

## **EVALUATION OF MERSEYSIDE SOCIAL RISK CAPITAL PROGRAMMES 2001-2004**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Social Risk Capital

The term social risk capital is often used interchangeably with the term social capital. Through financial support made available by the Merseyside Objective 1 Programme, in the form of Global Grants, four local organisations have been able to develop social capital funding programmes.

In Merseyside social risk capital has been developed to address a number of key weaknesses that had been identified in the development and delivery of previous European Union (EU) funded programmes within Merseyside, namely:

- ❖ Issues about the equality of access to EU funding. Whilst, in theory, any organisation can apply for EU funding there appeared to be real or perceived barriers that prevented small groups or organisations from accessing such funding opportunities. This lack of access to EU funding meant that alternative funding mechanisms needed to be considered.
- ❖ That despite an increasing emphasis upon the need to engage local groups and communities, and empower them to play a more active role in the design, development and delivery of EU programmes, they were still not fully involved in local regeneration based activity that affected their neighbourhoods or communities.
- ❖ The need to fully exploit the potential and capabilities of the voluntary and community sectors.
- ❖ Mainstream funding and projects, it appeared, were only partially successful in supporting the most disadvantaged groups in society, particularly those who are most excluded from the labour market, to access advice, training and employment

Social risk capital is unique, and is different from more conventional EU funded programmes, in the sense that it is concerned both with the development of a social infrastructure, that will develop an area's capacity and capability to reduce disadvantage and inequalities through the development of a network of voluntary and community groups (who, it is recognised, are often best placed to work with those who are excluded) and the delivery of projects that will move those who are excluded back into the labour market.

### Social Risk Capital in Merseyside

In response to this, and the emerging national Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, four social risk capital programmes were established and have operated across Merseyside since 2001. They are:

- ❖ The Community Opportunities Fund that was managed by St Helens Council and operated within the St Helens borough.
- ❖ The Social Capital Fund that was administered by Merseyside Expanding Horizons and which operated across Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral.

- ❖ The Social Risk Capital Fund that operated across all 5 boroughs of Merseyside and which was managed by the Merseyside Disability Federation.
- ❖ The South Sefton Key Fund that was managed by the Community Foundation for Merseyside and which operated in the South Sefton area.

These four programmes and the areas they operate in ensure that all areas of Merseyside have access to social risk capital funding.

In total, since 2001, the four programmes have invested a total of £4,193,000 in the development of a social infrastructure in Merseyside and have, by giving grants of up to £10,000, supported some 469 projects or groups.

### **Evaluation**

Towards the end of the current Merseyside Objective 1 Programme, which draws to a close in December 2006, it was decided that an independent evaluation of the 4 operational social risk capital programmes should be undertaken to assess their impact upon Merseyside.

The rationale for the evaluation, and this is explained in more detail in the full report, was to assess the impact and level of outcomes arising from the delivery of the 4 programmes, to evaluate the processes and procedures that were in place to support their effective delivery and to identify any good practice arising from their implementation.

Within Merseyside social risk capital funding programmes were established to channel resources into the voluntary and community sectors so as to develop a social infrastructure and to support innovative projects and groups to work with and support those who face disadvantage and exclusion back into the labour market. The evaluation of these programmes revealed the following.

### **Investment in the Development of a local Social Capital Infrastructure**

Fundamentally, the 4 social risk capital programmes in Merseyside have, since 2001, invested over £4 million in the development of a local social capital Infrastructure. This investment, in the form of small, and often, start up grants, has enabled 469 groups and projects to develop and deliver services.

### **Target Groups and Beneficiaries**

A review of the projects supported through the social risk capital programmes reveals that the projects and groups supported have focused their activities upon those individuals and communities that are most at risk of exclusion and who are a priority for the Objective 1 Programme. In particular, projects that target and work with young people, lone parents, people with learning difficulties and other forms of disabilities, Black and Minority Ethnic groups and those who are, or at risk of becoming, long term unemployed have been supported. This is entirely consistent with the Government criteria and policy guidelines that provide a framework for the use and management of social risk capital.

