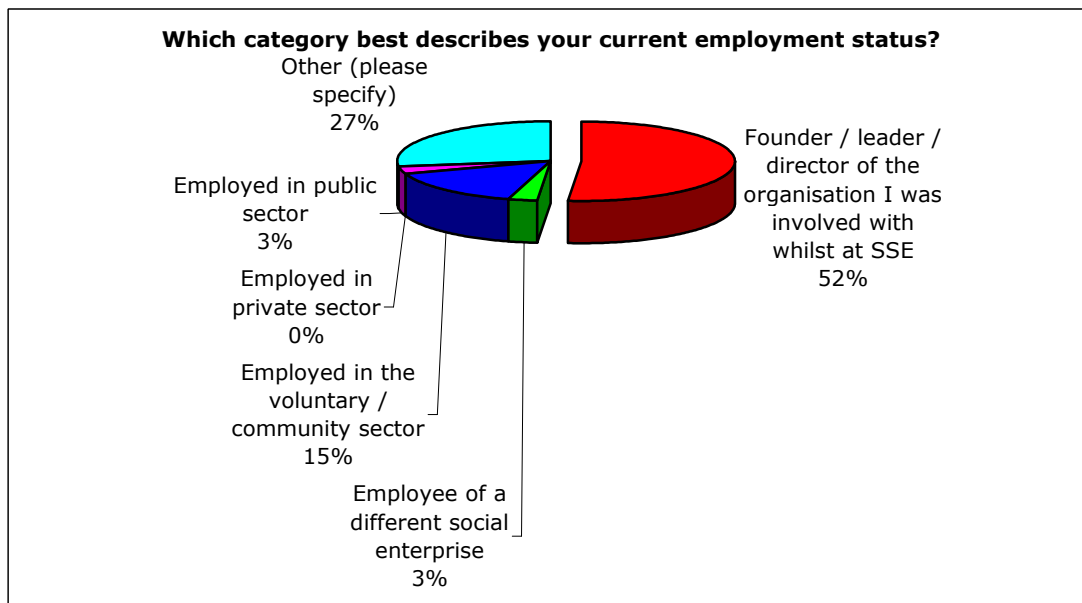
### Employment status

Thirty-four of the respondents described their current employment status as the founder, leader or director of the organisation they had been involved with whilst they were at the SSE. Ten were employed in the voluntary and community sectors, and two in the public sector.

Of the 19 remaining respondents not falling into any of these three categories:

- Six work for or are involved with a social enterprise either in a paid or voluntary capacity (e.g. trustee, chair).
- Six described themselves as self-employed
- Seven described themselves as unemployed, active in community development or at the development-of-ideas stage of a new project.
- None of the sample described themselves as being employed in the Private Sector.

The remainder of the questionnaire was completed by 57 fellows. The findings have not been analysed for statistical significance, and so all presented data is based on the respondents who completed the questionnaire. Percentages are correct for this self-selected sample, and in the view of the researchers provide an indication of the way the total population of fellows would respond.



**Figure 1: Stated employment status (64 respondents)**

### **Stage Five: Case studies**

Case studies were chosen to begin to investigate the impacts of the organisations and longer-term change on the communities, environment and economies that they bring about. In particular they provide an overview of the impact in communities of the work of students and fellows, economically, socially and, where applicable, environmentally and in doing so address research questions four and five:

*Research Question 4:* Is the SSE meeting its objectives in terms of bringing about sustainable change in communities?

*Research Question 5:* Can meeting/not meeting these objectives be attributed to the SSE? What are the other factors that could be contributing to these?

Conversation carried out with the participants also allowed us to investigate SSE's aim that, "... participants will pass on their social entrepreneurial approach to others in their immediate community. They do this by demonstrating confidence and success in their community, by recognising and encouraging other people with the necessary potential in their community to develop their capabilities and also by recognising other issues where a social entrepreneurial approach will create a better community solution and then applying their understanding and skills." [Further references to this aim will be referred to as the 'social transformation' or 'modelling of behaviour' thesis].<sup>21</sup>

Following discussions with the management team at the SSE, individuals and organisations were selected as case studies mainly from those respondents who answered the questionnaire and were happy to be contacted for further interviews. They reflect a reasonably representative sample of individuals from across the UK, involved in differing social, environmental and economic missions and coming from a variety of ethnic and gender backgrounds. The fellows were interviewed by a nef researcher, apart from Rahma Maye who

was interviewed by a member of the SSE staff. The protocol and the transcripts of the conversations are reproduced in the appendix.

**Table 1: Overview of case studies**

Name	Organisation	Mission
Merlin Matthews	Re-Cycle	Re-Cycle collects and ships second-hand bicycles and parts to Africa. Local partners teach local people the repair and maintenance skills to improve their lives in a sustainable manner. In the UK, Re-Cycle works with the probation service, young offenders, prisons, schools, youth with disabilities and volunteers; preparing shipments, stripping spare parts and loading containers.
Christine Townsend	Teviot Action Group	Living on an isolated and run-down estate in the Poplar borough of Tower Hamlets Christine set up the Teviot Action Group (TAG) in 1997 as a direct response to unacceptable levels of crime and unemployment, and to address issues resulting from the high percentage of single parents and people with mental health problems and the fact that there were few local resources. Initially begun as a campaign for better public transport, TAG now runs advice and guidance sessions, language classes, bingo nights, IT classes, children's after-school clubs, parent and toddler groups, training and recycling projects. The organization also runs two football teams as well as study support classes for people that have missed out on education. Overall TAG involves over 450 local people in activities and projects.
James Greenshields	Media for Development (MFD)	MFD is an award-winning, not-for-profit media consultancy that specializes in the design and implementation of public education campaigns using different media to reach, engage and empower isolated communities in the UK and internationally. MFD has worked with a wide cross-section of partner agencies and clients in more than 30 different countries.
Rahma Maye	Ambition	Rahma has been working in her community supporting individuals and particularly young people with caring responsibilities for a number of years. A young carer herself – she was forced to quit college to care for a member of her family. She is setting up Ambition, a community organization supporting other refugee families in this position enabling them to complete their education and achieve their potential despite their caring responsibilities.
Roger Wilson-Hinds	Screenreader	As a visually impaired person himself, Roger ran a business for 10 years training blind and visually impaired people to use computers at work. During this time he became increasingly concerned about the eighty per cent of blind people not in employment who had no access to expensive screenreading software. Four years ago he began developing low cost screenreading software to address this problem. Reading a computer screen is a challenge for many people, and many others have reading difficulties not related to visual impairment. In response to this Screenreader offers a range of affordable software and other products to help. It also provides Braille software, assists with training for blind and sighted people, and provides complete computer systems.

### ***Stage Six: Analysis***

Basic analysis of the questionnaire responses was compiled automatically through the Survey Monkey software. Further quantitative analysis was then carried out, first to demonstrate the answers from each question and then to uncover particular themes or further breakdown the data.

Interview transcripts were coded where necessary to group obvious themes and underlying processes at work, whilst theoretical memos were used to allow ideas to emerge more fluently whilst conducting analysis. The interviews were reviewed by moving from the event as a whole and then considering smaller constituent elements and speech. Throughout all interviews and analysis, awareness of issues of authority, personal attributes and 'situation' were kept continually in mind.

## 5. Theory of change

### Measuring what matters

There is a common dilemma facing all those attempting to measure the effects of an intervention that has been designed to bring about social change. Fulfilling a range of output targets does not in itself represent a clear picture and therefore proper understanding of the change that those outputs are designed to create. There are two dangers: first that the indicators chosen for scrutiny become established as ends rather than means to the extent that the bigger picture of an original objective becomes lost by focusing on a specific detail that is necessary but not sufficient to bring it about. (Its necessity to bring about an outcome is duly acknowledged; but the extent to which it is sufficient is over exaggerated.)

Secondly, that the path from actions to outcomes is not properly thought through or understood and targets are based on inappropriate indicators chosen because they happen to be the easiest things to measure. In this case by attempting to simplify the issue, achieving the target might actually prevent the desired outcome from taking place. This often leaves the difficult questions unanswered, such as whether shorter hospital waiting lists – however they are achieved – actually lead to a healthier nation.

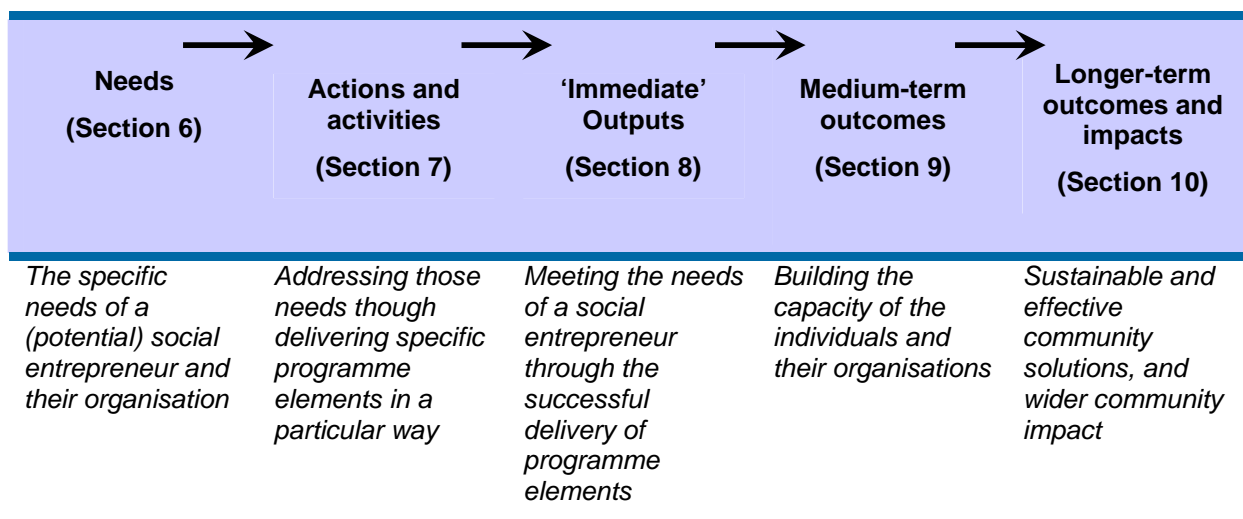
That is not to say that we must dispense with measuring targets altogether. The best indicators are chosen based on information from a range of stakeholders about how the different parts of an intervention lead to a desired outcome, and consequently how those stakeholders will know that the change has taken place. This means taking the time to bring together the many different perspectives on a particular project's story or theory of how it brings about change.

### Telling the story

The overall objective of the SSE is to support sustainable, effective solutions to real community problems, and to do so in a way that has lasting wider social impact. The emphasis is very much on outcomes rather than process. The SSE's aim is not to turn out ready-made social entrepreneurs on a production line, but to create the right atmosphere for individuals to learn and experience for themselves whatever is necessary in order for them to be able to deliver positive social change.

For an intervention as complex as the one pursued by the SSE, merely counting the number of graduates or programme elements delivered does not allow for the true picture to emerge of whether the programme is achieving its long-term or wider-reaching objectives. This is in addition to the fact that to do so would focus a disproportionate amount of time and energy on evaluating means rather than ends. All evaluations need to combine numbers with narrative in order to give those numbers meaning, but it is just as important for that narrative to provide the thread that links the various indicators (the chapters in the story) together.

The methodology used for this evaluation began by compiling a set of indicators that reflected the views from staff, students and fellows about how the SSE achieved its objectives, as well as describing in detail what those objectives were. For sections 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of this report we reproduce that narrative in a way that presents the indicators in the context of why they are important, and how they lead to the next step in the overall theory of change. Figure 2 describes a simplified version of the story of how what the SSE delivers brings about that change.



**Figure 2: Summary of the SSE theory of change – a five-part story**

Using this simple logic model as a starting point we can describe the theory as follows: by addressing and meeting the multiple needs of the students so that they fulfil their objectives (through enhanced practical learning and increased confidence for themselves and organisations) the SSE aims to contribute to the over-arching goal of creating sustainable change in communities. This is change which stems from the direct actions and activities undertaken by the social entrepreneur.

And so for the detail of whether the reality matches the theory we started by asking “How do we know that each step has been reached?” And then, by looking at the evidence gathered from testimony, the SSE’s own programme materials and, predominantly, the findings from a questionnaire, we explored the balance of evidence that supports and challenges whether the SSE is indeed fulfilling its promise.

# 6. Understanding the needs of the social entrepreneur

Needs (Section 6)	Actions and activities (Section 7)	'Immediate' Outputs (Section 8)	Medium-term outcomes (Section 9)	Longer-term outcomes and impacts (Section 10)
<i><b>The specific needs of a (potential) social entrepreneur and their organisation</b></i>	<i>Addressing those needs through delivering specific programme elements in a particular way</i>	<i>Meeting the needs of a social entrepreneur through the successful delivery of programme elements</i>	<i>Building the capacity of the individuals and their organisations</i>	<i>Sustainable and effective community solutions, and wider community impact</i>

## 6.1 Overview of this section

This section of the report summarises the first step in the SSE's theory of change. The needs expressed here represent the starting point for a personal transformation process that takes place for the students who take part in the programme. The material in this section is drawn predominantly from notes taken at the Storyboard exercises with staff, students and fellows (with some direct quotations taken from those workshops) and is also illustrated by some of the narrative responses from the on-line survey where we explored the hypotheses expressed.

Overall we found that students come to the SSE with a range of capacity needs and objectives for themselves and their organisations along with an idea in the form of a project or intervention that will benefit a particular geographic or thematic community.

Their needs are often manifested by a desire to:

- Increase the reach of their **network of meaningful contacts**, and identify with like-minded people who understand their passions and objectives for addressing social, economic and environmental concerns. (6.2)

- Build **confidence** in their own ability to achieve sustainable change with their project and thereby establish their own **credibility** amongst their peers and with a wider community of partners. (6.3)
- Learn **new skills and knowledge** which will allow them to fulfil a variety of organisational objectives such as positioning their organisations, business planning, and funding assistance. (6.4)

## 6.2 A network of meaningful contacts

Looking back on the period leading up to joining the programme, students and fellows taking part in two of the three Storyboard exercises stated that before starting the programme they had experienced a strong sense of “isolation”, “alienation” and “un-connectedness” as they felt that they were operating in a world that didn’t understand what they were trying to achieve. One of their motivations for attending the SSE was therefore to widen their circle of contacts. Comments from the questionnaire in response to a question about why fellows had chosen the SSE over other providers re-iterated this.

*“SSE offered a unique opportunity to share experiences with like-minded people from different backgrounds.”* [SSE London fellow, 1999]

*“[The programme] offered opportunities to be with others driven by social aims and to visit projects which had similar aims.”* [SSE East Midlands fellow, 2006]

*“Didn't know about social enterprise, let alone support networks ...I know all about support networks now!”* [SSE Fife fellow, 2005]

However, it is clear from these comments that just making friends is not enough. Much has been written on the impact of networks for bringing about social change. The debates range from the general (for example how effective and important networks are in themselves), to the detail about the specific qualities and nature of the contacts within those networks. Although this study is not the place for a detailed critique on how networks function, it is worth noting that current thinking has moved on from assuming that networks in themselves are a good thing. As Robert Sampson points out in his study for Demos “The mistake has been to equate the existence of networks with mechanisms of effective social action when in reality it is a combination of diversity and the maintenance of flows of new information, knowledge and skills which are the necessary factors in ensuring their usefulness.”<sup>22</sup>

For any entrepreneur (social or otherwise) when it comes to getting on and getting ahead clearly people from identical spheres of reference have less to offer each other in terms of new fields of knowledge and experience than those who can call on a more diverse network of contacts.

### 6.3 Confidence and credibility

Indications from the Storyboard workshops highlighted that the students often arrived at the SSE looking to increase their general self-confidence, not only in their project idea, but in their ability to perform in what many of them had already found to be a challenging environment. Only then would they see themselves able to achieve sustainable change with their project. This was illustrated by feelings of “self-doubt” or “confusion” at the start of the programme that they hoped to address as result of taking part in the programme. One response to the questionnaire characterised the change alluded to in the Storyboard exercises by describing what they had experienced whilst at the SSE.

*“I feel the SSE believed in me and provided me with the support I needed at that time. Having been unemployed for several years SSE gave me hope and direction and completely changed my life. I am now employed and feel part of the human race again. The SSE understood me where other people did not.” [SSE Salford Pilot Scheme fellow, 2000]*

Successful entrepreneurs accept the need to take risks. Therefore the need to be an “informed risk-taker” with the “confidence to act” was acknowledged as a key ingredient of that success story. For one Storyboard participant this meant being able to say “no” to something that they realised would not contribute positively to their project, and more significantly being confident enough to be able to pick and choose who to work with.

This last point supposed that other organisations were putting themselves forward as potential partners, which in itself was an important indication for Storyboard participants that a project’s credibility had increased. The initial narrative stages of this evaluation also identified increased personal credibility as a crucial step in the story of the students’ personal transformation. Once this was explored in a more detailed discussion, it became apparent that an individual’s credibility was often gauged by how other people perceived their organisation. This is an example of how personal and organisational objectives are closely linked. These ‘other people’ could include the staff and students who represented their peers associated within the school; and beyond the school to include potential funders, customers and beneficiaries – in effect anyone to whom the student believed it was necessary to ‘sell’ their project.

### 6.4 Skills and knowledge

Although the success of an entrepreneur is likely to be as much down to their attitude and approach as to having a particular skill or piece of knowledge, these still play a part in the story. A number of priorities emerged representing the skills and knowledge that students believed were necessary for them to succeed. Findings from the London Business School (LBS) GEM Social Entrepreneurship Monitor highlight that social entrepreneurs are proportionately more likely than mainstream entrepreneurs to have failed to gain access to finance because of the nature of their business.<sup>23</sup> Similarly amongst students and fellows in this study, obtaining funding, and therefore being able to work with (and understand) funders was perceived as a

vital skill; for SSE fellows, funders are one of a whole range of stakeholder groups they identify that they need to be able to work with.

The SSE initial assessment process for joining a programme clearly aims to identify determination in prospective students, as this emerged as a common characteristic of many of the participants involved in this evaluation. Some highlighted that before the programme they lacked a clear sense of the right direction and how to “drive their project forward”, and so it was important to be able to identify their own strengths and abilities which could bring their vision closer to reality.

At a more basic level there was a real need to learn about the tools of their trade – literally “how the sector works” along with a clearer understanding of terminology so that they could understand their organisation’s place within the landscape. Perhaps reflecting the differing needs of a diverse group there was a range of views as to how these skills should be taught. Some were looking for training in specific aspects of, for example, business management, whilst others preferred a less structured approach:

*“I [...] felt that learning through experience was the best way to learn. This initiative gave me the chance to do just that.”* [SSE Glasgow Millennium fellow, 2001]

Understandably students recognised that their success rested on being able to address the “nuts and bolts” issues for their own personal development as well as for their projects. Equally there were students who chose the programme feeling that they could be furnished with the necessary skills and knowledge through learning by doing, as opposed to concentrating on passing examinations or achieving a qualification.

