Case Study of NOW – Springfield Road, Belfast

NOW is a quality organisation which provides quality training and employment services to people with learning disabilities/difficulties supporting them to get the job they want and keep it. We have been operating in North and West Belfast for 9 years and have developed a number of award winning programmes specifically targeted at matching individuals with learning difficulties with employment opportunities in their local communities.

Our services for people with learning difficulties

NOW’s core service delivery is done under our Employment and Training Programme which is delivered in partnership with Stepping Stones in Lisburn and is funded by European Social Fund, Belfast H&SCT and Disablement Advisory Service (DEL) and also delivers other DEL Contracts through Workable Ni and New Deal for Disabled People in partnership with the ACET Consortium. We support 300 people with learning difficulties per annum that are unemployed or economically inactive and are interested in moving into paid employment. This programme includes:

- **Employment Team** – use the model of supported employment to link people with learning difficulties with local employers and job opportunities.
- **Transition Team** – work with young people with learning difficulties in the process of leaving school signposting them to further education, training and employment opportunities.
- **Vocational Training** – delivering a range of award winning industry recognised qualifications including NVQ level 1&2 in Catering and Hospitality, Health and Safety and Essential Food Hygiene.
- **Basic Skills Training** - a range of accredited training programmes which help participants tackle the barriers to employment i.e. Money Management, Interview Skills etc.

Our social economy businesses

NOW also operates Loaf Catering which is social enterprise catering business consisting of 3 Cafes and an outside catering delivery business. Loaf employs 8 staff over 3 sites.

In 2009 NOW also set up a new social enterprise called Gauge – a consulting business which uses the Model of Social Return on Investment and other evaluation tools to help organisations understand, measure and communicate their value.

Our strategic themes for 2010 are:

*Quality*
As an organisation which has worked hard to gain Investors in People accreditation and ISO 14001 and 9001 recognition we have developed excellent systems and procedures which ensure we value our staff and deliver a quality service.

**Governance**

Over the past few years Governance has been an important part of our work as a Board and this year we have seen it pay off with our Chief Executive being awarded the CO3 Voyager Award for Governance which recognises the structures we have in place to ensure our organisation is governed professionally and effectively.

**Impact**

There is a reason why NOW does what it does and we have driven to ensure that we are always cognisant of the impact our services have on the lives of people with learning difficulties and their parents and carers. We are continually developing our work on Social Return on Investment to ensure that at the highest level we continue to check to make sure that the services we are delivering are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the people we aim to help.

Extracts from NOW's 2009-10 report on Social Return on Investment on Project Workforce OUR Employment and Training Programme show:

- Participants had on average £3,251 in their pockets due to being in work.
- There was an overall saving in social security benefits of £10,768 & an additional £5,907 paid to the Exchequer in income tax.
- Saving in daycare costs of £548,098 as participants took up training, employment or further education opportunities.
- Savings of £14,966 to Health and Social Care in year as participants travelled more independently.
- Employers in total reported an added value/cost savings to their business of £16,437 when they worked with NOW.

In summary then if we take the impact of this particular project and look at the value over the next 5 years:

Cost of intervention was £669,536
Total added value over next 5 years: £3,219,116.46
SROI ratio: 1 : 4.80

The SROI ratio is 1: 4.80. This means that for each pound invested in Project Workforce over 12 months, the project returned an amount of £4.80 over the next five years.

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**More information about NOW and our services is available at:**

www.loafcatering.com; www.gauge-ni.co.uk