### **Access to Funding**

Without the development of the 4 local programmes it is highly unlikely that any of the 469 projects would have been able to access EU funding. The existing funding process, whilst not intentional, favours organisations who are able to demonstrate a proven ability to manage EU funds and those organisations who are seeking substantial sums of money. The development of 4 social risk capital programmes has enabled new access arrangements that are specifically targeted at those organisations looking to access EU funding for the first time and has supported those organisations to develop their capacity and capability, in other words a track record, to manage public sector funding. In many cases, as is explained further below, this experience has enabled groups to apply, with confidence, for other sources of funding to grow and develop both the services they offer and their groups.

### **Promoting Innovation and Filling Gaps in Service Provision**

The voluntary and community sectors often develop services to address a niche need or market and where the public sector cannot always develop and deliver cost effective support or services. A review of the projects visited as part of this evaluation illustrates that a substantial number of projects and services have been developed to address a particular need and to fill gaps in service provision locally especially where there were no existing support arrangements. This is evidenced by the fact that many of the groups have already, even in a short space of time, entered into Service Level Agreements or have secured additional grant funding or contracts to provide specific services. These arrangements are generally with local authorities, PCTs and the local Learning & Skills Council.

### **Cost Effectiveness & Generation of Added Value**

A number of the projects visited as part of this evaluation had only recently started or certainly had not spent all of their initial funding allocation. Despite this, however, there is clear evidence that the initial financial support provided has led to the generation of additional income amongst those organisations in receipt of social risk capital support. The most significant example of this is the award of a grant award of £5,000 that led to that organisation being awarded an 18 month contract worth some £100,000. This demonstrates the fact that the award of a relatively small social risk capital grant can, by supporting a local voluntary or community sector group, act as a catalyst and generate significant and additional financial leverage.

Furthermore, many of the groups that have been assisted have developed new volunteering opportunities for local residents. The use of volunteers has provided such individuals with an opportunity to develop new skills and has also assisted in the development of locally delivered, and cost effective services.

### **Hard or Socio-Economic Outputs**

Each project supported by the 4 social risk capital programmes is different in nature and focus. However, the evaluation revealed that there is clear evidence of:

- ❖ Projects supporting the creation of new jobs – particularly where groups or projects have succeeded in winning new contracts or Service Level Agreements it can be seen that a number of full time and part time jobs have been created. Many of these employment opportunities have been taken by individuals from those groups that the project or service was designed to support thus where jobs are created they are benefiting those groups at risk of exclusion from the labour market.

- ❖ Volunteering Opportunities – as alluded to above a common feature of almost all the projects and groups visited reveals that groups have used social risk capital funding to create new volunteering opportunities and to provide advice, training and other support to assist people to volunteer.
- ❖ Access to Learning and Delivery of Training and Qualifications – a sizeable number of projects have offered access to learning opportunities ranging from “bite size” tasters to more formal and structured qualification based programmes.

### **Factors for Success**

This evaluation, in addition to probing the impact of the 4 social risk capital programmes, sought to assess the extent to which the processes and procedures that were put in place were appropriate to realise the objectives of social risk capital funding.

The review of these processes and procedures is considered in greater detail in the full evaluation report however it is clear, notwithstanding the need to make a small number of changes, that the existing processes and procedures have, largely, been fit for purpose and have actively encouraged small groups to consider applying for social risk capital support.