*“It offered opportunities to be with others driven by social aims and to visit projects which had similar aims. I didn't have to be worried about being forced to do academic work and gain unnecessary qualifications.”* [SSE East Midlands fellow, 2006]

The SSE has been delivering its programmes for social entrepreneurs since 1998, and in that time has welcomed a wide range of people in terms of their abilities and experience. Based on what it has found in the qualities and attributes of its students, the SSE has shaped an in-depth programme of work that looks to address their needs and contribute to the success of their projects and organisations. The following section looks at the next step in that story.

## 7. Actions and activities: addressing needs through the delivery of programme elements

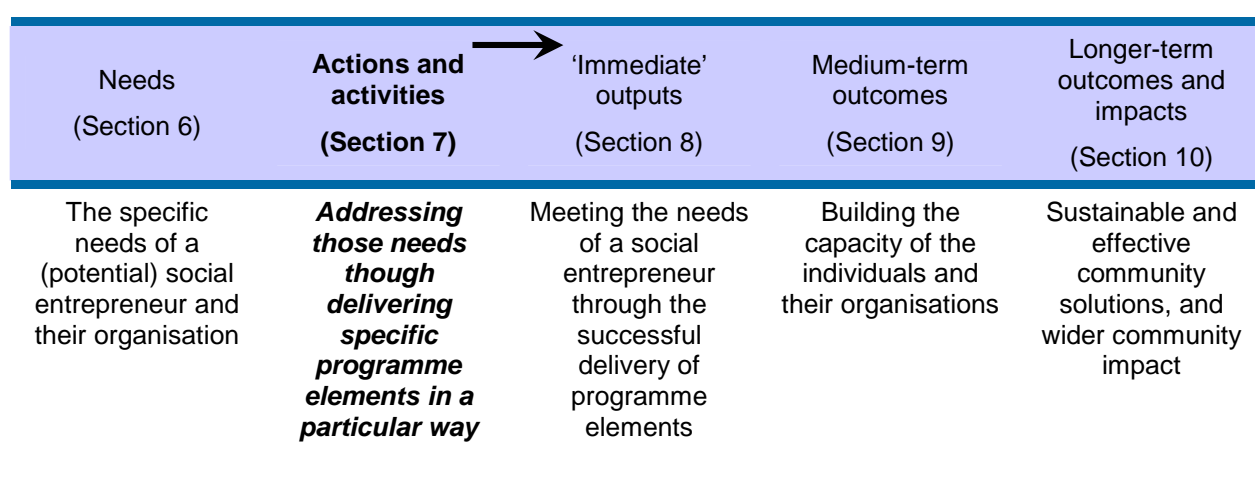


Figure 3: The second part of the story

### 7.1 Overview of this section

This section reviews the actions and activities (as identified by the researchers and described by the SSE) which the SSE undertakes in order to meet the needs of its students and their organisations. The themes that characterise these actions and activities are taken mainly from Storyboard exercises, and specifically from those contributions made by staff and those closely associated with the school who are not currently students. Additional material comes from the SSE's own promotional literature and internal documents, in particular the description of programme elements.

Overall we found that:

- The SSE's learning process is powered by **action and reflection**, providing a practitioner-led package of support, training and advice. (7.2)
- The SSE offers a variety of **programme elements** to give students the necessary skills and understanding to complement their own intrinsic predisposition to being socially entrepreneurial. (7.3)

- The activities and actions are delivered in a way that is designed to identify, accommodate and successfully **meet a variety of the students' needs** and expectations. (7.4)
- The SSE offers a **supportive and collaborative environment** which encourages people to develop their own capacities, confidence and legitimacy of their project. (7.5)
- Access to **networks** is a key ingredient of the SSE's approach to creating change both through the programmes' activities and actions and through the SSE fellowship beyond. This is in terms of students building peer-to-peer relationships and being able to access knowledge, services and influence beyond their existing field of experience. (7.6)
- A **quality system and audit** process means that the activities and actions can be implemented with consistency across all of the schools in the SSE network. (7.7)

## 7.2 Action and reflection

The SSE offers support and learning opportunities to those interested in setting up new ways to create social change. The SSE's learning process is powered by action and reflection through what is known as an Action Learning Model. At its heart is the idea of *learning while doing*. For example, there are no lecturers but witnesses to question and learn from; there are no textbooks, but project visits to see social enterprises in action. Figure 4 illustrates the cycle of learning that takes place. Having had experience of an action, students are encouraged to reflect on that experience (in the pursuit of insight and understanding) and use this new knowledge to undertake the next action.

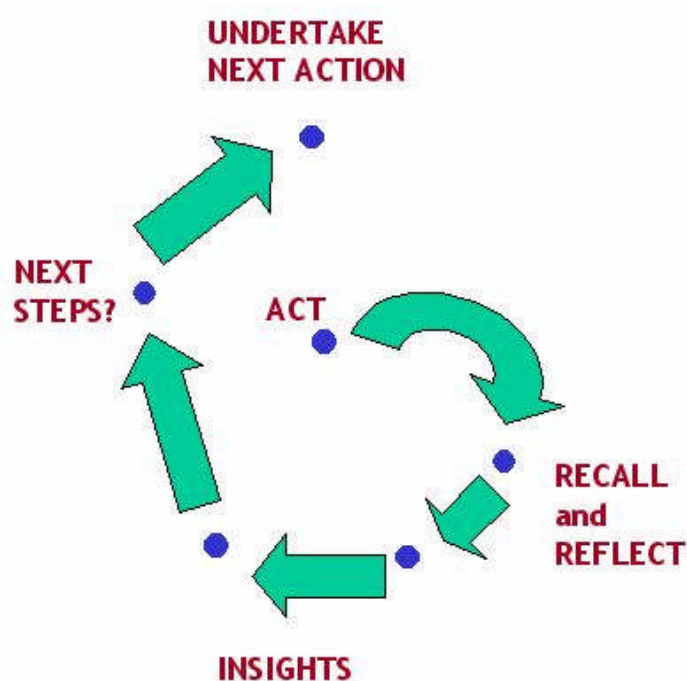


Figure 4: The Action Learning Cycle

The emphasis is less on experts and teachers as custodians of knowledge to be imparted, but more on the "collaborative nature of learning" by creating a "spirit of support" in which students can test out ideas, striking a balance between a set programme of a syllabus and the questions raised by students in the course of their own study providing a practitioner-led package of support, training and advice.<sup>24</sup>

### **7.3 The programme elements**

The SSE provides a variety of programme elements and resources aimed at meeting the needs of its students. These elements are designed to identify and build on the necessary skills and understanding which complement the students' own predisposition to being socially entrepreneurial.<sup>25</sup> The SSE's aim is to build the capacity of individuals to meet challenges by increasing their skills and confidence and in turn, the effectiveness of their project. The following paragraphs outline those elements as they occur during the SSE programme.

#### ***Action learning sets***

Action learning sets are a core part of the SSE's learning programme, involving a rigorous process of questioning that ensures participants undergo an honest self-review of their practice and motivation. With a trained facilitator, students work in a small group throughout the year to find useful ways of overcoming the stumbling blocks, dilemmas and other issues that can beset any project. These smaller groups allow closer bonds to be forged in which the focus on questioning each other means students have to generate solutions themselves. It is sometimes the case that fellows of the School often continue to work in their action learning sets long after they complete the SSE programme because they find the trust and wisdom that the Set builds to be of lasting value. They are particularly instrumental in addressing the needs identified above in section 6.2 (contacts) and section 6.3 (confidence).

#### ***Expert witness sessions***

Throughout the year, students are given plenty of opportunities to listen, learn, question and network with other social entrepreneurs. Expert witness sessions represent a key part of this process, where real practitioners come to the SSE to share their experience and offer expertise and advice. These practitioner-led sessions are designed to be a combination of inspiration and information that instils self-belief in the students' ability to learn from their own mistakes and the mistakes of others. Rather than delivering lectures, witnesses provide evidence and testimony, and give those on the programme an opportunity to question and analyse other people's practice and experience. Witnesses may also specialise on how they navigated a particular area such as legal structures, funding or marketing in the context of their story. As well as building confidence in their own actions (6.3), these sessions are also about furnishing students with new skills and knowledge (6.4).

### ***Group study sessions***

In addition to, and in conjunction with, expert witness sessions, students attend study sessions with the entire group, either priming them for the coming session or embedding the learning afterwards. These sometimes use different techniques to encourage interactive discussion, such as funding panels or knowledge cafés.

### ***Project visits***

Over the course of the programme students have the chance to investigate a range of established projects first-hand and visit organisations that are prepared to share their experiences. Project visits give students the opportunity to view successful social entrepreneurs on their own ground, giving insights into how they work and thrive. Each visit can bring a different viewpoint, new knowledge, and a potential source of inspiration. (6.4)

### ***Intensive study residential blocks***

At least once in the year participants in all the learning programmes are brought together for a dedicated three-day learning experience combining project visits, expert witness sessions and group learning. These also provide the time and space to network and socialise with students from more than one school across the SSE Network (6.2, 6.3 and 6.4). The residential blocks are a more recent addition to the programme.

### ***Personal tutors***

Students are assigned a personal tutor to help them embed and apply their learning to their situation and to work through any personal and project challenges that arise. These one-to-one sessions are designed to give students continuing support and to help them to think about their personal goals and how to approach the challenges their project presents. This part of the programme is intended to be more action-driven than other elements. By providing assistance with a business plan or funding applications, tutors are also in a good position to provide a useful means of personal support (6.2 and 6.4).

### ***Mentors***

Mentors are there to provide guidance and strategic help within a confidential setting managed by the student and shaped according to the student's own personal and professional development goals. Mentoring sessions may not begin until the student is some way into the programme and it is intended that they provide a space outside of the SSE for a one-to-one relationship to grow and develop into a useful working partnership. The SSE guarantees to provide an opportunity for mentoring along with guidance and advice. The management of the relationship works according to both parties, and mentoring relationships can last beyond the end of an SSE programme (6.3 and 6.4).

## 7.4 Identifying students' needs

The activities and actions are delivered in a way that is designed to identify and successfully meet a variety of the students' needs and expectations, particularly their need for confidence and credibility (identified in 6.3 above) and their need for learning new skills and knowledge (as in 6.4 above). Students come to the SSE with their project ideas at different stages of development, usually at one of several windows of opportunity for change. A rigorous process for obtaining a place on the programme explores the detail of each potential student's motivations and particular needs, and is as much about selecting the right group of people who can work together, as making sure that each individual feels that the programme and its approach is the right thing for them at the right time.

A key ingredient is that the students identify themselves as the owners of their projects. They do this by demonstrating a commitment to understanding the issues involved by being personally engaged with or living in the community they are aiming to serve. Then both they and their projects benefit directly from the action learning which can meet their specific needs more effectively.

The Action Learning Model and elements of the programme such as expert witness sessions and project visits encourage and inspire the students to act and meet their own challenges in ways that are suitable to their specific circumstances. The programme is not dependent on a formal examination or qualification; instead it is developmental and practical and can be adapted to the needs of each student. This allows for accountability in the relationship between students and teaching staff based on self-enforced obligations to complete the necessary work. This in turn contributes to the creation of a non-judgmental space in which ideas can be explored freely.

There is a history of employing members of staff at the SSE who are themselves experienced practitioners in the sector. This is important; because they may have started or led their own organisations they are particularly well-placed to understand the multiple needs and motivations of the students.<sup>26</sup>

## 7.5 A supportive and collaborative environment

The SSE creates a space (metaphorical and physical) for learning and reflection. This is as much to do with the attitudes of the staff and the way the buildings are organised as to how the programme is delivered. Whilst they are attending a programme the SSE team is always on hand to offer students advice and guidance, coaching, information, and support in addition to that offered through the more formal elements of the programme. Students are encouraged to telephone the office or drop in during working hours for help or to access the SSE's resources (e.g. library, workstations and meeting rooms). In addition the SSE has developed an electronic networking and information system (the SSE Learning Web) which is an online resource for SSE students and fellowship members. Students have the opportunity to create a homepage and profile, to email their fellow students, and to tap into the experience and resources of the ever expanding SSE fellowship. All this represents the supportive and

collaborative environment that the SSE aims to create to help students develop their own capacities, confidence and belief in the legitimacy of their project.

Students are encouraged to learn together with a peer group made up of like-minded people from a variety of diverse backgrounds. The programmes are carefully designed to be equally challenging regardless of prior educational experiences by exposing students to new, but highly relevant topics and bringing about learning in creative and demanding ways. The initiative rests with students to "get out what they put in", and so the SSE represents a crucible for forging a project idea and testing it out under the scrutiny of peers. In exploring the possibilities, the students are confronted with honest feedback and hard truths. The confidence students should develop as a result of this means that whilst some students' projects may not last, or even take off for whatever personal or organisational reasons, the individuals can go on to be successful in other areas.

## 7.6 Networks

This relates to the need identified in 6.2 above. Providing information on how to make the best of (and access to) networks is a key ingredient of the SSE's approach to creating change as well as underpinning the way that many of the programme elements are delivered. This is in terms of students building peer-to-peer relationships amongst their cohort whilst also being able to access knowledge, services and influence beyond their day-to-day experience.

One of the results of completing the SSE programme is lifelong membership of the Fellowship Network. The SSE describes this as being like an ever-expanding club with members continuing to swap views and experiences and to trade and collaborate. It is supported by E-bulletins bringing news and links to other organisations and the Learning Web which enables students to contact each other easily and to keep in touch.

As a result it is expected that SSE students make useful contacts who can contribute positively to their own organisation or project or who in turn they can help. This can be through immediate tangible outputs such as providing inspiration, advice or contacts from beyond their normal sphere of experience, whilst also providing opportunities for winning business or recruiting new staff and volunteers.

The SSE works hard to expand its range of contacts and standing within the sector in order to maintain an up-to-date view of the landscape that potential and established social entrepreneurs can draw on to strengthen their personal development and that of their projects. Indeed some of the activities and actions of the programme itself are carried out by former SSE students who themselves have a history of being practitioners in the sector and in some cases have become part of the staff.

This 'cycle of growth' continues as the growing pool of SSE staff, students and fellows become advocates for the organisation, recommending and encouraging other individuals to investigate the programmes or attend the School.

## 7.7 Quality system and audit

In 2006, a quality system comprising of a set of quality standards and a Best Practice Guide were launched. This brings together some of the existing feedback processes the SSE already uses including distance-travelled scales<sup>27</sup> and an internal customer feedback mechanism. With the latter students are invited to give anonymous feedback on all elements of the programme at three points during the year in order to help shape planning the next stage and subsequent cohorts.

The quality standards represent a set of mandatory programme deliverables as controlled by Central SSE through its license, while the Best Practice Guide seeks to update changes and harvest the benefits of each School's innovations, circulating them to the SSE Network as a resource to be used as needed.

The quality standards are also audited. The audit is undertaken annually in two stages, the first an internal audit by the Schools themselves, and the second an external audit by an auditor appointed by Central SSE.

The quality system and audit means that the activities and actions outlined above can be implemented with consistency across all of the schools in the SSE network.<sup>28</sup> The quality system was designed to maintain the balance between control by Central SSE over essential aspects of the franchise's activities on the one hand, and encouragement of each School's freedom of action on the other.

# 8. Immediate outputs: the SSE’s initial objectives – meeting the needs of a social entrepreneur

Needs (Section 6)	Actions and activities (Section 7)	‘Immediate’ Outputs (Section 8)	Medium-term outcomes (Section 9)	Longer-term outcomes and impacts (Section 10)
<i>The specific needs of a (potential) social entrepreneur and their organisation</i>	<i>Addressing those needs through delivering specific programme elements in a particular way</i>	<b><i>Meeting the needs of a social entrepreneur through the successful delivery of programme elements</i></b>	<i>Building the capacity of the individuals and their organisations</i>	<i>Sustainable and effective community solutions, and wider community impact</i>

Figure 5: The third part of the story

## 8.1 Overview of this section

This section looks more closely at the substance of (as well as the ethos behind) the SSE programme. This meant asking the fellows whether for them the SSE is fulfilling its promise through the specific elements of the programme and the environment in which those elements are being delivered.

Overall we found that:

- *Meeting needs and depth of support (8.2)*  
The SSE is meeting the diverse needs of students across the UK: **90 per cent of students felt that the programme they undertook was well suited to their needs and 90 per cent also believed they were freely able to explore their own ideas.**

Students receive a range of learning experiences that together provide a considerable depth and breadth of

support. Respondents highlighted the influence and success of action learning sets, expert witness sessions, project visits, personal tutors and the residential block to both their personal and organisational development.

In particular, 74 per cent of respondents rated expert witness sessions 7 or above out of 10 for their personal development and 61 per cent respondents rated them 7 or above for their organisation's development

- *Supportive environment (8.4)*

The SSE provides a supportive environment for students, giving them a space to reflect and to be with like-minded people who understand their passions and motivations: 93 per cent of students agreed that the SSE provided them with a supportive environment and 82 per cent were comfortable discussing their business ideas with their peers; 92 per cent of students felt that the SSE provided them with "space to reflect".

- *Building contacts into a Community of Practice (8.5)*

Students attending the SSE will almost certainly make **useful** contacts: 53 per cent of the fellows questioned made more than 10, 76 per cent more than 4. With networks and contacts playing a crucial role in the success of social entrepreneurs, these contacts and the benefits they bring are a vital part of the SSE's theory of change. This is because as the number of students increases, so does the pool of knowledge and expertise available for providing opportunities and support to future participants as fellows remain in contact with the SSE as associates (e.g. tutors/mentors) or staff.

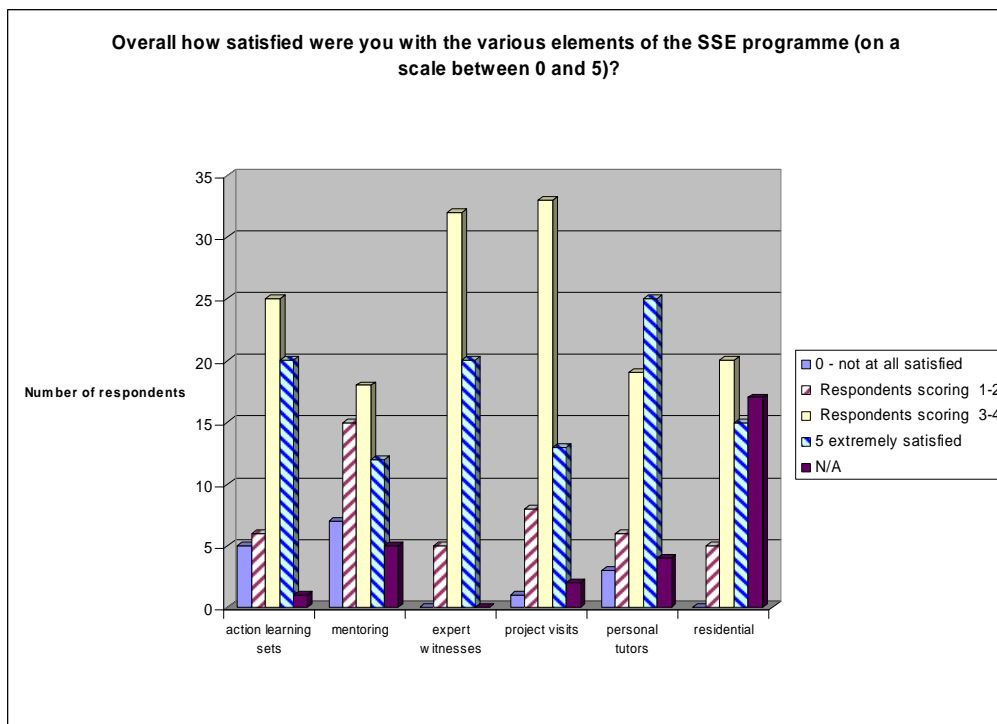
## 8.2 Meeting needs and depth of support

The programme of work is structured around six elements, each designed to complement the other in meeting the needs of the students in terms of skills, knowledge, and experience and to make best use of their own innate desire for inquiry. The detail of what each element entails is covered in Section 7.3.

Not all the elements of the SSE programme can suit everyone – the SSE acknowledges that it is catering for many different learning styles. A great deal of energy and expertise goes into the recruitment process so that those needs and styles are properly understood and aligned to what the programme offers. As a result generally less than 5 per cent of students do not complete the programme.<sup>29</sup> If we combine this low drop-out rate with the fact that almost 90 per cent of respondents to the fellows' questionnaire (51/57) agreed or strongly agreed that the programme was well-suited to their needs, we get a strong indication that the school is meeting one of its key objectives – meeting the needs of the students.

The responses from fellows in relation to each of the specific elements show that generally they are satisfied with the programme, and that it is influential on both their personal development and the development of their organisations or projects.

The detailed responses shed some light on where the programme works and where it could be improved. When asked about their overall **levels of satisfaction** with the elements of the programme, the distribution of responses for each element is at the top end (3 or above) of a 0-5 point scale, as demonstrated in Figure 6. Note that for 17 respondents the residential blocks did not feature (“Not Applicable”) as part of their experiences because when they attended the SSE these were not yet part of the programme.



**Figure 6: Fellows’ satisfaction with the programme elements. (Base 57 respondents)**

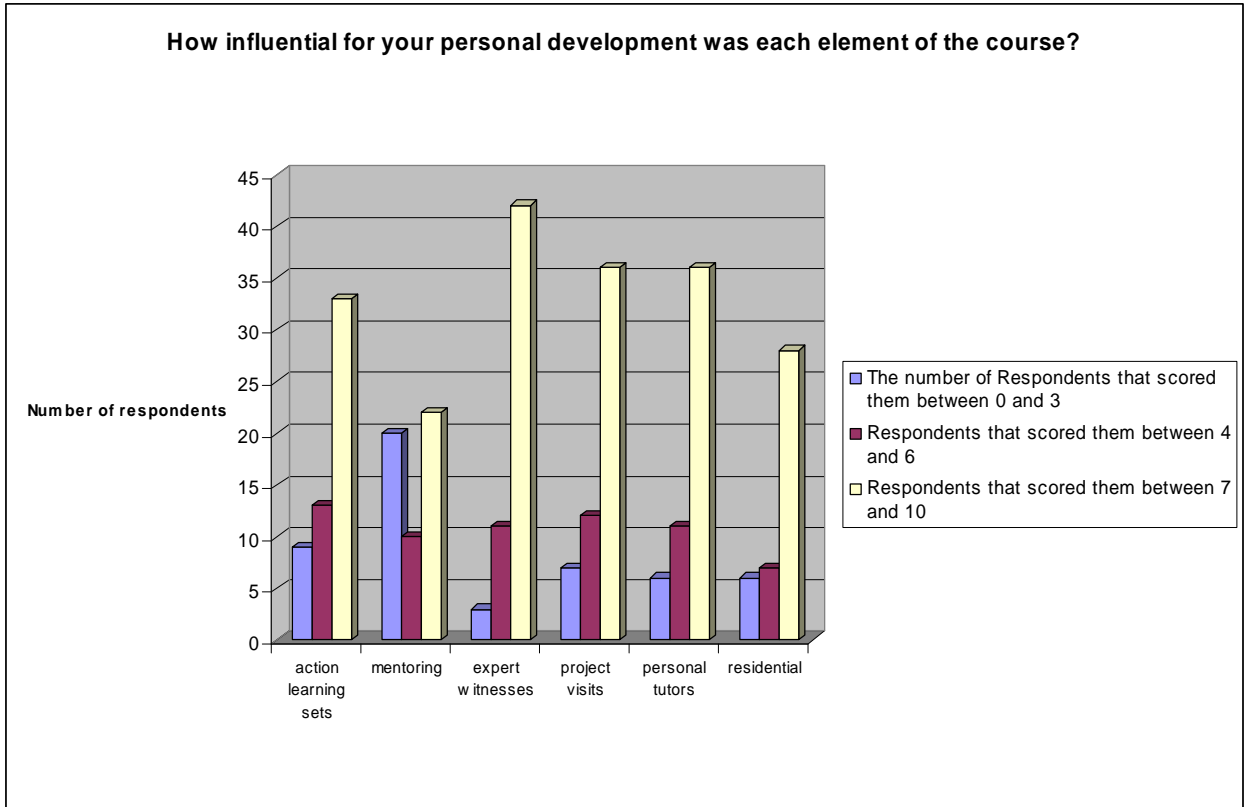
When asked **how influential** each element of the programme was for fellows’ personal development, the distribution for five out of the six elements points clearly to the top end of the scale, in each case with the majority of respondents scoring them 7 or above out of 10. (See Figure 7.)

Although the relative distribution is similar in terms of the influence of these elements on Fellows’ organisations’ development (see Figure 8 below), the expert witness sessions and the personal tutoring stand out for both as being key, with project visits, action learning sets and residential blocks following close behind. The questionnaire invited fellows to add comments in order to qualify the scores they had awarded the elements of the programme. Thirty-six fellows responded, of which 17 comments were broadly positive, and only 10 negative – with a further 9 neither positive nor negative. The additional comments broadly reflect the positive distribution of the scores, whilst highlighting some of the benefits that resulted.

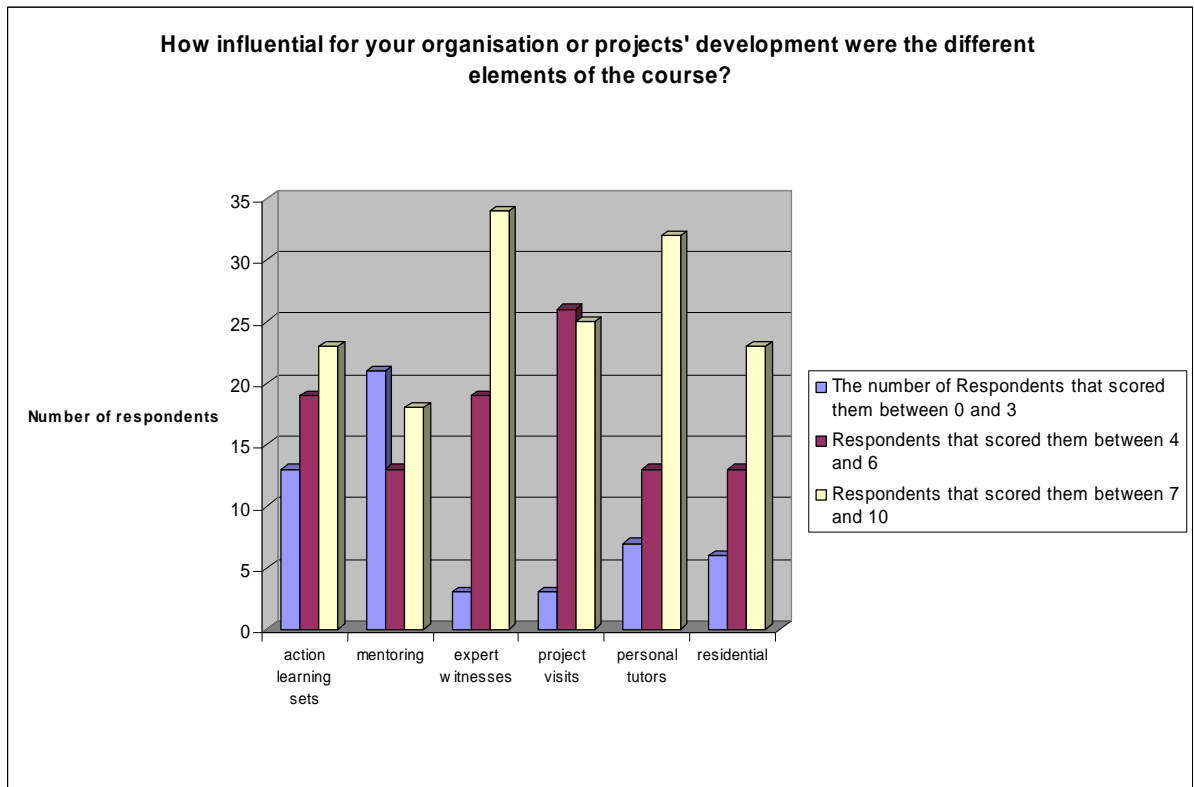
*“My confidence level was mostly boosted by hearing from expert witnesses and also visiting projects; my Tutor was also paramount in my own development and acquisition of a more focused approach.” [SSE London fellow, 2000]*

*“Very good input from expert witnesses on things that would be useful to say in grant applications. [...and in particular] input from Alastair from London SSE about the things that they look out for, and dos and don'ts”. [SSE East Midlands fellow, 2006]*

*“My original McKinsey mentor remains a trustee 5 years on.” [SSE London fellow, 2001]*



**Figure 7: Influence on personal development**



**Figure 8: Influence on organisational development**

Although that last comment showed how a strong and trusting relationship with a mentor can emerge from attending the programme, not all fellows shared a good experience of the mentoring sessions. All three figures highlight the lower satisfaction and levels of influence in relation to these. This aspect of the programme comes across as much harder to tailor for each student, as although there are those for whom the mentoring worked, there were one or two comments pointing to a mismatch between students' needs and what their mentors were able to offer them, for example:

*“My mentor was extremely 'nice' and an interesting person but had insufficient understanding or focus on my project and didn't offer sufficient challenge to really stimulate or help me progress.” [SSE London fellow, 1999]*

It is encouraging that the only other element that scored less well on overall satisfaction (Figure 6) and its influence on a project (Figure 8) were the action learning sets, although they scored as well as the other elements in terms of influence on personal development. This is important to note, and yet should not be of too much concern for the SSE as the action learning sets' primary purpose is personal development – particularly in exploring how to overcome dilemmas. The comments that accompany these scores shed some light on why they did not meet the requirements of every student.

*“I personally didn't gain much benefit from the action learning sets as I am a practical person and don't see much value in the touchy-feely aspect of the course but at the same time I saw the great help it gave to my peers in need of confidence or emotional support and as such I feel it does have a place on*

*the course but should be more targeted rather than applied carte blanche.*" [SSE Fife fellow, 2006]

*"I struggled with my action learning set and found it rather 'polite' - would have liked a livelier, more honest and explorative arena."* [SSE London Ready Steady Grow fellow, 2006]

*"I had a particularly problematic [action learning] set, people didn't show up etc. so this clouds my judgement - I know other sets worked really well."* [SSE London Essentials fellow, 2005]

It is important to remember that both of these elements of the programme represent its most challenging aspects and epitomise particular approaches to teaching that inevitably will not suit everyone's style of learning. For those for whom the action learning sets and mentoring were successful (particularly in terms of influence on personal development), the comments were very positive:

*"I feel the Action Learning sets were very beneficial to me it gave me quality time in a safe environment to reflect and also to learn from others and share knowledge."* [SSE Salford Pilot Scheme fellow, 2000]

*"...my ALS tutor and group were fantastic and I enjoyed this element the most. We still continue to meet every now and then."* [SSE London fellow, 1999]

*"[My] mentor continues to support work of new organization. [I] will have active links to the organisation headed by [my] tutor."* [SSE London Ready Steady Grow fellow, 2006]

*"The mentoring has enabled me to double check my progress, the work has led on to bigger projects."* [SSE London Ready Steady Grow fellow, 2005]

Mentoring and action learning sets are valuable aspects of the programme. For the degree of support and opportunities for learning that they bring to students undergoing the SSE experience it is clearly important that sufficient time and energy is allocated to making them work.

### **8.3 An emotional journey**

We have seen how the SSE helps students meet personal, and where they are linked, organisational objectives through more than just laying on lectures and visits. The SSE make it clear at the start of a programme that if a student is undergoing the necessary personal transformation to ensure that they are better prepared for experiences in the real world, that journey may not be a comfortable one and that the initiative rests with students to "get out what they put in" and have "ownership" of their project idea.

The findings from the Storyboard exercises demonstrated the acceptance by students and fellows that a personal transformation does indeed take place whilst attending the school. A parallel can be drawn in a general sense with the way people deal with new information that might conflict with their current view of the world. This

is sometimes described in terms of a process from denial, followed by anger and confusion, to acceptance and re-growth.

A number of emotions emerged in the Storyboard discussions that signalled a similar progression. These warranted further exploration amongst a wider group to see if they were occurring for more than just a handful of fellows and students. We wanted to see if there was an indication of a transformation process taking place, as well as the extent to which positive and negative feelings played a part in what was evidently for most of the respondents a positive experience.

Using a six-point scale we asked respondents to describe the extent to which they felt a number of the emotions that participants had alluded to in the Storyboard sessions. Columns A, B and C in Table 2 can be thought of as “less frequently” and columns D, E and F as “more frequently”. By comparing the combined scores of A, B and C with the combined scores of D, E and F we can get an indication from the sample group of what was more common amongst the fellows.

Generally the positive emotions tended towards the “more frequently”. We found that 80 per cent of respondents (46 or 48 out of 57) said that they had felt energised, inspired and enjoyment ‘most’ or ‘all of the time whilst at the SSE’.

**Table 2: An indication of positive and negative emotions whilst at the SSE (57 respondents)**

	Less frequently			More frequently		
	A Just at the start of the SSE programme	B Just at the end of the SSE programme	C Not at all or almost none of the time whilst at the SSE	D Some of the time during the SSE programme	E Most of the time during the SSE programme	F All or almost all of the time during the SSE programme
<b>Energised</b>	1	0	1	7	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>
Confident to act	1	2	0	13	29	12
<b>A sense of solidarity</b>	3	0	4	9	<b>18</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Inspired</b>	1	0	0	8	<b>27</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Enjoyment</b>	2	2	0	7	<b>33</b>	<b>13</b>
Clarity	1	1	1	28	23	3
Focused	1	0	1	21	23	11
Bored	3	2	42	8	2	0
<b>Self-doubt</b>	5	0	12	<b>35</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Confusion</b>	12	1	17	<b>24</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Isolated</b>	<b>10</b>	2	<b>29</b>	13	1	2
Disillusioned	2	4	33	18	0	0
Fear	7	2	24	23	1	0
Frustrated	4	1	12	35	4	1
Ignorant	8	0	26	21	1	0

We also looked at some negative feelings and found that overall these tended towards the “less frequently”, although the difference was smaller. Noticeably self-doubt and frustration occurred “more frequently”. Viewed in the context of the general satisfaction towards the programme (encouragingly, hardly anyone felt bored!) these negative points need not be seen as detracting from the success of

the programme, but appear to be a part of the personal transformation experience. Overall 84 per cent of respondents agreed that “hard truths” were a necessary part of the SSE experience and 90 per cent of respondents agreed that the programme had demanded an active contribution from them in order for them to get the maximum benefit.

These findings also demonstrate that the selection process for students joining the programme, as well as the way the programme is presented, is making the students aware of the commitment necessary to see it through, whilst at the same time meeting their needs.

## 8.4 A supportive environment

### *Networks*

In the Storyboard exercises it was noted that the SSE served, in the words of one participant, to “open up a new world” where they were able to make connections with people with similar goals and values, both amongst their fellow students and with people from the wider sector associated with the school. This illustrates a common feature that emerges throughout the SSE’s theory of change in sections 6 and 7: networks are central to the needs of the students, and consequently to what the programme offers, particularly in the way that the selection process creates cohorts of students who bring with them similar values but more importantly a diverse selection of experiences and backgrounds. This is an example of the extent to which the SSE emphasises managing the character and quality of the connections that are made between people as a key part of the overall package it offers.

Comments made throughout this evaluation, whether relating to an increase in confidence, the potential for impact, or just the sheer enjoyment of working in an atmosphere of mutual interest and shared values often highlight the existence at the SSE (by statement or inference) of the qualities of a successful network, particularly the subtle combination of shared values and diversity of experience that the SSE strives to establish in each cohort.

*“SSE offered a unique opportunity to share experiences with like minded people from different backgrounds” [SSE London fellow, 1999]*

*“The SSE ‘sounded like a safe place to be me whilst learning from like-minded people.” [SSE London Ready Steady Grow fellow, 2006]*

*“[I chose SSE] because the specialisation is Social Enterprise and because they offer the mentored support and the connections with other students (social enterprise) across the area.” [SSE Salford Millennium fellow, 2002]*

Having experienced a significant growth in confidence whilst attending the SSE, one fellow put this down to:

*“The network of contacts I have created during my time at the SSE after being shown that people in power are approachable once you have been shown how. A valuable lesson that has*

*stood me in good stead and one of the best things I achieved from my time at the SSE.” [SSE Fife fellow, 2006]*

And another fellow:

*“...gained confidence, but missed the weekly meets with fellow entrepreneurs for the 'buzz'.” [SSE East Midlands fellow, 2005]*

As these quotes indicate – and in particular the occurrence of words such as, “like-mindedness”, “different backgrounds” and “buzz” – the character and quality of the connections gained are something more than a group of individuals attending the same programme.

### **Addressing isolation**

Table 2 in Section 8.3 also highlighted ‘isolation’ as something felt by a small number of fellows at the very start of their time at the SSE. This had emerged in the Storyboard exercises as one of the needs that prospective students were hoping to address by taking part in the programme, and indeed is related to many of the themes emerging throughout this study.

Through a discussion at the Storyboard exercise it became clear that the feeling of isolation was often characterised by students’ instinctive desire to widen their field of contacts, and make links with people who had a proper understanding of (as well as a will and ability to have a positive impact on) the things they were trying to achieve with their projects. At least half the respondents to our question on negative feelings stated that once they had started the programme they hardly felt isolated, to the extent that almost 72 per cent (41 out of 57 respondents) felt a sense of solidarity most or all of their time whilst on the programme.