Factors that have contributed to the successful development and delivery of the 4 programmes include:

- ❖ The provision of accessible and client friendly advice and guidance at an early stage that has provided clarity on the role and objectives of the 4 programmes and has reduced the number of applications that do not meet the criteria for the use of social risk capital.
- ❖ Straightforward, and easy to complete application forms with clear guidance notes.
- ❖ Monitoring and administrative requirements that are proportionate to the level of grant requested.
- ❖ Rapid appraisal of applications from voluntary and community groups ensuring that, whether they have been successful or rejected, they are able to respond promptly and, in the cases where they have been successful, commence the development and delivery of services quickly.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 A partnership comprising the four organisations listed below, in conjunction with Government Office North West, have come together to commission a joint evaluation of their respective social risk capital programmes, which have supported the development of social capital across Merseyside.

- ❖ The Community Foundation for Merseyside – South Sefton Key Fund
- ❖ Merseyside Disability Federation – Social Risk Capital Fund
- ❖ Merseyside Expanding Horizons – Social Capital Fund
- ❖ St Helens Council – Community Opportunities Fund

### **EVALUATION OF GLOBAL GRANT PROGRAMMES SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL**

- 1.2 The development and use of Global Grant Programmes is a recent innovation in the context of the Merseyside Objective 1 Programme.
- 1.3 The four organisations listed above have utilised Global Grant funding to support the development of social capital locally. It is timely, as the end of this current Objective 1 Programme approaches and planning for transitional arrangements commences, that an evaluation of these 4 programmes is undertaken<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.4 Global Grant Programmes are unique in the sense that, not only are they a relatively new concept in Merseyside, but they are unlike any other programme that has been supported by the Merseyside Objective 1 Programme.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.5 They differ from mainstream Objective 1 funded projects in the sense that Objective 1 funding is devolved to other organisations to distribute funding with decision making on the allocation of grant funding being taken by a body other than the Objective 1 Secretariat..
- 1.6 Global Grant Programmes have been used locally to support the development of a social risk capital funding infrastructure. This local social capital infrastructure has distributed relatively smaller grants, which are specifically designed to target local communities to test - bed or pilot new ideas and concepts. The latter point, about enabling communities to become active and develop and manage new projects and services underpins the concept of social risk or social risk capital.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that an interim evaluation of Merseyside Expanding Horizons' Social Capital Fund was undertaken earlier in this current Objective 1 Programme

<sup>2</sup> To date, the only Global Grant Programmes that have been supported by the Merseyside Objective 1 Programme. are the Merseyside Special Investment Fund (MSIF) and the four funds listed above that support the development of a local social capital infrastructure.

- 1.7 Against this backdrop, the evaluation of the four social risk capital programmes has 3 principal aims, these are to:
- ❖ **Evaluate the Processes and Procedural Arrangements underpinning the delivery of the Global Grant Programmes and specifically the development of Social Capital.** In essence, this is to assess the effectiveness of the application and grant approval process with regards to distributing funds to organisations, groups and activities that are closest to the objectives and priorities of social risk capital programmes.
  - ❖ **Assess the Outcomes and Impact.** This was to be achieved through an evaluation of a sample of projects supported by the 4 programmes that have supported the development of social capital, paying particular attention to how these awards supported the development of the recipient organisation and have assisted individuals, beneficiaries and service users.
  - ❖ **Identify Good Practice to support Continuous Improvement.** To include highlighting examples of good practice that might be replicated and commonalities of approach and alignment between the 4 delivery organisations e.g. data sharing protocols.
- 1.8 Recognising that Global Grant Programmes, which support the development of social capital, will continue to be supported over the period 2005-2008, each of the four organisations, as part of their overarching commitment to continuous improvement, wanted the joint evaluation to undertake the following:
- ❖ **Undertake a Gap Analysis.** To identify the type of organisations, activities and geographical spread of projects supported by social risk capital funding and establish whether there have been any particular concentrations or gaps in the way social risk capital programmes may have been used.
  - ❖ **Evaluate Projects and Organisations.** To outline the outcomes and impact of the awards including its contribution to the recipient organisation's development through visiting and interviewing a sample of the projects supported by each of the 4 programmes supporting the development of social capital.
  - ❖ **Identify any Support and Organisational Development Needs.** By consulting with organisations in receipt of social risk capital funding support to establish if they have any unmet needs.
  - ❖ **Make Recommendations** for the future direction and implementation of social risk capital funding.
- 1.9 In assessing the impact of these programmes Community Concepts Ltd have been particularly keen to review the impact of the four programmes, and the individual projects that they have supported, at a number of levels. These include:

- ❖ A review of the processes to ensure that they are fit for purpose and that they have supported the effective delivery of both the programmes and individual projects.
- ❖ A review of the range and type of “hard” outputs and measurables that have been delivered.
- ❖ An analysis of the impact, where it is measurable, of the programmes upon Merseyside.
- ❖ An assessment of the extent to which the programmes have supported the development of social capital.

## **2. Context for Social Risk Capital**

- 2.1 The term social risk capital is applied to an amount of funding, sourced from the European Union via one of its Structural Funds, that has been ring fenced to provide small grants to non-governmental organisations, especially organisations in the voluntary and community sectors. Within Merseyside, and elsewhere in the United Kingdom, Global Grant Programmes, funded through the European Union, have been used as a vehicle to support the development of social capital.
- 2.2 What is social capital? Social capital is “the raw material of civil society” (Bullen & Onyx, 1998). Social capital is recognised by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (The World Bank) as one of the four major capital measures, alongside financial capital, physical capital and human capital.
- 2.3 The Merseyside Objective 1 Programme, particularly in Priorities 2 and 4, places an emphasis upon the need to engage and involve individuals and communities in the development, design and delivery of programmes that have as their objective the regeneration of the region. The Merseyside Objective 1 Programme provides support in the form of financial capital, which has in turn developed the region’s physical capital (through investment in physical infrastructure and environmental improvements) and human capital (through investment in skills, training and other development). Through support made available by the Merseyside Objective 1 Programme support is, systematically and for the first time, being made available to support the development of social capital.

### **What is Social Risk Capital?**

- 2.4 Social capital is an essential component of both the regeneration and development of areas or regions. The Merseyside Objective 1 Programme is a long-term investment based programme. It seeks to invest in measures and infrastructure that will lead to the reduction in inequalities and disparities. These inequalities exist in the sense that there are areas or communities within Merseyside that are significantly more disadvantaged than others e.g. Pathways areas. Such inequalities and disparities also exist in the sense that Merseyside lags significantly behind other parts of the North West and other regions of the United Kingdom.

- 2.5 Social capital is concerned with the development of a social infrastructure, the bringing together of individuals and communities, to tackle inequalities, disadvantage and exclusion. It is designed to play a central role in mobilising individuals and communities to make an input into the design, development and implementation of services that will promote inclusion and socio-economic development.
- 2.6 If the over-riding social inclusion and economic development aims of the Merseyside Objective One programme are to be realised, it is crucial to maintain investment in the organisational capacity of those who face and experience exclusion in its variety of manifestations. The creation of an infrastructure that supports the development and growth of social capital locally is essential in developing the diverse stakeholding and participation that is crucial for effective economic development.

*“Social Capital should be seen as a component of orthodox development projects, from dams and irrigation systems to local schools and health clinics. Where poor communities have direct input into the design, implementation management and evaluation of projects, returns on investments and the sustainability of the project are enhanced.”*  
**(Esman, Milton, Uphoff, 1984)**

- 2.7 “Social Capital – A Discussion Paper”, published by the Performance & Innovation Unit in April 2002, identified a number of beneficial economic and social effects that may be derived from effective investment in the development of social capital:
- ❖ Higher levels of, and growth in, GDP; Economies in areas rich in social capital provide an environment more conducive to:
    - Saving, investing, risk taking and entrepreneurialism.
    - Innovation.
    - Efficient resource allocation.
    - The development of organisational forms required for the modern economy.
  - ❖ Efficient functioning of labour markets; Social capital provides highly cost-effective job search mechanisms, with evidence showing that more unemployed people find employment through their networks and personal contacts than through any other single route.
  - ❖ Improved educational attainment; There is a strong positive association between the levels of social capital and educational achievement, with social networks, community engagement and social trust both contributing to raised educational aspirations and, in turn, benefiting from the subsequent attainment levels.
  - ❖ Lower levels of crime; Criminologists point to “social control theory”, whereby social networks and other bonds to mainstream society prevent individuals from becoming involved in criminal activity.