*“It changed me as a person. I was with people that I admired and felt solidarity with. I feel I became more effective as a result of it.” [SSE London fellow, 2005]*

In a general, sense this provides us with a strong indication that the SSE is providing a supportive environment. One fellow’s general comment on their time at the SSE articulates this nicely with a ringing endorsement:

*“Genuinely felt lifted by the experience- probably more a response with benefit of hindsight than a response felt at the time. Almost validated my own professional existence. Before I felt fairly remote and isolated, and after the course I felt more engaged and part of a network (even though I'm quite resistant to networks generally- and remain so...)” [SSE London Ready Steady Grow fellow, 2004]*

### **Peer-to-peer relationships**

Another aspect of the quality of the network engendered by the SSE is characterised by the peer-to-peer relationships that develop between students, and amongst students and staff. In its report *Working Progress Demos* identifies that wherever people are dealing with new information and unfamiliar environments (for example new recruits to an organisation) the relationships they form and utilise with people that they perceive to be ‘more like them’ are more effective for advice and support and for addressing issues of uncertainty, than

those with people who they perceive to be higher up the hierarchy of knowledge and experience (i.e. more senior staff and managers). The report's recommendation to employers is to acknowledge the importance of providing a depth of support that allows these less formal, yet vital relationships to form.<sup>30</sup> The SSE is overt in the way it promotes this extra-curricular activity as an important part of a student's experience.

The evidence from this research demonstrates that fellows did experience good quality relationships with their peers throughout their time at the SSE, and their comments point to this being a key factor contributing to their success through gaining confidence and inspiration.

*"It was all about the (peer) group! They were fab"* [SSE London Ready Steady Grow fellow, 2006]

*"Through Peer Support and the knowledge of key workers my confidence was improved. I had the chance to prove to myself that I could do more with my life and succeed in doing it."* [SSE Glasgow Millennium fellow, 2001]

*"SSE gave a real overview of the sector and gave us all confidence in our own abilities. Also we were inspired by our peers."* [SSE London fellow, 2001]

*"The people around me at SSE - staff and fellow students - gave me great confidence."* [SSE London fellow, 1999]

Such an effective working relationship requires trust, especially where people might be putting themselves out on a limb by sharing their dreams and ideas with others. Encouragingly the responses to the questionnaire showed that 82 per cent of fellows said that whilst they were at the SSE they felt comfortable discussing their business ideas with their peers.

*"The SSE sounded like a 'safe place to be me whilst learning from like-minded people'."* [SSE London Ready Steady Grow fellow, 2006]

### **Time period**

In its conclusions, the LBS GEM Social Entrepreneurship Monitor identifies that as they become more experienced, social entrepreneurs become more disillusioned with entrepreneurship, see fewer opportunities, and are more likely to fear failure.<sup>31</sup> This representation of a loss in confidence provides an endorsement of the approach that the SSE advocates which promotes long-term support for its students, both whilst on the programme, and beyond through the fellowship and networks that are created.

*"It has left me with a support network that I call on when it gets tough."* [SSE Essentials fellow, 2005]

*"During my time at SSE I built a project that delivered for the first time despite difficulties and setbacks. My Action Learning set was extremely supportive and helped me deal with my fears and doubts and SSE provided practical assistance when I hit a real difficulty part way through. I came out the other side and the organisation has provided a continuous and growing service ever since".* [SSE London fellow, 1999]

Certainly the fact that one of the first students to graduate still feels that they have had 'continuous support ever since' shows that the SSE programme continues to have an effect beyond the months of intense study.

### **Unique**

All of this paints a picture of the SSE as providing a supportive environment for the social entrepreneur. The questionnaire responses help summarise this: 90 per cent of fellows agreed that they felt freely able to explore their own ideas whilst attending the programme and 93 per cent agreed that the SSE provided them with a supportive environment. We also found that almost all fellows (92 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that the SSE provided a space for them to reflect, which in itself is a key aspect of the action learning approach the SSE advocates.

Referring to a stated increase in confidence whilst at the SSE, one fellow commented:

*"Much of this was [down to] peer support and general support from SSE. Prior to joining SSE I was someone who felt that something needed to be done to change things for the better and that I had a way to do it; what I didn't have was the inherent confidence within myself nor the skills to carry it out. Attending SSE helped in both building my skills and in acquiring more self-belief."* [London SSE fellow, 2001]

The SSE is a place to grow and develop ideas, alongside people who understand the values and motivations of a social entrepreneur. This is important in order that ideas can be tested and strengthened under the scrutiny of people who have different and perhaps richer experiences.

*"In retrospect, I was much freer than I've ever been – even though I was working extremely hard to tight deadlines. I think the people in the organisation I was placed with just let me get on with things because they were not sure where to go with the idea and this extra rope could have been enough to hang myself with but luckily I fashioned it into a flying trapeze! ... Working on my placement was the most intense learning period I have experienced."* [SSE London fellow, 1999]

As part of this research we asked fellows why they had chosen the SSE over other institutions. Responses such as "only one around at the time" and "unique approach" were noted from some of the earlier graduates in London. However, these comments were not exclusive to the earlier graduates – they also came from more recent fellows. Although only providing an indication, it is significant that of the 57 comments made, 21 of them referred to the SSE's uniqueness or the fact that they had not found anyone else doing something similar; and 6 of these were from 2005 and 2006. The comments often speak of finding like-mindedness and understanding – essential elements for a supportive environment.

*"The SSE understood me where other people did not."* [SSE Salford Programme fellow, 2000]

*"No other provider offered such a flexible and responsive programme."* [SSE London fellow, 1999]

*“First, there was no other training provider doing this and second, I was completely inspired by the ideas and aims of SSE – I loved its vision.” [SSE London fellow, 2001]*

*“I liked the idea of working for myself and for the benefit of the community. There were no other courses available, locally that were anything like this!” [SSE Fife fellow, 2005]*

The fact that the SSE schools are sited in areas of most need means that the schools are providing a support structure that is additional (and complementary to) the existing initiatives designed to improve quality of life. The franchise approach adopted by the SSE means that each new school can make sure it is not duplicating what is already there, but is able to work with existing local agencies. Where a potential social entrepreneur's good idea might have fallen through the existing net of local initiatives, the SSE provides another chance for getting that good idea to happen.

*“As someone who lives in Angus, Scotland I found the SSE very rewarding and still make use of the network.” [SSE London fellow, 2002]*

A similar point emerged from Re-Cycle, one of the case studies featured in Section 10. The SSE network is particularly helpful for an organisation operating “out in the sticks”. This also illustrates a wider point associated with the SSE's applicability to a range of geographies – whether inner city estate, or remote part of Scotland. It is a model designed to support individuals whether they are operating exclusively for a local community or whether they have a more international focus and in an urban or rural context.

## **8.5 Building contacts into a community of practice**

### ***Making and using contacts***

Again we see the recurring ‘network’ theme emerging in both the numbers and the narrative of this study. Clearly the activities of the SSE bring people together who have real experience in the sector, and the world of the social entrepreneur. Fifty-three per cent of fellows (27/51) who answered a question about contacts, stated that they had made 10 or more useful contacts attributable to their involvement with SSE. Twenty-one percent made between 1 and 3 contacts; 18 per cent made 4 to 6 contacts. In fact only one respondent had not made any useful contacts at all, and so we can safely say that SSE students will almost certainly make useful contacts as a result of attending the programme.

What is more, these contacts are more than names in an address book. There was significant evidence of students contracting and delivering paid work or work “in kind” for other fellows. Over a third of respondents (18/51) have carried out ‘in kind’ work for another SSE fellow, and a quarter (13/50) have had ‘in kind’ work done for them by another SSE fellow. (Of these, 7 respondents both received and gave.) This is also a demonstration of the trust that is engendered between and amongst students and staff whilst on the programme.

And further down the line, these connections yield more than just transfers of knowledge and experience, but can directly enhance the

activities and actions of the organisations they work for. Examples of the sort of work this involved range from practical physical projects (“putting up stock fencing” or “providing building work”) to facilitation, and practical computer advice and assistance, including graphic and website design.

### ***Cycle of growth***

This spirit of mutual help and benefit is not restricted to just the students’ and fellows’ own organisations. Three of the respondents referred to in the previous paragraph have provided services or currently work for the SSE as staff or speakers on a programme. And so the SSE is itself a good example of an organisation that benefits from exchange of skills and knowledge engendered amongst and between staff and students. The cycle of growth refers to the gradual accumulation of contacts (and therefore experience) that feeds back into delivering elements of the SSE programme – not only in terms of delivering expert witness sessions and project visits, but for tutors and core staff who themselves are able to identify with the students’ values and needs. This also important in terms of the additional credibility of the staff amongst the students, as they are practitioners who have experienced the programme for themselves. In turn, this body of knowledge and expertise is able to contribute to the growth and sustainability of organisations, as well as to their impact in wider communities.

The SSE in London employs fellows in two full-time staff posts, as well as engaging three as trustees, and a further five as associates (such as action learning set facilitators or tutors). The resulting legacy of encouraging this approach is a specialised community of experienced activists and entrepreneurs situated within a mechanism for them to complete a feedback and learning loop for the next generation.

### ***Recruitment***

Consequently spreading the word to potential new students to bring them to the school in the first place is a vital part of this cycle. In order to test the hypothesis about how the SSE expands its circle of contacts and advocates, we asked fellows “From whom did you hear about The School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) first?”

Fifty-seven fellows answered this question. Of these the largest single group of respondents (42 per cent) had heard about the SSE from a member of staff, a student or a fellow. But interestingly it is clear that the SSE does not need to rely on this, as it is apparent that the brand carries some credibility in the wider sector as 20 per cent had heard about the SSE first from a third sector, voluntary or community organisation and a further 24 per cent from newspaper articles, advertisements or the Internet. The remaining responses identified 12 per cent who had heard about the school from a friend, family member or advisor. Evidently where an organisation is striving for a local focus, the success of word-of-mouth recruitment is as important as more formal channels of communication.<sup>32</sup>

### ***Community of practice***

*“I become more aware of the community of social entrepreneurs which provided inspiration.” [SSE London fellow, 2000]*

By reflecting on the SSE's capacity to meet the needs of the students and provide a supportive environment we see that one of the general by-products of this intense approach is a lasting community of entrepreneurs who remain connected to some degree with the school and its work.

There are various networks at play here, including the network of fellows (the Fellowship) for teaching, mutual support and inspiration, as well as the less formal peer network of like-minded individuals that some students had not found in their usual spheres of operation. Because of the differing nature of these connections, we can broadly define this as a community of practice characterised by trust and understanding and a rich vein of experience.

### ***Maintaining attitudinal support***

It is from these types of relationships that students gain attitudinal support in the sense that they have an endorsement of their beliefs and values through seeing them shared (and sometimes challenged) by others. This support is crucial to social entrepreneurs and, according to the Social Entrepreneurship Monitor 2006, not just at the start-up stage but for many of the more experienced individuals for whom fear of failure and disillusionment with entrepreneurship can increase with time.<sup>33</sup> Harding goes on to cite a previous report stating “social entrepreneurs are community-centric and rely heavily on networks and support structures for their work”, recommending the development of “infrastructures which should include these normative aspects of the support base.”<sup>34</sup>

Peer-to-peer relationships and all the aspects identified of a community of practice are cemented by recognising this alignment of strongly felt beliefs and values. There is evidence across the findings from the fellows who responded (particularly in their comments) that there is a strong sense of camaraderie engendered amongst students, as well as between students and staff at the SSE. Many of them share the vision and values of each other, the school and particularly of its founder, Michael Young.

# 9. Medium-term outcomes: the SSE’s objectives – building the capacity of individuals and their organisations

Needs (Section 6)	Actions and activities (Section 7)	‘Immediate’ Outputs (Section 8)	Medium-term outcomes (Section 9)	Longer-term outcomes and impacts (Section 10)
<i>The specific needs of a (potential) social entrepreneur and their organisation</i>	<i>Addressing those needs through delivering specific programme elements in a particular way</i>	<i>Meeting the needs of a social entrepreneur through the successful delivery of programme elements</i>	<b>Building the capacity of the individuals and their organisations</b>	<i>Sustainable and effective community solutions, and wider community impact</i>

Figure 10: The fourth part of the story

## 9.1 Overview of this section

Section 8 of this report looked at the SSE’s objectives, and to what extent those are being addressed and indeed met, particularly in terms of the student’s needs and the wider growth of a community of practice. Having established this, it is now important to make the link to the next step in the theory of change, i.e. to understand the relationship between meeting those objectives and the changes that take place as a result for the individuals and their organisations. These changes can broadly be termed as ‘building capacity’. Overall we found the following:

### Growth in confidence (9.2)

There is a great change in the reported confidence students feel whilst attending the SSE: 88 per cent agreed that whilst attending the SSE they experienced a growth in confidence in their ability to deliver their project idea or run their organisation; 60 per cent agreed that their confidence continued to rise even after having left the SSE due

to the long-lasting support network, friends and contacts made whilst there.

### **Increased credibility (9.3)**

The SSE opens doors and increases the capacity of organisations to effect change, giving students better positioning to funders, local authorities and other key decision makers: 66 per cent of respondents rated their perception of their organisation's credibility as 7 or above on a scale of 1–10. In all but a handful of cases they attributed this directly or indirectly to their experience at the SSE.

### **Skills and knowledge (9.4)**

Individuals and organisations use the contacts they've made to establish and develop flourishing organisations. Skills and knowledge gained from the programme, tutors and witnesses build individual's capacity. They also gain sufficient confidence in their ability to lead their organisations and where necessary to move on to further training and development in a much more focused way.

### **As a result of contacts (9.5)**

There are significant benefits to individuals who attend the programme that result from the contacts they have made through the SSE. These range from the practical such as funding, contractual work, physical or technical expertise, to the equally important advice and friendship.

## **9.2 Growth in confidence**

### **Whilst at the SSE**

Feedback from students and fellows in the two Storyboard workshops highlighted not only the importance of increased confidence for their personal success, but demonstrated that for most the School was indeed delivering a programme that built confidence and capacity to operate in the sector. As this was such a key feature of the preliminary discussions around the overall theory of change for the SSE, it warranted more qualitative and quantitative study in the questionnaire to fellows.

**nef** asked fellows about changes in their levels of confidence. Of the 57 respondents who answered this question, the majority (88 per cent) agreed that whilst attending the SSE they experienced a growth in confidence. A selection of the narratives behind this particular number strengthens the point:

*“The [specific course] elements helped me to gain the ability to develop confidence in myself in order to be able to run the organisation.”* [SSE London fellow, 2005]

*“I have also had the confidence to take on the business planning for a new harbour authority for the Exe estuary, a plan which is due to set a precedent for other harbours around the country. This would have been out of my reach without the SSE training, and is an example of the hidden benefits of such work.”* [SSE Devon Millennium fellow, 2002]

*“I was surrounded by supportive people and made fantastic friends who I still meet regularly which gives me confidence also – we're all in the same boat.” [SSE London Essentials fellow, 2005]*

*“Through Peer Support and the knowledge of key workers my confidence was improved.” [SSE Glasgow Millennium fellow, 2001]*

*“The people around me at SSE - staff and fellow students – gave me great confidence.” [SSE London fellow, 1999]*

### **After the SSE**

It is particularly encouraging to note that the effects of support for social entrepreneurs whilst at the SSE continues after they have completed the programme, as the findings highlighted that almost three-quarters (72 per cent) of the 56 fellows who responded stated that they experienced a growth in confidence **after** they had left the SSE. Many of their comments continue in the same vein as for their experience during the programme.

*“Experience has bred confidence. SSE has given me a strong message – ‘You can do it!’ My project is innovative and both it and I have faced setbacks (and poverty!) since starting. I still know though (and SSE helped with this) that I will see this through and make changes for the better.” [SSE London fellow, 2001]*

*“The energy I got from the SSE programme has continued to drive me forward.” [SSE London fellow, 1999]*

We have already seen some of the examples of the reasons for this growth in confidence referring to specific elements of the programme. However, it is worth grouping them together (as above) to emphasise the ringing endorsement that came across throughout the study. The fact that the last two comments came from students who left the programme five or six years ago also helps emphasise the point.

### **Peer scrutiny**

One element contributing to the growth in confidence that warrants a special reference is the importance of the peer-to-peer relationships. This has particular relevance to the students' own confidence in their projects and what they were striving to achieve. Having a project idea scrutinised by peers helps in its development both by strengthening the idea itself as well as the student's belief in its validity.

*“We all went through a process of presenting and defending our projects throughout the year which meant that I was able to build on my confidence about my organisation. I think funders respond positively to confident and well-thought-out plans which we were able to develop during the year at SSE.” [SSE London Essentials fellow, 2005]*

Of course confidence alone doesn't make a successful project, but where it is achieved through having tested and strengthened a project idea, then that can significantly contribute to an effective initiative's sustainability.

### 9.3 Increased credibility

Evidence of a stronger belief and confidence in a project naturally leads on to the idea of perceived personal credibility for the individuals and, by extension, of the project itself. A proxy for this identified in the Storyboard workshops was when fellows felt able to influence decision-makers. Findings from the questionnaire showed that the majority (65 per cent) of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of attending the SSE, they felt better able to influence the decisions made by funders that affected their project or organisation. For those who agreed, some of the comments describe the importance of their association with the SSE name as contributing to this.

*“The fact that I have been on the course has instilled in funders that I am a professional person and understand my business well. It has been very well received by funders.”* [SSE Ready Steady Grow fellow, 2006]

*“The SSE is strongly respected in Fife and being able to say you have graduated carries a lot of weight as funders and other bodies are aware of the quality and intensity of the training given and as such generate a certain level of respect for you as an individual that you have completed and graduated from the course.”* [SSE Fife fellow, 2006]

*“We are now taken very seriously by public bodies such as the local council and the police force we are no longer seen as playing at this but these bodies are now firmly behind us to bring the project to fruition as soon as possible.”* [SSE Fife fellow, 2006]

*“Being associated with the SSE elevated me to a position a person of my age and experience would not normally be in. Coupled with this rarefied opportunity, was the chance to be creative and confident in my ability to create chances and get results in unconventional ways.”* [SSE London fellow, 1999]

As we saw from the numbers of new students recruited via other players in the third sector, the heritage and the name of the school undoubtedly carry weight in the sector which reflects back on the students so that this, too, contributes to their confidence.

*“As you can imagine, gaining funds was easier with Michael Young's "stamp" on it...but we have all been able to learn from that/his experience.”* [SSE London fellow, 1998]

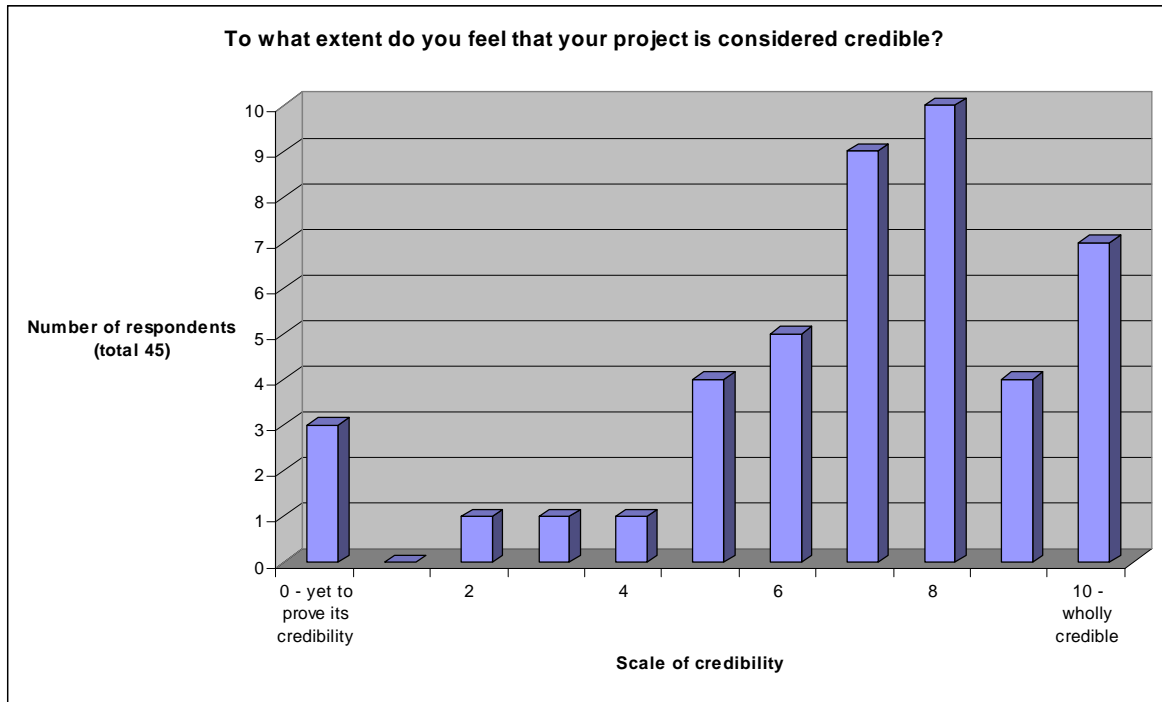
And even for those who didn't see the direct benefits to their project, there were still signs that the SSE name carried weight in the sector.

*“I don't feel particularly more able to influence funders – I still find fundraising a daunting task. I would say, however, that they (and others) are interested to see mention of attendance to the SSE.”* [SSE Ready Steady Grow fellow, 2006]

**nef** looked beyond personal credibility to the implications for an organisation's credibility (and therefore sustainability) by asking first of all what were fellows' own ways of knowing that their organisation was considered credible. Many referred to the growth, success and the sustainability of their organisations as characterised by...

“...Securing sustainable funding”...“Continued funding for the training we provide”...“Word of mouth recommendations”...“When people come back to us asking and wanting to partner with us.” [Selection of responses from fellows]

Then we asked to what extent (on a scale of 0 to 10) they felt that their organisation had achieved that credibility. (See Figure 11.)



**Figure 11: Credibility of projects**

The majority of respondents ranked their organisations towards the top end of the scale with 66 per cent (30/45) scoring 7 or above. Out of the 32 respondents who gave reasons for their answers, only 3 stated that their perceived credibility had *not* been affected by any experiences had through the SSE.

Meanwhile, ten respondents indicated that their perceived credibility had been affected through their personal development at the SSE and three through feedback from their peers (staff and other students); seven through their organisation’s development resulting from the SSE contact; four through direct association with the SSE ‘name’; and two through “better knowledge and positioning” within the social enterprise sector. These are encouraging indications of SSE’s positive impact on the credibility of people and organisations which in turn helps to maintain the reputation that the organisation already appears to command.

## 9.4 Skills and knowledge

For the SSE, building the capacity of individuals and organisations is much more than just transferring skills and knowledge from experts to pupils. Indeed, the action learning approach directly challenges this style of teaching. To demonstrate that students are acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to make their projects happen, we

only have to look back at some of the narrative behind the numbers we found concerning improved confidence and credibility.

### **Working with funders**

One of the main areas where confidence appeared to be an important attribute for the fellows was when it came to talking to (and negotiating) with funders. We have already noted that the LBS GEM Social Entrepreneurship Monitor highlighted funding as the main issue of concern for social entrepreneurs, particularly as *social* entrepreneurs are proportionally more likely to have failed to gain access to their finance because of the nature of their business.<sup>35</sup> This makes it all the more important that graduates emerging into the sector have the confidence to approach potential funders.

Findings from this study show that many of the skills and much of the knowledge that students stated that they were acquiring whilst at the SSE related to an improved ability to access funding.

*“Partly this is because of increased knowledge of funders and the processes that inform funding decisions.”* [SSE London fellow, 2001]

*“[SSE] Provided understanding of how funders operate.”* [SSE London fellow, 2000]

*“Whenever I am applying for the grant I try to use the techniques I learnt from SSE.”* [SSE London fellow, 2005]

*“I understand better and more explicitly the importance of relationships in fundraising. I was too idealistic before.”* [SSE London fellow, 1998]

*“I was highly successful in raising resources for the various orgs that I worked for in a consulting capacity. The SSE gave me the background and the understanding of the sector that was vital to be successful.”* [SSE London fellow, 1998]

Evidently it is not impossible to crack the funding nut, as we also see from the example of one fellow who described how, after leaving the SSE, they secured an £800,000 bid from the Department of Work and Pensions.

### **Working with other stakeholders**

The ability to influence other stakeholder groups (including funders) also has a direct link to both increased confidence and credibility. A significant proportion of respondents agreed that they were able to influence procurement officers (39 per cent) or users, beneficiaries and customers (43 per cent). Crucially, the comments relating to all three of the responses from those who felt better able to influence stakeholders endorse the view that the SSE is providing a wide range of the necessary skills and knowledge in order to operate in a challenging environment.

*“I use the skills I got from SSE which enable me to listen and give attention to the service users of the organisation.”* [SSE London fellow, 2005]

*“I learned useful lessons regarding governance and representation in social enterprises.”* [SSE London fellow, 2000]

These skills are subtler than just knowing how to prepare a funding application. Often it is as much about a greater understanding of how parts of the sector operate, and therefore how to work with them to best effect.

*"[I] Understand [procurement officers'] motivations better; [the programme] developed my abilities to influence them through negotiation."* [SSE London fellow, 1998]

*"[SSE] provided understanding of the environment decision-makers operate in, and key drivers of decision making."* [SSE London fellow, 2000]

And so by drawing on the insight and experiences of those who have gone before, they have a chance to see the motivations and drivers for the people they will inevitably come across as they strive to develop their project.

### **Steps beyond the SSE**

An increase in confidence and capacity is also being manifested in the things graduates go on to do after the SSE. With its emphasis on personal support, the SSE approach is as much about learning 'how to learn' as teaching skills, and so one of the positive outcomes of increased confidence is that graduates feel able to go on to do further training or study. They are able to do this with a better idea of what it is they need to know.

*"Since leaving the SSE I moved on to secure a managerial post in the voluntary sector and also gained additional qualifications including HNC; Assessor Units and Modern Apprenticeship in Management. Once I got going there was no stopping me. I've never looked back and will always strive to improve."* [SSE Glasgow Millennium fellow, 2001]

*"The information and knowledge is informal and not counted as qualification, but reputation and self confidence provided me [with] enough support to raise my question."* [SSE East Midlands fellow, 2006]

Of the 50 respondents who experienced a growth in confidence whilst at the SSE, 20 of them stated that they went on to do further professional development training or study. Table 3 lists the types of training these fellows undertook having left the SSE.

The next steps for a fellow may not be more training but the ability to pass on skills and knowledge to others in their communities:

*"I feel more confident applying for funding, I can identify clearly whether a funding application meets the criteria and I am more focused on my projects and how the funding will be spent. I also pass on my skills to groups I work with so they can apply for funding. I sit on funding panels i.e. ----- Council Voluntary Service, and ----- Primary Care small grants panel."* [SSE Salford Pilot Scheme fellow, 2000]

For a small number of the respondents there was evidence of the need to have (what one respondent described as) a more "in-class, hands-on" focus on specific skills, such as business planning. Rather than representing a gap in what the SSE programme is teaching, these comments perhaps illustrate the inevitable mis-match that may

occur for those students for whom particular elements of the programme do not suit a particular style of learning. For others the right balance was achieved between teaching specific skills and reflecting on practice.

**Table 3: Examples of further training accessed by SSE Fellows**

<b><i>Leadership and business management</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Business Link or SEER</li> <li>▪ Open University MBA</li> <li>▪ London Development Agency's "Gateway 2 Investment"</li> <li>▪ Business counseling courses</li> <li>▪ franchise course</li> <li>▪ IML Management course</li> <li>▪ Intellectual Property issues.</li> <li>▪ SSE Ready Steady Grow programme.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Mentoring, coaching and facilitation</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teaching qualification</li> <li>▪ NLP Master Practitioner and Training Certification</li> <li>▪ MA Coaching and Mentoring</li> <li>▪ Facilitation courses with ICA and Bristol City Council</li> <li>▪ Common Purpose</li> <li>▪ Developing Participation Projects with young people, with Council of Europe</li> </ul>
<b><i>Further skills and knowledge</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First aid at work</li> <li>▪ Solar water heating Biomass course with Forestry Commission</li> <li>▪ Manual handling</li> <li>▪ Strawbale building course</li> <li>▪ Natural Building Technology course</li> <li>▪ CITB site supervisor exam</li> <li>▪ Midas minibus driver training</li> <li>▪ SFEDI accreditation</li> <li>▪ Training for work, self-employment (6 month Government course)</li> <li>▪ Further training in artistic practice</li> </ul>

### ***Self discovery***

The other type of important knowledge that the programme delivers comes as part of the supportive environment and the space provided for reflection. This results in students gaining a better understanding, not only of the landscape in which their project sits, but a degree of self-knowledge about their own capabilities and limitations.

*“The [specific programme] elements mentioned in questions 12 and 13 (referring to all but Mentoring sessions) helped me to gain the ability to develop confidence in myself in order to be able to run the organisation.” [SSE London fellow, 2005]*

*“I also understand better the limits of my personal ability to compromise ...the development of my programmes.” [SSE London fellow, 1998]*

*“My time with SSE gave me a much clearer idea of my underlying entrepreneurial behaviours, increased my confidence and gave me useful practical skills.” [SSE London fellow, 1999]*

*“Had new ideas and different perspectives - no longer tried to be a manager, having realised that I am not one.” [SSE London fellow, 1998]*

All of which shows that some Fellows gained the self-knowledge that is as vital as any practical know-how.

## 9.5 As a result of contacts

We have already seen in Section 8.4 that by taking part in the SSE programme, students make more than transitory connections with other students as well as people in the field. These help to enrich their network of contacts in ways that can have both an immediate and a longer-term impact on their organisations and their ability to bring about lasting change. A student taking part in a Storyboard exercise commented:

*“SSE was a starting point which helped me see myself differently and encouraged me to take new, more challenging approaches to things. It also provided new contacts and networks which have allowed me to achieve things that I would not otherwise have done.” [SSE London fellow, 1998]*

From the fellows' survey, it was the majority of respondents who identified that they had made useful contacts through the SSE. These contacts yielded a range of inputs for their organisations in the form of: support (24 respondents), time (11 respondents), networks and further contacts (9 respondents), money (8 respondents), financial/funding assistance (6 respondents), ideas and knowledge (6 respondents), work/contracts (3 respondents), labour (3 respondents) and friendship (2 respondents). One respondent noted of the connections they had made that:

*“From a creative and supportive point of view they were very influential in helping me develop myself and my abilities in the sector. Most of the input was creative help based on their experience.” [SSE London fellow, 1998]*

The wide range of these inputs characterises the holistic nature of the needs of a social entrepreneur, and that they are being met by students' active participation in the programme and their interaction with their peers. This interaction is itself a preparation for meeting the challenges they will inevitably confront in the wider world. And so the contribution that these contacts can make to these individuals' organisations must not be underestimated. In the same way that

respondents identified a variety of inputs from contacts, they went on to qualify the extent to which they were useful by describing a wide range of the resulting benefits.

These included areas of general development, such as growth and increased quality of the organisation and project (14 respondents), personal development (7 respondents), knowledge and expertise (4 respondents), increased credibility or profile (4 respondents), to the more specific such as a change in direction for the organisation or project (3 respondents), or bringing in new employees (2 respondents). One comment, although not typical, draws a direct relationship between the programme and a substantial benefit to their organisation:

*“I raised over 55k whilst on the course from witnesses.” [SSE London fellow, 2001]*

These numbers all help make the case for the link between being part of a network, and membership of that network bringing about real and lasting benefits for its members.

### **Fellowship**

One of the ways in which the benefits of the network are sustained over a longer period of time is through the SSE Fellowship. The Fellowship remains the central network engine for the SSE (and as such the main source of data for this evaluation) and evidently makes an important and thriving contribution to the SSE bringing about its objectives. For some fellows, the Fellowship provides a resource that allows them to draw on a variety of other individuals and organisations to build capacity and share experiences in an affordable way.

*“I call fellows, they call me. We all share and over the long term too. It’s support you don’t pay for.” [SSE London fellow, Case Study, Teviot Action Group]*

Whilst there are many fellows who choose to engage with the Fellowship and use it in whatever way is appropriate to them, it is a network and way of working that does not suit all fellows and not all fellows use it. For example, a couple of respondents who found their action learning sets difficult or who are more geographically isolated from the schools and major urban centres found it less useful than others.

There is a strong case that the activities and actions described in Section 7 are bringing about the primary objectives of the SSE in meeting the needs of the students. What is more, meeting these needs is contributing to the increased capacity of the individuals and organisations so that they are in a better position to succeed through their social entrepreneurial efforts. The SSE does this by building students’ confidence and credibility against a solid background of skills, knowledge and an effective working network of contacts.

*“The progress I see in the organisation since I graduated from SSE proves beyond doubt that my attendance at SSE built my confidence to run the organisation.” [SSE London fellow, 2005]*

*“It felt like a real privilege to have the time to concentrate on developing the skills I needed to get an organisation off the*

*ground. When I started the project I was told it would never happen by BCC's Community Development team. It has happened and is starting to build the capacity to have a much greater impact than I ever imagined might be possible."* [SSE London, fellow, 1999]

The next section takes the story a step further to see to what extent these endeavours are indeed creating impact in the wider communities of the students and fellows who have taken part.

# 10. Longer-term outcomes and impacts: sustainable, effective community solutions

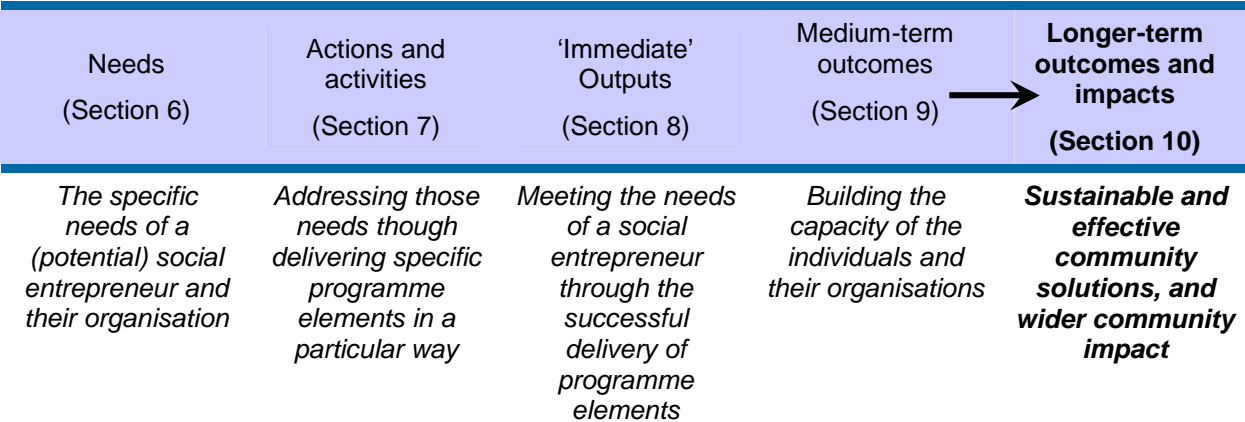


Figure 12: The fifth part of the story

## 10.1 Overview of this section

This final section examines the impact for the fellows' wider communities and its relationship to the SSE's intervention. As this level of outcome represents an area beyond the SSE's direct sphere of influence, an exact picture of this complex area would require individual (and independently delivered) evaluations of each fellow's project. However, case studies can shed light on the validity of this part of the hypothesis, as well as give an indication of how much of the continuing impact can be attributed to the SSE. To investigate the long-term changes that arise from the medium-term outcomes the evaluation draws on the fellows' own accounts of changes they see happening as captured in responses to the questionnaire and from more detailed case study material. Overall we found that there are three areas of the SSE's theory of change being fulfilled:

1. *Sustainable and effective organisations (10.2, 10.3)*

**Alive and surviving:** 85 per cent of respondents stated that the project or organisation they were working on whilst at the SSE was still in existence. SSE fellows' organisations are over one-and-a-half times more likely to be in existence after eight

years than conventional businesses.<sup>36</sup> Eighty-one per cent of respondents were still involved in that organisation.

**Growing:** These organisations are experiencing financial and organisational growth in a variety of ways, such as generating employment, creating volunteer posts, reaching thousands of users and effectively trading and gaining on average a five-fold increase in turnover.

## 2. *Wide-reaching and long-term impact (10.4, 10.5)*

SSE students and organisations are able to see long-term change and impacts in the wider communities, economies and environments in which they work.

**Reaching out:** The change is diverse in addressing varied economic, social, environmental issues from a range of perspectives, including ethnicity, gender and in a range of locations throughout the UK and internationally. This leads to a diverse range of positive outcomes representing value to those communities.

**And beyond:** These changes also extend to social entrepreneurs reaching out beyond their localities and communities in challenging 'decision makers' and conventional economic processes and influencing public policy at other scales.

## 3. *Social transformation (10.6)*

Fellows can illustrate that a change takes place whereby they are able to pass on their social entrepreneurial approach to others in their immediate community who are associated with their organisations.

**Self seeding:** SSE fellows are inspiring others in their immediate communities by demonstrating confidence and success in their community and by recognising and encouraging other people with the necessary potential to develop their capabilities.

## 10.2 Sustainable and effective organisations – alive and surviving

For the SSE, sustainable and effective organisations are essential in creating long-term change. Solutions to social problems rely on established organisations that meet needs over a long period of time. Sustainable, flourishing organisations are better placed to create sustainable outcomes and impacts. Here, the term 'sustainable' refers to issues of economic security of the organisation and of the social entrepreneur as well as in the sustainability of numbers of users or clients.