- ❖ Better health; Studies have proven links between levels of social capital and mortality rates. In the USA people tend to die significantly younger in states with low levels of social capital.
- ❖ Improved effectiveness of institutions of government; This is seen as being a consequence of the improved ability of high social capital communities to lobby for and organise public service delivery. Social capital has this impact through:
  - Fostering citizenship, enabling more effective policy implementation.
  - Providing channels through which people can become informed of and involved in policy development and implementation.
  - Improving co-operation between politicians and officers, who benefit from carrying the same skills as social capital resources as the rest of the population.

### **Social Risk Capital**

- 2.8 During the period 1994-1999 policy relating to the use of European Union Structural Funds changed markedly. There was an increasing recognition at a European Commission level, and this was particularly reflected in the development of the Pathways initiative in the first Merseyside Objective 1 Programme, that traditional approaches to regeneration, namely centrally managed or “top-down” programmes, were not always successful.
- 2.9 Instead, there was an increased policy emphasis upon encouraging greater involvement of local communities in local regeneration programmes and activity. The European Commission, and latterly the UK Government in its Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, recognised that the involvement of local communities was central to achieving long-term, sustainable regeneration and the reduction of inequalities and disparities between richer and poorer areas and communities.
- 2.10 This policy emphasis is based upon the belief that local individuals or groups are often closer to local problems, possess valuable local knowledge and insights, and are well placed to tackle the issues of regeneration.
- 2.11 Without involvement in regeneration programmes it was widely felt that exclusion and inequalities could not be effectively addressed. As such, community or neighbourhood ownership of local regeneration programmes became a central feature of EU Single Programming Documents for the period 2000-2006.
- 2.12 Despite this policy emphasis, it was apparent that whilst local communities may have a greater say in the design and development of local regeneration programmes, individuals, groups and locally based community and voluntary organisations were not generally becoming involved in the delivery of projects to the extent aspired to by the Objective One programme. This was due to the nature of the selection process and programme management systems inherently favouring larger scale projects delivered by organisations with a track record of managing and accounting for the use of large amounts of EU funding.

- 2.13 Small community groups, often newly established, had no previous experience of managing regeneration funding and thus had no track record with which to demonstrate their ability to manage EU funding.
- 2.14 It was recognised that to “bridge the gap”, enabling small-scale organisations to develop new skills and knowledge and obtain the experience of managing EU (and potentially Government) funds, a new approach to the use of EU funding was required. In response, the concept of social risk capital was developed.

### **Management of Social Risk Capital**

- 2.15 Global Grant Programmes (GGPs) are now operational across most parts of the United Kingdom and form a central part of EU Single Programming Documents. Each Global Grant is administered by an Intermediary Body, or an accountable body, that manages and accounts for the use of EU funding.
- 2.16 Intermediary Bodies must be able to demonstrate that they have the financial and management capacity to manage a Global Grant Programme, the value of which in some cases can exceed £1 million in total value. There are no restrictions on the type of organisations that can become Intermediary Bodies; they can be public and / or voluntary sector organisations.
- 2.17 However, in order to be an Intermediary Body managing a Global Grant Programme that is concerned with the development of social capital it is evident that any organisation, wishing to fulfil that role, must have a robust relationship with the voluntary and community sectors.
- 2.18 There are a number of rules or operating guidelines, however, which govern the use of social risk capital programmes. Social risk capital programmes must display the following characteristics:
- ❖ **Small grants;** Provide small grants to new or recently established community or voluntary groups to enable them to develop both their organisations and new services.
  - ❖ **Easier to access;** Whilst they are awarded through an open and accountable tendering process, accessing social risk capital support must be easier to access and offer an introduction to bidding for EU funding.
  - ❖ **Lower level of monitoring;** Do not require the same level of monitoring as mainstream EU funded projects. The level of monitoring and management is appropriate and proportionate to the level of grant awarded; e.g. monitoring requirements for a £5,000 contract should be less onerous than for a contract with a value of £500,000.
  - ❖ **Develop local social capital;** Should support organisations and services that contribute to the regeneration of the local area through the development of local social capital and support the implementation of the Single Programming Document and strategies such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