The first obvious indicator for sustainability is whether the project or organisation the students were working on at the SSE is still in existence, and then whether they are still involved with that organisation. **The evaluation found that 85 per cent of individuals who answered the relevant question in the survey stated that the project or organisation they were working on whilst at the SSE was still in existence** (see Figure 12).<sup>37</sup> And 81 per cent of

respondents were still involved in that organisation (see Figure 13). Although there is a possibility of a sample bias, these findings present a positive indication of sustainability amongst organisations and projects associated with the SSE.



Figure 12: Breakdown of organisations (from those that responded) still in existence from each SSE year intake

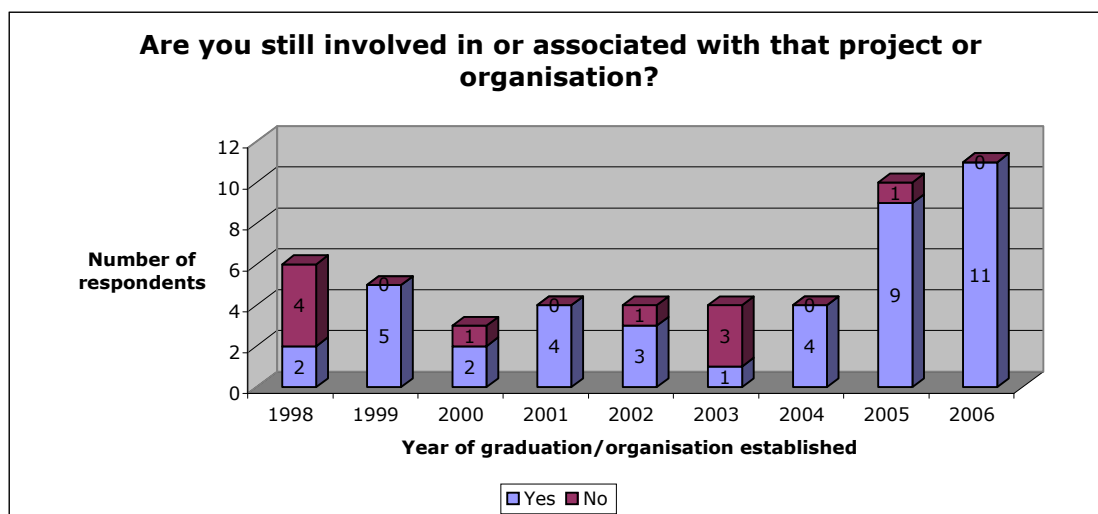


Figure 13: Breakdown of fellows still involved with the project or organisation they brought to the SSE from each SSE year intake

Furthermore, if we take the survival rate based on survey responses for SSE fellows' organisations after eight years of existence, i.e. those organisations set up in 1998, the survival rate is 67 per cent.<sup>38</sup> This compares with the survival rate of conventional business after eight years of 39 per cent, suggesting that based on our survey of responses **SSE fellows' organisations are over one-and-a-half times more likely to be in existence after eight years than conventional businesses.**<sup>39</sup>

### 10.3 Sustainable and effective organisations – growing

Having established a comparison of the existence or non-existence of fellows' organisations and the status of their involvement, we can examine in more detail further aspects of their sustainability.

#### *People*

Survey data demonstrates that SSE fellows and their organisations have generated employment over the last eight years in a wide variety of places. Taking into account the 100 or so paid posts created from 34 organisations over 8 years, this shows the reality of recent sector and public-policy claims that social enterprise is a strong driver of employment growth.

The number of volunteer posts created more than doubled, suggesting that at the same time these organisations are making a significant contribution to community engagement and participation. Although not directly linked to the financial economy, these elements of the organisations' activities represent an important part of the fabric of functioning communities.

The number of users and direct beneficiaries demonstrates the scope of the positive impact that these organisations are having in their communities.

- Number of paid posts created: 100 plus (from 34 respondents).
- Number volunteer posts created: 235 (plus 500 from one social enterprise: Kikass).
- Number of users direct beneficiaries gained: 24,000 (plus 3 million claimed by Kikass).<sup>40</sup>

#### *Money*

As a result of attending the SSE, organisations gained an average **five-fold increase in turnover**, demonstrating that the objective of both students and the SSE in helping organisations to become financially sustainable is being met. **Sixty-three per cent of those that gave details, receive more than 50 per cent of their turnover from trading activity.**<sup>41</sup>

Twenty-three respondents reported an increase in turnover since graduating. Since 1999 their combined approximate annual turnover at graduation of £598,000 has increased to a combined approximate annual turnover today of £2,955,400. This increase represents  $2,955,400/598,000 = 4.94$ .<sup>42</sup>

The questionnaire data also revealed that seven respondents are unemployed or 'in between' ideas. This is a useful reminder of the precarious and challenging nature of social enterprise – particularly for those community-based social entrepreneurs in areas of high unemployment.

#### *Progress over time*

In order to gain further insight as to how sustainable organisations are over the long term, it is useful to examine a selection of data from the earliest intakes. This shows how the sustainability of the earliest

established organisations in this evaluation continues over the long-term, with 9 out of 11 organisations still in existence from those years, each serving large numbers of users, generating employment and increasing turnover.

Some facts and figures from the 11 fellows of the 1998–99 (first) cohort who responded:<sup>43</sup>

- Nine organisations are still in existence.
- Seven fellows are still involved in their organisations.
- Forty-one paid posts have been created.
- Sixty-one volunteer posts have been created.
- Thousands of customers/users/direct beneficiaries gained.<sup>44</sup>
- Three examples of fellows' organisations' increase in approximate annual turnover since graduation: £5000 / £70,000; £0 / £600,000; £5000 / £150,000

At the same time, we must acknowledge the danger of just using financial figures as the only indicator of sustainability. Although funding is always a key issue for most of these organisations and projects, many thriving organisations had little income from trading. This is a reminder that income from market transactions may not be the most important factor contributing to the sustainability of these organisations; sustainable, effective organisations also demonstrate that determination, persistence and support for the leaders of these organisations generates long term change, too.

## 10.4 Wide-reaching impact

The SSE's theory of change suggests that as well as encouraging sustainable organisations into existence, effective and long-term change means bringing about positive outcomes and impacts for the wider world. Often these are bottom-up solutions to problems (in the sense that they come directly from the community); they address community needs involving a huge range of issues; in particular well-being, social and economic inclusion and generally strengthening communities by building capacity and binding together.

### *Fellows describing their impact*

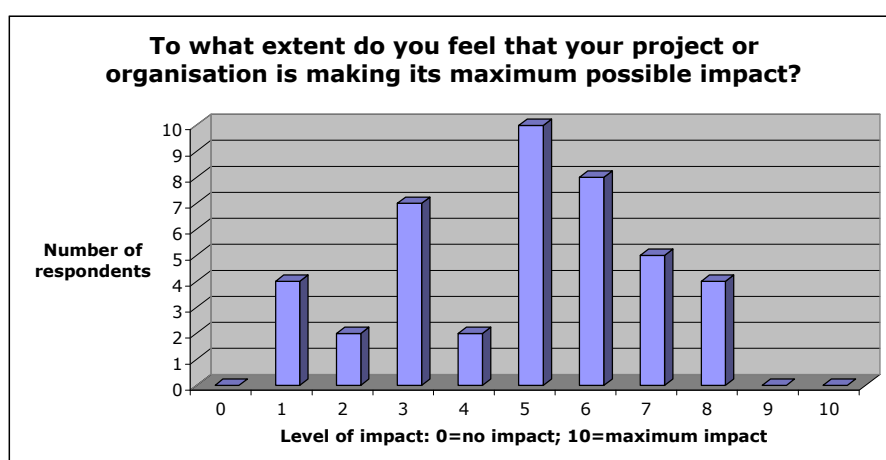
To investigate and understand the long-term change and impacts that the SSE is creating in the wider communities, we asked SSE fellows to tell us their most important indicator (literally their way of knowing) that their organisation was having a positive impact. This provided a perspective from the individuals who are working 'on the ground' as to the nature of long-term change and how it is identified.

From the 44 responses, 16 stated that some form of stakeholder feedback was their most important indicator that their organisation is making a positive impact.<sup>45</sup> Thirteen respondents mentioned some form of output measure, such as "increase in clients" or "training completed" and seven respondents mentioned some form of outcome as their most important indicator.<sup>46</sup> Respondents' comments on outcomes vary widely and are not easily comparable but include measures such as:

*“...when local people are able to take greater control of their own lives”... and “...that there is a slow but perceptual [sic] move away from interpreting the family as 'nuclear' to a wider definition.”.*

A small number of these respondents (7) had undertaken an independent evaluation of their organisation.

Because direct measurement of community impact with evidence from a wider group of stakeholders was not within the scope of this report, we attempted to contribute to the picture by using the questionnaire to draw on the fellows’ own perceptions of their impact. In addition to using case studies we asked our sample of fellows to what extent they felt that their project or organisation was making its “maximum possible impact”. (See Figure 14.)



**Figure 14: Respondents’ views on maximum possible impact (42 respondents)**

In seeking to understand the SSE’s role in making these impacts, we asked respondents whether their view on making their maximum impact had been affected by any of the experiences they had through the SSE and if so, in what way.

Only five respondents suggested that their organisation’s achievement of a positive impact had **not** been affected by any experiences they had had through the SSE. By contrast, the rest of the responses indicated that the SSE had helped significantly; for example, by making them “more ambitious” to make a bigger impact (4), or “more confident” to strive for their maximum positive impact (4) and “more knowledgeable” about how to increase exposure (2). Other respondents noted the benefit of the support they had received from the SSE in terms of how to carry out effective planning and manage the growth of their organisation.

### 10.5 Long-term impact

For the remainder of this section, and to further explore the nature of the long-term change organisations are creating, the report draws upon **case studies** undertaken as part of the evaluation.<sup>47</sup> It reflects the questioning and themes of the case study research on long-term

change, and in doing so draws on fellows own reporting to identify four related findings:

1. SSE fellows and organisations are able to describe the long-term change they are creating in the wider communities they serve. This change is diverse in addressing varied economic, social, environmental issues from a range of perspectives, including ethnicity and gender within a range of locations throughout the UK and internationally.
2. This has led to a diverse range of observable positive outcomes for those communities.
3. These changes also extend to social entrepreneurs reaching out beyond their localities and communities in challenging decision-makers and conventional economic processes and influencing public policy at other scales.
4. The SSE's role in creating this long term change varies, but is significant to all case studies.

### 1) Long-term change addressing diverse needs

The organisations represented by students at the SSE aim to have a positive impact across a wide-range of geographical contexts. Their stories demonstrate a long-term change in the wider community that is truly diverse and representative of the social, economic and environmental needs and issues present in the UK and internationally.

The SSE requires students to nominate their own geographic or thematic community and places no restriction on what this might be. For the SSE fellows, social entrepreneurship and the impacts they create reflect this unbounded approach to long-term change. For Roger Wilson-Hinds of Screenreader, who provides affordable software for blind and partially sighted people, an approach to long-term change for this community must be global in its outlook to have its maximum impact.

*“Long term change – Yes it’s global, it’s really global. If we take this community approach, we can include a massive amount of people. When you go to business school they make the distinction between local or national, but on the web there’s no boundary, it’s just not an issue.”*

In 1997, Christine Townsend set up the Teviot Action Group (TAG) on an isolated and run-down estate in the Poplar Borough of Tower Hamlets. The area was characterised by high crime and unemployment rates and a high percentage of single parents with very few local community resources. For Christine, creating long-term change had to be centred upon a distinct locality in working with a range of problems in that area. This also meant that for her long-term change could only come about through an intimate understanding of the people and the needs of the estate.

*“There are people who fear education, large college buildings and these people need a smaller place where they can come and be part of society, to learn, which we provide. On the estate they see themselves as failures – so they need to be shown how positive things can be – they need that inspiration.”*

For Merlin Matthews of Re-Cycle, his organisation needs to operate at both national and international scales to create the long-term change he would like to achieve. Re-Cycle's mission is to collect and ship second-hand bicycles and parts to Africa. Local partners teach local people repair and maintenance skills, whilst contributing to an improvement of their quality of life in a sustainable manner. In the UK, Re-Cycle works with the probation service, young offenders, prisons, schools, youth with disabilities and volunteers. This involves preparing bicycles for shipment, stripping spare parts and loading containers.

*"We work with partners in Africa and it's saving people there vast amounts of waiting and walking time."*

Back in the UK, Rahma Abdalla, a refugee from conflict in Somalia, knows all about the importance of allowing time for building links within communities. As a fellow from SSE's East London programme in 2005, she now works on a community-based project in London working with other refugees. She talks of some of the specific outcomes coming about as a result of her different approach to arranging community activities, in particular:

*"There was a huge misunderstanding between elders and young people but they are now coming together since taking them on the trip. The difference was all going as a family together....The project is teaching people how to do things for themselves".*

## 2) Diverse range of positive outcomes

The variety of geographical contexts in which the social entrepreneurs and organisations work means that these organisations bring about a range of benefits, from transport solutions and training benefits, to health and well-being as well as environmental sustainability.

One of the impacts of the TAG has been a completely new transport infrastructure for the area, brought about by successfully campaigning for both a bus route and a Docklands Light Railway (DLR) line to the estate. This was achieved through a highly effective stakeholder-based approach to change.

*"Everyone designed the paths and station and we involved the schools, so it's [as much] about a sense of ownership as [it is about] our station. It's a fantastic achievement."*

Roger Wilson-Hinds has a clear idea of the outcomes and impacts he is creating, beyond measuring the outputs of Screenreader's work. For him this involves looking at the much bigger picture in terms of delivering well-being in a different context.

*"The long-term impact of our work extends far beyond just number of jobs created or training received of course – it's a massive ripple for that person and their well-being. We can't control that – we've rubbed the lamp and here's the genie and away we go! We have to find organisations that will support local people at grassroots level. We've set up the software and our next target is to do this – that's long-term change."*

For other organisations, the long-term change they create may also be about environmental impacts. As Merlin Matthews suggests:

*“There are long term benefits in the UK with the environment – it’s refurbishing to create ... bikes which use less energy than buying new ones. It doesn’t do anyone any favours to be buying a cheap, poorly made bike to throw away.”*

### 3) Reaching out to engage decision-makers

The long-term impacts also extend beyond some representations of bottom up communities delivering local needs. There is evidence that this picture is more complex in that some fellows are seeking to counteract disempowerment by ‘jumping scales’ to assert their specific concerns and to challenge power and influence public policy. They aim to do this at local and even national and international scales and in turn shape the wider structural economic, social and environmental processes that affect change in their chosen community *and* in other communities.

We have already asserted the existence and importance of personal transformations for individuals in terms of both practical skills and confidence. For Christine Townsend, the personal transformation she experienced whilst at the SSE and the skills she learnt have been integral to her ability to engage with local authorities and others in seeking to influence both the decisions made that affect the estate, but also those that might affect other places in the future.

*“It’s absolutely about talking to people from outside the estate and engaging them. I’m very well known in Tower Hamlets! I speak to all authorities; I wouldn’t have been able to do that if I hadn’t been to the school. They’re the same as me; I can speak to anybody now. I was meeting people in pin-striped suits who talk using jargon and it was very intimidating, but SSE gave me the presentation skills to go and do that. The policy makers then change their behaviour to other estates. Just by being in the room - you are there and they need to recognise you.”*

And so to Screenreader where Roger Wilson-Hinds describes a similar drive to create long-term change that reaches out to communicate their experiences to policy-makers.

*“I regard that as a key part of what I need to do. If I can get the Cabinet Office to stop talking and listen for a minute then we might get somewhere. But they’re stuck in this mindset and talking to the RNIB and thinking that if you have a public library, they’ll have to buy a very expensive machine so they can then go ahead, tick their box and put it in a cupboard. We’re not an opinion leader though – yet – and so we’re not able to easily influence.”*

### 4) The SSE’s role in creating long-term impacts

In evaluating and investigating the nature of the long-term change taking place in the wider communities, and in order to obtain further clarity of impact whilst considering the ‘deadweight’ involved (i.e. what would have happened anyway), it is important to ask whether these organisations would have been set up and whether the long-

term changes would have occurred regardless of coming into contact with the SSE.

The case study research indicates that this depends upon the social entrepreneur and organisation in question. In all cases fellows indicated that the SSE played an important role. James Greenshields of Media for Development (MFD) indicated that in order to create long-term change...

*“Long-term support found at SSE is absolutely required - inspiration, encouragement over the long-term too.”*

For some, the SSE acts as what can be described as a ‘fine-tuning greenhouse’, working with individuals, creating personal transformation and organisational change that allows them to go on to achieve a greater impact than they might have otherwise had. As Merlin Matthews of Re-Cycle explains:

*“If SSE hadn’t been in existence, Re-cycle would be similar to how it is now but we wouldn’t be as far down the road in terms of progress on all fronts including long-term impacts.”*

One example of a more specific way in which this greenhouse helps organisations to grow and improve their impacts is provided by James Greenshields (MFD):

*“We were looking at the possibility of replicating the model in other prisons; changes needed to happen in MFD and we didn’t have the infrastructural capacity. SSE helped with infrastructural changes – funding systems and in the UK environment as our previous work had been international as well as with our work with partners – our work is very much a collaboration of partners.”*

Although, as MFD indicates, linking this work to particular long-term changes can be complex and requires further research.

*“It’s a difficult question to answer, but there is perhaps a line to the long-term changes through that infrastructural change. Yes, SSE helped in the positioning you could say – and they contributed to the legal and governance structures and the networks and partnerships that we’ve established.”*

For others, the SSE’s role in creating long-term change is more than fine-tuning and becomes the difference between existence and non-existence. In these cases in particular, the role of long-term sensitive support in creating impacts becomes more apparent. For Christine Townsend, this support was the difference practically and emotionally.

*“No one told me about the child protection policy and all the other complex issues involved. That learning was invaluable– it can be very lonely – SSE gave me support.”*

*“I was always giving support to people on the estate and in setting up TAG, but I needed support myself as well. Everybody needs support.”*

This support to create long-term change also emanates from the ‘community of practice’ amongst SSE fellows as well as the organisation itself.

*"I call fellows, they call me. We all share and over the long term too. It's support you don't pay for....If I'm having a problem, I can still go to SSE, I have a mentor for life. I can go to them for anything. You become one big family, someone to talk to, someone to share ideas with – it's absolutely about long term support that you need."*

The creation of long-term change is not just about improving social, economic or environmental issues, but also about halting or slowing down processes of decay or deterioration that would become worse, or develop anew if they weren't in existence already. As Christine says:

*"I dread to think what the estate would be like if SSE wasn't in existence. Regeneration wouldn't be here yet. It's absolutely stopped things getting worse as well as improving [them]."*

The SSE's approach to long-term support is once again endorsed by feedback from fellows working on the ground. Rahma told us:

*"It takes a long time. I have been working with my group for 2 years or more. They have improved a lot but there is still a long way to go. 10 of them have recently passed their NVQs".*

For those 10 people their NVQ's represent the start of 10 new journeys that in a sense started with Rahma's involvement with the SSE. To an extent, for as long as they are supported by Rahma, that relationship continues.