- ❖ **Enable progression;** Support activities, including capacity building, that promote social inclusion and tackle the underlying causes and contributing factors of unemployment, particularly long term unemployment. All social risk capital funded activities must support progression towards the labour market.

2.19 Social risk capital funding was, and continues to be, seen as a vehicle for testing new approaches to tackling social inclusion and laying the foundations for increased community and voluntary sector development.

2.20 Social risk capital is, therefore, seen as being an investment programme as well as a programme that takes risks and test beds or pilots new regeneration activity.

### **Targeting of Social Risk Capital**

2.21 Additionally, social risk capital funding is expected, through its support of community and voluntary sector organisations, to target certain communities, both geographical communities and communities of interest. These include:

- ❖ Areas eligible for Neighbourhood Renewal Funding.
- ❖ Disabled people.
- ❖ Young people.
- ❖ Lone parents.
- ❖ Ethnic minorities.
- ❖ Individuals aged 50 and over.
- ❖ The long-term unemployed.
- ❖ Individuals who are workless, typically those in receipt of indirect benefits.

### **Social Risk Capital in Merseyside**

2.22 In drafting the Single Programming Document for the current Merseyside Objective 1 Programme and taking into account the lessons from the previous programme, namely the difficulties that small scale voluntary and community groups experienced in being able to access Objective 1 funding, it was decided to earmark funding to support the development of social capital.

2.23 A minimum of one per cent and a maximum of two per cent of the total Merseyside Objective 1 Programme was allocated to support the development of programmes that would enable social capital to be developed locally.

- 2.24 Four organisations applied to become Intermediary Bodies to manage social risk capital funding. These were:
- ❖ Community Foundation for Merseyside – who developed the South Sefton Key Fund.
  - ❖ Merseyside Disability Federation – who developed the Social Risk Capital Fund.
  - ❖ Merseyside Expanding Horizons – who developed the Social Capital Fund.
  - ❖ St Helens Council – who developed the St Helens Community Opportunities Fund.
- 2.25 Although each of the four social risk capital funds developed at slightly different points in time the organisations involved did enter into early stage discussions to ensure that, where possible, the development of the four funds would be as coherent as possible
- 2.26 In response to the varying demands of both geographically-based communities and communities of interest, each of the four organisations developed different social risk capital funding arrangements in that they:
- ❖ Varied in size and resources. The availability of match funding to lever in or draw down European Social Fund was a determining factor in the size of the overall social risk capital programme.
  - ❖ Focused upon different aspects of social capital. Three of the social risk capital programmes were generic in nature whereas the Merseyside Disability Federation’s social risk capital fund is specifically for organisations consisting of or for disabled people.
  - ❖ Covered different geographical communities. The Merseyside Disability Federation social risk capital fund covered all of Merseyside. Merseyside Expanding Horizons covered Liverpool, Knowsley, Sefton and Wirral whereas the St Helens and Community Foundation for Merseyside programmes covered St Helens and South Sefton respectively. It is worth noting here that the Community Foundation for Merseyside South Sefton Key Fund was supported through Priority 4 or the “Pathways” priority of the Merseyside Objective 1 Programme. This meant that this particular social risk capital fund had a narrower geographical focus and was restricted to operating in specific post code areas whereas the others had broader geographical remits.