## **10.6 Social transformation**

In the overall theory of change, social transformation is one of the key long-term changes for wider communities that represent an important aim for the SSE.

*"The success of a school is tied to the extent to which it is creating sustainable solutions and enhanced practical learning and confidence for its community. At a secondary level, SSE's aim is that participants will pass on their social entrepreneurial approach to others in their immediate community. They do this by demonstrating confidence and success in their community, by recognising and encouraging other people with the necessary potential in their community to develop their capabilities and also by recognising other issues where a social entrepreneurial approach will create a better community solution and then applying their understanding and skills."<sup>48</sup>*

### **Passing it on**

To an extent this means creating practitioner-led change through fellows being inspirational role-models for others. For some of the organisations this is also their *raison d'être* and the main focus of their long-term impacts in the wider communities in which they work. Christine Townsend and TAG strive for their long-term impacts by reproducing the SSE's own spirit of personal transformation and also by adapting the SSE's own approach to learning:

*"We've got so many volunteers and we all learn by doing. It's making the community understand the project. What's*

*important is for them to know they're not alone. If they have an idea – yes! I can do it. And even if it fails you have to pick yourself up and you will have learnt new skills and changed anyway. That's something I learnt from the SSE and passed on. I am a witness speaker as a manager and director of a regeneration company, but if you haven't got that support, it's a problem."*

As the example from TAG shows, skills and capabilities are being passed on to the wider communities and social entrepreneurs are recognising others in their communities who could benefit from developing their skills and receiving encouragement.

*"Giving someone freedom to bring their ideas out of themselves and support them in doing that is crucial. You couldn't recognise my secretary from 4 years ago. She looked old, with a walking stick, made one trip to get her shopping, that was it. She joined Bingo, learnt new skills and now she's a completely different person and became my secretary. We've learnt from the stories of failures heard at the SSE too and that it's not always the persons fault."*

This also involved a direct use of skills learnt and approaches to learning experienced at the SSE, and in particular the action learning sets to enhance practical learning that was appropriate and relevant to her community.

*"SSE learning like the ALS is something you can take into the community and share. It enabled me to bring the ALS to our organisation and community and used that as a way of teaching people here."*

Similarly, Rahma Abdalla speaks of how it is important to pass on not only the ability but the will to take action to other people in her community. Although outwardly we can suggest that it is her confidence that inspires others, she says that it is about identifying that they both share ownership of a goal. She describes this simply by saying to them "this is not just for me, it's for you." Her approach works as, people who have been directly involved in her project do go on to create change:

*"One lady I worked with from Sure Start was inspired by my project and has now set up her own project [ ...] Also three girls are spending their year out from education volunteering for the project to set up their own smaller projects within Ambition, including childcare."*

Roger Wilson-Hinds at Screenreader highlights how this social transformation and encouragement of other individuals can also extend by passing on the socially-entrepreneurial approach to others.

*"It's the heart of it. If we can encourage others at grassroots level to do this – in the middle of Northamptonshire, if we can get someone there to sell the right to use it to organisations – because it's free to individuals, if we can get them to sell it and offer their services as a trainer or tutor – then that's brilliant. It's a different way of doing things, and the whole of the blind industry is against us – the charities, the grants – for them it's very expensive and it costs a lot of money. That's what it's all about."*

Passing this approach on to other people with the necessary potential in their community is undoubtedly challenging. This is especially the case if the goals are to develop their capabilities and to recognise other issues where a social entrepreneurial approach will create a better community solution, as well as knowing how to apply their understanding and skills. Screenreader wants to empower individuals and partners to develop their own businesses using the software, with further long-term impacts hoped for as a result.

*“We’re almost there. We have eight people who we’re training. We’ve booked our first session. That will happen, I’m confident of that, but it takes time. If I can get to the stage when I know of someone in New Delhi, who’s blind but has worked with a partner of ours, used the software, received training and now has a job at a call centre – then that’s brilliant.”*

In being clear about the social transformation taking place, we suggest that it is more (but not exclusively) focused on the aim of encouraging and developing capabilities in others in a general way (perhaps by example) as opposed to directly teaching specific skills. Although there will be exceptions, care should be taken in suggesting that students directly pass on their socially entrepreneurial approach to others who then follow a similar path in setting up social enterprises to combat new problems. This case study research and the survey did not bring out any specific or established examples of this happening, although several organisations were developing in this manner. As MFD indicates:

*“The listener is not just a passive recipient of information; the radio programmes can influence behaviour and thought. With our educational prison project, the aim is absolutely a long-term impact and was taken from our work in developing countries, but we’re certainly not saying “you should come out of prison and do something ‘socially responsible’” - that’s for them to decide. However, I’ve recommended one employee to the SSE who has benefited from them and I’m hoping to do so with someone else. So the relationship continues.”<sup>49</sup>*

## **The role of the SSE**

From the evidence presented in the case studies, the role that the SSE has in social transformation is very similar to that outlined above for long-term changes. For many organisations social transformation is at the heart of what they do. Fellows, by their example, challenge an attitude of dependence. They do this predominantly by seeking to pass on the SSE personal development approach and inspiration to others they meet in their community or field of work. The social entrepreneurs came to the SSE with the passion to bring about this social transformation.

For some the SSE’s approach to learning and development equip social entrepreneurs to pass on this approach to their community in ways that they otherwise would not be able to, so that (as Christine Townsend says),

*“It’s long term; after me they’ll be another one and another one and another one.”*

In summary, SSE fellows are able to report that they are helping to create effective, sustainable organisations in a wide range of thematic and geographical communities. Furthermore, the stories represented by the case studies indicate that SSE fellows are creating real long-term outcomes and impacts for the communities, economies and environments that they serve and that they are inspiring and passing-on this approach to others in their communities.

# 11. Conclusions and recommendations

## Overview of this section

For a conclusion, we return to the two overarching questions of this evaluation. First, the intrinsic question about whether the School is fulfilling its objectives for supporting individuals (i.e. doing what it says on the tin), and secondly what can we conclude about the role of the SSE in creating sustainable change in communities? The primary purpose of this evaluation was to test the efficacy and transformative effect of the SSE approach and methodology both on the social entrepreneurs who go through their programmes, on the organisations they are associated with and on the communities they serve.

The report has followed the steps in the SSE's theory of change in order to establish not only *if*, but understand *how* what the SSE is doing is achieving its objectives. Drawing on the material highlighted throughout the re-telling of the SSE story and the findings of nef's evaluation, we take each research question in turn, identifying the important headlines, outlining the implications and offering some recommendations that the SSE may wish to take into account for future practice and policy development.

### 11.1 Is the SSE unique as compared to other organisations doing similar things?

We asked fellows why they had chosen the SSE over other institutions and the largest group of respondents (21/52) answered that it was because of its unique features. For the earliest graduates, this was because the SSE was the *only* organisation available to support social entrepreneurs when it first began, blazing a trail that others have since followed. For the later students, the indications are that its unique offers are the ***depth and the breadth of personal support, the inspirational mixture of people and lasting support networks.***

While no other organisation offers the action learning model and programme offered by the SSE, other organisations share ground with the SSE. However, there are some significant differences. For example, those organisations that provide support to individuals as managers or staff of organisations, or in starting-up organisations, often offer witness sessions with experienced practitioners but the

SSE's approach of coupling this with a focus on the individual's journey and self-actualisation through action learning sets it apart from these.

Likewise, those whose focus is on developing new businesses and helping existing enterprises to grow (the Business Support sector) play more of a signposting role and lack the peer-to-peer support, co-learning and personal skills development that the SSE maintains at the core of its offer.

Finally, academic education and support interventions often require a first degree or equivalent experience and may focus more on a book-learning approach that is less suited to some entrepreneurs' needs. Whilst for some, qualifications are important, those who chose the SSE may have found them not to be essential or important to the work they were interested in undertaking.

Detailed understanding of the SSE's competitors' own objectives and access to evaluations of their long-term impacts would provide proper comparative evidence of uniqueness. However, it is clear that there are significant differences in the approach offered by other training, support and education establishments and that of the SSE because of the way that the latter brings together such a wide range of specialised elements into a single programme.

## **11.2 Is the SSE helping the students to meet their own objectives?**

Many social enterprises are under harsh financial pressures, and individuals can feel themselves personally isolated and find themselves without the necessary skills and contacts to fulfil their potential. To be truly effective these organisations may need strategic development advice, financial support and personal support over the organisation's life, and not just at the start. This support needs to be of a sensitive nature to address multifaceted problems without assuming that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach will suit.

### ***Addressing students' needs***

In response to these needs the SSE aims to meet students' objectives, in particular for building their confidence, credibility and circle of contacts and thereby contributing to the growth of their project or organisation and its financial sustainability. The programme acts as a crucible for forging project ideas in an environment that provides both support and freedom to explore. Students are challenged and their projects tested and strengthened so they are more likely to be credible and sustainable. SSE fellows' organisations are over one-and-a-half times more likely to be in existence after eight years than conventional businesses.<sup>50</sup>

This evaluation found that the SSE is meeting the diverse needs and objectives of students across the UK from a wide range of thematic and geographical areas. Ninety per cent of students felt that the programme they undertook was well suited to their needs. Whilst on the programme fellows consistently acknowledged the success of action learning sets, expert witness sessions, project visits, personal tutors and the residential blocks as well as the influence the programme had had for both their personal and organisational

development. nef's evaluation shows that different learning styles reach students differently. This is a key to the SSE's success – it offers a range of ways to learn, as well as a range of people to learn *with* and to learn *from*.

### ***Providing a supportive environment***

The SSE provides a supportive environment for students giving them a space to reflect and to be with like-minded people who understand them: 93 per cent of students agreed that the SSE provided them with a supportive environment; 92 per cent of students agreed that they were provided with space to reflect.

Social entrepreneurs are often assumed to have inexhaustible well-springs of energy, ideas and ability to deal with multifaceted dynamic problems. Whilst many have these characteristics, the experience of SSE fellows demonstrates that genuine long-term change benefits from the sensitive long-term support that the SSE provides. The need for this support is recognised elsewhere in sector as the LBS Social Entrepreneurship Monitor report also draws attention to the need for "sustained attitudinal support" – 'sustained' because it is amongst the more established social enterprises that doubt and fear of failure emerge as barriers to progress.

The SSE also actively generates personal and organisational support through the community and network of social entrepreneurs that emerges from working in action learning sets and by coming into contact with other fellows. This additional support (as well as providing opportunities for identifying and accessing financial support) is crucial to the work that many social entrepreneurs carry out. The nature of the personal support delivered by the SSE either directly through elements of the programme, or indirectly through the contact networks it helps to create is flexible, adaptable and sensitive to the needs of each individual student.

### ***Building credibility and confidence***

Students who attended felt energised, inspired, and confident to act in relation to their project idea. Association with and experience of a programme at the SSE can improve the ability of individuals to influence decisions made by funding organisations, not only through engaging new contacts, but through a growth in confidence and understanding about how to work effectively as part of a funder/grantee relationship. The SSE opens doors and increases the capacity of organisations to effect change, giving students better positioning to funders, local authorities and other key decision-makers.

We found that there was a significant change in the level of confidence students attributed to their involvement with the SSE: **88 per cent agreed that whilst attending the SSE they experienced a growth in confidence; 60 per cent agreed that their confidence continued to rise even after having left the SSE** due to the long-lasting support network, friends and contacts made whilst there. The atmosphere of "can do" support, with something as fundamental as someone to believe in them can make all the difference to whether a student achieves their next step.

### ***Strengthening contacts, peers and networks***

Students attending the SSE make useful contacts: 53 per cent of the fellows questioned made more than ten; 76 per cent more than 4. With networks and contacts playing a crucial role in the success of social entrepreneurs, as well as providing a robust forum for testing ideas and engendering a spirit of mutual accountability, the benefits they bring are a vital part of the SSE's theory of change.

Through meeting fellow students, expert witnesses and established entrepreneurs on project visits (many of whom are themselves fellows of the school) individuals at the SSE often come into contact with people they would otherwise not have met, thus providing them with exposure to a range of different backgrounds and minds – existing fellows appreciate the importance of this for their own learning.

Likewise, the other students in any cohort represent a rich and diverse source of contacts. These are particularly important as peer-to-peer relationships are known to be a vital source of advice and support for anyone assimilating new information or working in new and unfamiliar environments. At the SSE the year-long programme and the intense nature of the learning experience can contribute to forging these stronger friendships and contacts.

For the students who continue as active members of the Fellowship there exists a set of networks and sense of community long after their time studying at the SSE. They are able to draw on this resource for a quick chat or to gain inspiration, or more tangible benefits such as commissioning or delivering 'in kind' work and paid employment. In this way relationships continue to be useful after the SSE programme has finished.

### **11.3 Is the SSE meeting its own objectives, particularly in terms of maintaining itself as a sustainable organisation that grows and adapts (described by the SSE as a 'cycle of growth')?**

We have already described how the SSE programme is meeting the needs and objectives of students, and that it does so for individuals from across a wide range of geographical and socio-economic backgrounds: **90 per cent of fellows felt that the programme they undertook was well suited to their needs**, clearly demonstrating that the SSE is achieving a key step in its overall theory of change.

The elements of the programme are able to meet the many and varied needs of the students, both in terms of the sort of information they wish to find out, but also by being sensitive and flexible to the many learning styles that such diverse groups of individuals will represent. Whilst not every element will suit everyone, different elements work at different times for different people across the variety of areas where the SSE operates.

The Quality Standards Log and Best Practice Guide across the nationwide network of schools are important new additions to the SSE's model strengthening its internal management processes. Future evaluations can, and should, focus on the effects of introducing this into the SSE system. When used effectively, such a

process can strengthen consistency of delivery, as well as representing an important way to challenge and test those principles upon which the SSE is founded.

It is clear that the SSE is able to maintain what it calls a cycle of growth and deliver the programme in a spirit of co-operation and learning amongst a dedicated team of staff and associates. The cycle of growth is reflected by the gradual accumulation of contacts (and therefore experience) that results from engaging staff and associates who are themselves SSE fellows. Their knowledge and expertise then feeds back into delivering elements of the SSE programme, for example by providing expert witness sessions and hosting project visits and they are able to identify with the students' values and needs. As such, the advice they are able to offer is timely and relevant. This increasing body of knowledge and expertise is able to contribute to the growth and sustainability of a next generation of organisations, as well as contributing to their impact in wider communities.

#### **11.4 Is the SSE meeting its objectives in terms of bringing about sustainable, effective change in communities?**

SSE fellows' organisations are alive and surviving, growing, reaching out and are beginning to create a social transformation by inspiring and transforming others. Most significantly these organisations are:

- *Alive and surviving*

Eighty-five per cent of respondents stated that the project or organisation they were working on whilst at the SSE was still in existence. SSE fellows' organisations are over one-and-a-half times more likely to be in existence after eight years than conventional businesses.<sup>51</sup>

- *Growing*

These organisations are experiencing financial and organisational growth in a variety of ways, such as by generating employment, creating volunteer posts, reaching thousands of users, effectively trading and on average gaining a five-fold increase in turnover.

- *Reaching out*

SSE fellows and organisations are able to see that they are creating long-term change in the wider communities they serve. This change is diverse in addressing economic, social, environmental geographical contexts from a range of perspectives, including ethnicity and gender resulting in a diverse range of positive outcomes for those communities.

These changes also extend to social entrepreneurs reaching out beyond their localities and communities in challenging decision-makers and conventional economic processes and influencing public policy at other scales. Jumping scales in this way allows them to influence the wider economic processes that affect change in their chosen community *and* in others – thus further enhancing their capacity to affect change and

therefore the SSE's impact. The Teviot Action Group case study illustrates that this is possible.

- *Self seeding*

SSE fellows can see that they are inspiring others in their immediate community. This is done by demonstrating confidence and success in their community and by recognising and encouraging other people with the necessary potential in their community to develop their own capabilities.

The SSE's approach to personal transformation means that social entrepreneurs both benefit themselves and are better placed to pass on this focus and personal transformation in their own projects and communities. One key way is by promoting volunteering. With 235 volunteer posts created from amongst those fellows surveyed, there is evidence that social entrepreneurs through their activities provide a focus for volunteering activity within their communities of influence.<sup>52</sup>

However, the evidence from this report suggests that social enterprises should not be measured as a growth engine, or primarily as employment generators. SSE fellows do generate paid employment for their communities, but this employment should not be seen as the only major indicator of success. Other ways of knowing include the things that fellows have themselves identified as their own indications that they are making a difference. These include positive feedback from stakeholder groups (users, customers and other beneficiaries) and as well as the visible positive difference in the communities in which they are operating such as when local people are able to take greater control of their own lives.

### **11.5 Can meeting or not meeting these objectives be attributed to the SSE?**

Whilst full consideration of all attribution issues is not within the scope of this evaluation, it is clear that for some social entrepreneurs the SSE acts as a 'fine-tuning greenhouse', giving them the ability to move forward with their project in a variety of ways and create a greater impact than they would have otherwise had. For others, the SSE is nothing less than the difference between the existence and non-existence of their project or organisation representing a turning point or a profound change within their own lives.

#### ***Some areas to note***

As well as the many positive numbers that emerge from the questionnaire to fellows, this study has identified a huge body of qualitative evidence in the form of comments and suggestions that complement the quantitative data and make a strong case for attributing positive change directly to their involvement in the programme.

As with the specific, most challenging elements of the programme such as mentoring and the action learning sets, a great deal of the SSE's success relies on personal style, and the right people coming together at the right time. Inevitably not every group will gel, but the fact that it appears to be successful for the majority demonstrates an

effective, tried and tested match between the students selected and the style and content of delivery.

The findings presented in sections 8 and 9 strongly demonstrate that the SSE meets the needs of the social entrepreneurs and the communities they serve. There are, however, a few areas worthy of note as part of an ongoing assessment of the SSE's approach which could be seen to represent potential barriers to the SSE achieving its objectives. A couple of respondents found that whilst useful, the Fellowship didn't provide a deep enough network of support after graduation. For those who find their action learning sets difficult or who are more geographically isolated from the schools and major urban centres, the Fellowship system will need to work especially well to provide an inclusive and comprehensive resource. Another point (mentioned in section 9.4) was made by a small number of fellows who expressed a desire to have more of the practical lessons in the mix of action and reflection, particularly as a way to focus the learning potential from the expert witness sessions.

Trust is a fragile yet essential commodity for any business relationship. Most fellows in this evaluation expressed confidence in sharing their business ideas with fellow students, but one comment also demonstrates that the learning environment the SSE creates is not divorced from the real world:

*"I started out with a goal, plan of action, strong incentive and a degree of optimism. The SSE introduced me to various ways of attempting to reach my goal and, the more I learned, the more confident I became of being able to achieve this. Unfortunately, what started as a supportive group became extremely competitive towards the end of the course and, whilst it was a valuable lesson to find that social enterprise was just as (if not more so) cut-throat as commercial enterprise, I became less confident of support."* [SSE Fife fellow 2004]

Of the specific programme elements, this evaluation acknowledges that different elements suit different learning styles, and that although on the whole the response was more than satisfactory, the action learning sets and mentoring sessions still remain a challenging part of the programme to deliver. These elements both rely on sensitive facilitation, and a very subtle matching of personalities along with an awareness of the most appropriate times to intervene. It has been suggested that mentoring sessions are likely to be more effective the later they come in the programme.

### ***Understanding attribution***

The SSE maintains a commitment to better understand the effects of its endeavours, particularly in understanding the true extent to which community impact can be attributed to students' involvement in a programme. While engaging directly with the communities on the ground was beyond the scope of this evaluation, it was able to draw significantly on self-reporting of wider community impact by the fellows who responded to the questionnaire and who provided material for the case studies. Although self-reporting provides a vital part of the story, it represents a proxy for the next layer of impact. A fuller sense of the impact being created will be found through

exploration of the stories the members of those served communities have to tell.

Additionally, the nature of the impact in communities can be further clarified through a better understanding of the term. It was clear that not many fellows were able to offer formal or informal evaluations of their endeavours, and that the sample of responses represented a varying and less than comprehensive knowledge of what is meant by impact and how to best communicate it. The SSE will be able to demonstrate wider community impact for future cohorts by encouraging a more strategic approach to building the capacity of projects and organisations to commission their own evaluations and tell their own stories better.

So that this can result in useful information filtering back to the SSE, this will entail a combination of at least three things.

1. Selling the idea to students as part of the programme that measurement is more than just an add-on for funders, but actually represents a vital part of any project's path to success.
2. Spending time as part of the programme discussing and signposting different methods for knowing and evidencing that they are having an effect. In particular, this could mean even better equipping of students with the knowledge, tools and resources to take the first steps to choosing meaningful indicators (meaningful to them and their stakeholders) and implementing practices for monitoring them.
3. Establishing a mechanism whereby graduates maintain their contact with the Fellowship and the school through the re-telling of the stories that their evaluative practices identify, and are able do so using the tools and methods explored and learnt about during the programme.

## 11.6 Is the SSE good value for money?

This evaluation can begin to give an indication of whether the SSE is good value for money by considering some of the areas where the SSE helps students and their organisations create value relative to the amount of money invested in the training for those students. The cost of putting a student through the SSE programme varies across the UK schools and by year and by intake. Based upon SSE data across these variables, an average cost per student across the network of schools is **£6,000**.<sup>53</sup>

### *Jobs created*

Although we have already pointed out that job creation in itself is not always the most important outcome resulting from the SSE's activities, when it is noticed and figures are combined with other data it can provide a helpful indication of positive changes taking place for people in the communities served by the supported fellows and their organisations. Using the estimated cost per student and measuring the potential monetary value of the jobs created by the SSE as compared with that money invested, the value would be a ratio of **1:1.5 (£6,000:£9,152)**. This is based on the evaluation findings of 100

jobs created by 34 fellows' organisations between 1998 and 2006 and the assumption of an average third sector wage of £22,879.<sup>54</sup>

Over a longer timescale, this investment increases its rewards in terms of jobs created and value for individuals. For those organisations who graduated in 1999, 35 jobs have been created cumulatively by the 5 organisations by 2006 when this survey was carried out; in total, an average of 5 per year. This yields a ratio of 1:6.3 that suggests that for every £6,000 invested, £38,131 is received in wages<sup>55</sup> through jobs created, with a proportion of this also benefiting the Government in terms of income tax and national insurance contributions.

### ***Turnover: value for money for students and the communities their organisations serve***

Evaluation data shows that since 1999 fellows' organisations have together increased their cumulative turnover by £2,357,400.<sup>56</sup>

This gives a ratio of **1:17** and suggests that for £6,000 invested in each student, there is a return in terms of organisational turnover of £102,496.

These two indications of whether the SSE is value for money highlight in monetary terms the large benefits to the SSE's stakeholders from the investment of £6,000 in each student. In answering whether the SSE is good value for money, it should also be made clear that this answer does not include those benefits to individuals, organisations and communities of outcomes that are difficult to monetise such as personal development and associated organisational change. This means that this calculation, whilst providing a useful idea, does not reflect the full value created by the SSE, which is also explored in non-monetary terms in the rest of this report. In addition to this, it is also important to remember that not all of the change created may be attributed to the SSE's intervention – figures above are purely indicative and not adjusted for 'deadweight' (i.e. what would have happened anyway).

### **Further research on value for money**

Describing such a calculation is meant less as a direct statement of financial benefit, and more as a starting point for a conversation about what such a calculation should include and, therefore, by extension, what is most important for the organisation to measure.

To build upon this understanding, there will be other areas that the SSE may wish to conduct further research into in order to collect additional monetary outcome indicators. This might include data on students that come to the SSE who are unemployed and collecting welfare benefit or how many people are employed by the fellows' organisations who are collecting welfare benefit in order to analyse government savings. Further research into the amount of funding or investment students secure, or work gained as a result of useful contacts made and brokering opportunities whilst at the SSE could also further demonstrate the SSE's value for money in terms of further income gained by organisations.

## **11.7 What does this evaluation say about some of the primary critiques of the SSE's approach to supporting**

## individuals and creating change in the world and social enterprise more broadly?

There exist several well-known critiques of the SSE's as well as more general critiques of the broader contribution of social enterprise to society and the economy. This evaluation does not attempt to provide a comprehensive engagement with each one, but our findings provide information that can effectively address some of the critiques of the SSE's approach as well as contribute to the wider debate.

### *Accountability*

For some, social entrepreneurs are heroic individualists, unaccountable to the communities they claim to serve and driven by an individualist's approach to change, without having real engagement with that community. Individuals at the SSE are accepted on the programme on the basis of being able to demonstrate ownership and personal experience or understanding of the issues that their initiative is aiming to address. While this ownership is important it can also represent a peril – that of taking too much ownership and becoming a lone crusader.

Once on the programme, however, students learn the importance of networks, teams and contacts in order to achieve their goals. They also come into contact with people who may have different backgrounds and viewpoints that can challenge and test their approaches, and potentially help to check this tendency through peer review. Essentially, SSE fellows are accountable to one another throughout the programme, which may, in turn, serve to ensure a greater degree of collaboration in future. While this was not specifically tested in this evaluation, it can be pursued further in future rounds.

### *Flexibility*

For others, there is a common danger of a one-size-fits-all approach that pays no attention to geography and difference, presuming that what will work in one context will apply in another. This, it is argued, is often enforced through unequal, destructive power relationships in which perceived experts set the way to do things to students, regardless of their differing knowledge of the communities' needs or individual project's challenges. Our findings suggest that the SSE's approach effectively addresses an individual's diverse needs, each arising from different contexts. The focus on personal development ensures that the individual and the organisation have the opportunity to grow organically according to their particular challenges rather than through a rigid 'tick-box' approach to each issue.

Furthermore, the cycle of growth ensures that staff and students have an understanding of each other beyond the 'expert/student' relationship. Many of the staff have been students themselves and so traditional boundaries are dissolved. The SSE also provides a safe and trusting space in which to learn. **The absence of a formal qualification enhances the spirit of freedom and flexibility that is vital to the SSE's approach.**

One further common critique is that the SSE's personal development approach is sometimes (rather flippantly) referred to as being 'woolly

minded' with an over-emotional focus, and therefore not effective for creating meaningful or lasting change. The SSE focuses on personal development for a good reason – it is this level of attitudinal, confidence-building support that can represent the difference between success and failure for an initiative that is relying on the inspiration and dedication of an individual to make it happen. The success rate of the SSE fellows' organisations highlights the real benefit of this approach.

### ***From local to national and beyond***

Some of the broader debates and critiques surround structural economic issues. There is a view that community action will not be enough when the decisions and processes of regional, national and international institutions and economies constrain or proscribe what will or will not work in local areas and shape local economies.

As well as undergoing personal transformations and strengthening their organisations, some SSE fellows have shown that they also *take purposive human action* to challenge the status quo of wider social and economic processes, sometimes simply by bringing people together who might not otherwise have done so, and by making representations where previously there had not been a voice for a particular group of people. Inevitably these emerge as the high-profile projects and individuals, who although represent a vital part of the social entrepreneurial culture, should not distract attention from the larger group of low-flying individuals whose combination of individual initiatives can equally bring about a seismic effect.

This evaluation has found that whilst social entrepreneurs are working locally yet facing challenges that are produced by processes beyond their immediate sphere of control, some fellows are also scale jumping and actively seeking to shape and change public policy at local and even national and international levels.<sup>57</sup> It is possible (and demonstrated so by the example of Teviot Action Group and others) that local action can help shape the wider economic processes that affect change in their chosen community and beyond. And so we must say that there is evidence that the bottom-up local-solutions-to-local-problems picture is much more complex.

### ***Being clear on the social enterprise promise***

In view of the contribution that social entrepreneurs can make to increasing community engagement and volunteering activity, recent policy measures and political discourse surrounding the 'respect agenda' highlights the kind of role the SSE and social entrepreneurs can play in contributing to effective personal transformation of neighbourhoods. However, it would be unwise to assume that this is reason enough to encourage a shift of responsibility from the state, the education system or familial social capital relationships onto social entrepreneurs in creating societies of respect. The causes of violence and other manifestations of perverse social capital are multifaceted and solutions need to work as such.

In *End of Millennium*, academic Manuel Castells uses a cosmic metaphor to identify a number of areas of social exclusion across the planet, "*multiple black holes of informational capitalism*", that for a variety of reasons lead, for the people trapped in them "to a

*downward spiral of poverty, then dereliction and finally irrelevance until or unless a countervailing force, including people's revolt against their condition, reverses the trend".<sup>58</sup>*

The SSE captures this spirit to reverse such trends in all these areas identified; locally, nationally and internationally through a process of personal transformation, organisational development and the creation of a community of social entrepreneurs along with engendering support networks that can work on a long-term basis to create wider and lasting change.

# Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Table 8 'UK Survival Rates up to 10 Years' in, UK Survival Rate Figures, Businesses registering for VAT between 1994 and 2003, Small Business Service Analytical Unit, February 2006.

<http://www.sbs.gov.uk/sbsgov/action/layer?topicId=7000011767>

<sup>2</sup> Approximate cumulative annual turnover at graduation of 23 organisations (who described turnover): £598,000. Approximate cumulative annual turnover today of 23 organisations: £2,955,400.  $2,955,400 / 598,000 = 4.942$  (Divided by 23 for 'average' turnover increase = 102,496)

<sup>3</sup> To calculate the unit cost the SSE took the total London School costs (less any subcontracting) and divided them by the number of students on programme that year. If it spans financial years the SSE allocated students on a pro-rata basis. As of 8 June 2006.

<sup>4</sup> This is based on the evaluation findings of 100 jobs created by 34 fellows' organisations between 1998 and 2006 and the assumption of an average third sector wage. Per year jobs created = 100 divided by the 34 organisations, divided by 7 years = 0.4 jobs per year. Average third sector wage of £22879 – *Third Sector Magazine*, 27 July 2005.

<sup>5</sup> This figure does not include reductions for tax contributions and National Insurance.

<sup>6</sup> Based on 23 responses.

<sup>7</sup> **Scale jumping.** This term is borrowed from geographers' work on scale and in particular the work of Neil Smith. For example, see Smith N. (1993) 'Homeless/Global: Scaling Places' in Bird J, Curtis B, Putnam T, Robertson G and Tickner L (eds) *Mapping the futures: local cultures, global change*, pp. 87-119. Routledge: New York.

<sup>8</sup> Quality is a term used to describe a high-level of functioning or excellence in the various aspects of an organisation – how it is run, the goods it creates and services it delivers. This can be measured according to external standards or can be seen as to the extent to which a product or service satisfies the expectations of the stakeholders.

Quality can be defined differently by different stakeholders or groups: the organisation itself and its stakeholders can decide what 'quality' looks like and set standards for the organisation to uphold; an external body or organisation may set standards for the quality of an organisation's products or how an organisation does things (process) or how the organisation makes or provides things (products or services); an umbrella or membership organisation representing a whole 'sector' or group of similar organisations can set standards for that group of organisations.

<sup>9</sup> Text from the SSE's own descriptive materials.

<sup>10</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2987704.stm>

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- <sup>11</sup> There is evidence of this in Gillinson S and O’Leary D (2006) *Working progress – how to connect young people and organisations* Demos: London, which we refer to later in this report.
- <sup>12</sup> This approach was also combined with understanding and experience of using nef’s ten elements for proving and improving:  
<http://www.proveandimprove.org/new/getst/index.php>
- <sup>13</sup> See Sanfilippo, L., Cooper, M., Kjell, P., Marks, N., Murray, R., Shah, H. and Somers, A. (2005). *Proving and improving: a quality and impact toolkit for social enterprise*. nef, London. [www.proveandimprove.org](http://www.proveandimprove.org)
- <sup>14</sup> See <http://www.theoryofchange.org>
- <sup>15</sup> See Appendix 1 for a complete Storyboard exercise.
- <sup>16</sup> Coding operates by linking different instances of the same characteristic within the total dataset, and thus fragments of data are brought together into categories which have some property or element in common. These categorisations help to organise the materials in such a way that interesting relationships can be identified.
- <sup>17</sup> <http://www.proveandimprove.org/new/myimp/index.php>
- <sup>18</sup> This included using a form of etic and emic coding of those personal development themes mentioned by the participants themselves, and those assigned by nef respectively.
- <sup>19</sup> Using Survey Monkey, online survey software at [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)
- <sup>20</sup> Storyboard Group Three.
- <sup>21</sup> School for Social Entrepreneurs (2006) *The role and approach of SSE*. Internal Document.
- <sup>22</sup> See Sampson, R (2004) ‘Networks and neighbourhoods’ Chapter 12 in McCarthy H, Miller P, Skidmore P (eds) *Network logic: who governs in an unconnected world?* Demos, London at <http://www.demos.co.uk/files/networklogic.pdf>
- <sup>23</sup> Harding R and Harding D (2005) *Profiling social entrepreneurs: a report for Coactive*.
- <sup>24</sup> Bourner T, Cooper A, and France L. (2000) ‘Action learning across a university community innovation’ in *Education and Training International*, 37/1 February 2000 cited at Bradford College Research website <http://www.bilk.ac.uk/college/research/allpd/Glossary.htm#revans> [August 2006].
- <sup>25</sup> These resources include internet based materials and processes.
- <sup>26</sup> At time of writing, two fellows are on the staff of the London team and three on the board of trustees.
- <sup>27</sup> As of June 2006 there was not sufficient distance- travelled data to include an analysis in this evaluation
- <sup>28</sup> This fact also allows for findings in this evaluation to be consistently applied to schools across the UK.
- <sup>29</sup> Nick Temple, personal communication, August 2006
- <sup>30</sup> Gillinson and O’ Leary (2006) *op. cit.*
- <sup>31</sup> Harding R. (2006) *Social Entrepreneurship Monitor United Kingdom GEM / Barclays*, London Business School: London.

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<sup>32</sup> This also plays a role in shaping the SSE's franchise approach to replication

<sup>33</sup> Harding (2006) *op. cit.*

<sup>34</sup> Harding and Harding (2005) *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> Harding (2006) *op. cit.*

<sup>36</sup> Small Business Service Analytical Unit, (February 2006) *Survival rates of VAT registered businesses, 1994–2003 Key results*

<sup>37</sup> Based upon survey data of 44 out of 52 (85 per cent) SSE fellows' organisations still in existence.

<sup>38</sup> Based upon survey data of 6 respondents from that year's intake.

<sup>39</sup> Small Business Service Analytical Unit (2006) *op. cit.*

<sup>40</sup> Kikass has been separately identified here due to the exceptional number of volunteer posts and direct beneficiaries gained it has made a claim for as compared to other respondents. Kikass is a charity that brings together young people across the UK to champion career and personal development, while channeling raw talent into finding creative solutions to social issues and building active communities among 16–26-year-olds. It uses 'street teams', volunteer networks, viral internet games and guerrilla stunts to carry out its work.

<sup>41</sup> Per cent (%) of today's turnover that comes from trading activity: 12 respondents greater than 50 per cent, 7 respondents less than 10 per cent; 33 out of 64 fellows answered the question.

<sup>42</sup> These are aggregate figures obtained by combining respondents' answers.

<sup>43</sup> Data from 11 fellows in these years who answered the questionnaire.

<sup>44</sup> For example, comments identified 15 organisations; for example responses ranged from 50 to 200 customers, users or beneficiaries, one respondent quoted "thousands of " customers, users or beneficiaries.

<sup>45</sup> In this case, the impact of an organisation refers to the broader, longer-term change that it has effected. Impacts can be both intended and unintended, as well as both positive and negative.

<sup>46</sup> Output here refers to a measure of an activity or intervention that results in something demonstrable or countable right afterwards. Output indicators show that the project or activity has successfully taken place and that the pre-conditions are in place to achieve the organisations outcomes/objectives. Outputs are usually finite – either items created, such as a report or units of carbon dioxide produced by a manufacturing process, or numbers of people who have received a skills training.

Outcomes refer to the changes that result from an organisation's activity – for people, communities, the economy or aspects of the natural or built environment. Outcome indicators help to assess the changes that take place as a result of a project and show progress towards the intended or unintended effects.

<sup>47</sup> See Methodologies for case study participants and further information.

<sup>48</sup> School for Social Entrepreneurs (2006) *The role and approach of SSE*. Internal Document.

<sup>49</sup> See [www.onroadmedia.org.uk](http://www.onroadmedia.org.uk) for this example of an organisation that has developed following a recommendation from an SSE Fellow

<sup>50</sup> Small Business Service Analytical Unit (2006) *op. cit.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>52</sup> This number does not include an estimated 500 volunteers used by the organisation Kikass.

<sup>53</sup> To calculate the unit cost the SSE took the total London School costs (less any subcontracting) and divided them by the number of students on programme that year. If a programme spans financial years the SSE allocated students on a pro-rata basis. As of 8 June 2006.

<sup>54</sup> Per year jobs created = 100 divided by the 34 organisations, divided by 7 years = 0.4 jobs per year. Average third sector wage of £22879 – *Third Sector Magazine*, 27 July 2005.

<sup>55</sup> This figure does not include reductions for tax contributions and National Insurance.

<sup>56</sup> Based on 23 responses.

<sup>57</sup> **Scale jumping.** This term is borrowed from geographers' work on scale and in particular the work of Neil Smith. For example, see Smith N. (1993) 'Homeless/Global: Scaling Places' in Bird J, Curtis B, Putnam T, Robertson G and Tickner L (eds) *Mapping the futures: local cultures, global change*, pp. 87-119. Routledge: New York.

<sup>58</sup> Castells M. (2000) *End of Millennium: Volume 3* Blackwell: Oxford.