### **3. The Merseyside Social Risk Capital Programmes**

- 3.1 During the Project Establishment phase of this evaluation commission Community Concepts Ltd met with the management team and relevant personnel working for each of the 4 social risk capital programmes.
- 3.2 The purpose of these meetings was to familiarise ourselves with each of the programmes and to obtain:
- ❖ An understanding of the focus of each programme
  - ❖ Details on the range of groups and projects that have received support
  - ❖ An outline of how each programme has been managed
- 3.3 Please see overleaf for detailed descriptions of each of the social risk capital programmes.

**EVALUATION OF MERSEYSIDE SOCIAL RISK CAPITAL FUNDING PROGRAMMES 2001-2004**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Programme Name:</b> Social Risk Capital Fund           |   |
| <b>Applicant:</b><br>Merseyside Disability Federation     |   |
| <b>Organisational Details &amp; Resources</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Merseyside Disability Federation (MDF) is an umbrella organisation working at a sub-regional level covering Knowsley, St Helens, Sefton, Liverpool, Wirral and Halton that supports the work and development of community and voluntary sector organisations of and for disabled people, both in their workings and in their development and capacity building in relation to current and emerging policy and legislation.</li> <li>❖ MDF acts as a conduit for consultation and dissemination to ensure that issues relating to disabled people are included at the planning and development stage of local, regional and national strategies. It engages with locally based voluntary and community sector groups to provide the services and activities that support this work.</li> <li>❖ The organisation was established in 2000 and has grown since that date to employ 5 people. MDF developed its Social Risk Capital Programme in 2001 and has a dedicated SRC Development Officer.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Activities &amp; Details of other Grant Programmes</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ MDF provides a range of services; influencing policy at a strategic level through involvement with sub-regional partnerships, undertaking research, and networking and capacity building of voluntary and community sector organisations working with disabled people.</li> <li>❖ MDF operates no other grant or social risk funding programmes.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Programme Size:</b>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Since 2001 MDF have managed three similar social risk capital programmes with a combined total value of £335,922.</li> <li>❖ Of this, MDF has received £292,954 of ESF support.</li> <li>❖ MDF will fund projects up to a level or maximum of £5,000.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Timescale:</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Three social risk capital programmes over the period 2001 / 2005.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Geographical Coverage &amp; Marketing Arrangements</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The Social Risk Capital Fund is available to new and grass roots organisations and innovative projects that operate across Merseyside (all 5 constituent Boroughs) and are organisations of or for disabled people.</li> <li>❖ MDF has used a range of approaches to raise awareness of the Social Risk Capital Programme             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The use of specific SRC marketing materials – an A4 sheet.</li> <li>○ Own newsletter.</li> <li>○ LSP networks.</li> <li>○ Funding fayres and other events.</li> <li>○ CVS.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <b>No. of Projects Supported</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ At the time of writing this report, 41 projects have been supported and a total of £182,292.90 committed.</li> <li>❖ The average grant awarded is £4,446.17.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Frequency of Funding</b>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ There is no specific or set timetable for receipt and management of grant applications however applications are encouraged on a monthly basis.</li> </ul>  |

**EVALUATION OF MERSEYSIDE SOCIAL RISK CAPITAL FUNDING PROGRAMMES 2001-2004**

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|--|--|
| <p><b>Process for Application &amp; Support Arrangements</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Applications are received on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>❖ Applicants are provided with a “Gateway” type support service. The Development Officer will either provide support over the phone or through visits to applicants.</li> <li>❖ Advice covers eligibility issues, the type of activity and reviewing the level of grant requested.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Application Form</b></p>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ One standard application form for all groups (4 pages). This is also available in braille, cassette tape and electronic formats.</li> <li>❖ The form is supported by two pages of simple and clear guidance notes.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Selection &amp; Approval Arrangements</b></p>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Applications are sent to MDF and the Development Officer performs an initial assessment.</li> <li>❖ Panel then reviews the grant applications that are received and approves, rejects or defers applications.</li> <li>❖ Focus upon community and grass roots organisations; developing new organisations that work with, and projects that support disabled people.</li> </ul>                             |
| <p><b>Strategic Planning &amp; Management</b></p>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Programme operates on a first come – first served basis.</li> <li>❖ Since MDF do not seek to define groups and their members by “medical model” type of disability, there is no specific review of applications to identify gaps where certain groups are under-represented.</li> <li>❖ There is no specific methodology for identifying boroughs where there are small numbers of applications.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Monitoring Arrangements</b></p>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ All projects receive a Monitoring Visit.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Aftercare Support</b></p>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Support is available throughout the project and at the final monitoring stage.</li> <li>❖ MDF issues a regular newsletter and raises awareness of other opportunities.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Partnership Linkages</b></p>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ MDF is well integrated into local partnership networks.</li> <li>❖ It has extensive links with local CVS, voluntary and community sector groups and Merseyside Network for Europe.</li> </ul>   |

**EVALUATION OF MERSEYSIDE SOCIAL RISK CAPITAL FUNDING PROGRAMMES 2001-2004**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Programme Name:</b> Social Capital Fund                |   |
| <b>Applicant:</b><br>Merseyside Expanding Horizons        |   |
| <b>Organisational Details &amp; Resources</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Merseyside Expanding Horizons is the applicant and managing agent for this programme.</li> <li>❖ The organisation employs 10 people and provides a unique service; working with voluntary and community sector groups and providing a range of support services, raising awareness of the social inclusion agenda and developing and managing a number of projects designed to promote social inclusion.</li> <li>❖ 2-3 individuals work on this programme but not on a full time basis.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Activities &amp; Details of other Grant Programmes</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The programme is a service offered to Community / Voluntary groups across Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral (complementing existence of St Helens Community Opportunities Fund and South Sefton Key Fund).</li> <li>❖ Management of the SCF forms part of a wider portfolio of services and activities designed to tackle social exclusion and support the development of the community and voluntary sectors locally.</li> <li>❖ MEH's Community Fund project provides capacity building, networking and information support to community and voluntary sector organisations and can be accessed by organisations in receipt of an SCF grant.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Programme Size:</b>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Since 2001 MEH have managed four social risk capital programmes with a combined total value of £2,772,061.</li> <li>❖ Of this, MEH has received £1,487,297 of ESF support.</li> <li>❖ MEH will fund projects up to a level or maximum of £5,000.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Timescale:</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 2003-2006 (activity between 2001 and 2003 was subject to a separate evaluation).</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Geographical Coverage &amp; Marketing Arrangements</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Social Capital Fund is available to organisations in Knowsley, Sefton, Liverpool and Wirral.</li> <li>❖ Marketing of programme has included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Newspaper advertisements (usually in areas where there has been low take up of grant opportunities).</li> <li>○ Radio campaigns.</li> <li>○ MEH and other community newsletters.</li> <li>○ Occasionally through CVS.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <b>No. of Projects Supported</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ At the time of writing this report, 215 projects have been supported.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Frequency of Funding</b>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Applications are received and reviewed by a Panel that meets on a monthly basis.</li> <li>❖ Organisations need not wait more than 4-6 weeks for a decision.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Process for Application &amp; Support Arrangements</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ No notified deadlines or timetable just a commitment to meet monthly. Applicants must find out when Panel meets.</li> <li>❖ Phone support and 1-1 visits are available to assist in developing the application and ensuring that proposed activity is eligible.</li> </ul>   |

## EVALUATION OF MERSEYSIDE SOCIAL RISK CAPITAL FUNDING PROGRAMMES 2001-2004

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Application Form</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ One standard application form for all groups (4 pages)</li> <li>❖ The application form is supported by a guidance booklet (in word rather than DTP format).</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Selection &amp; Approval Arrangements</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Applications are sent to Panel.</li> <li>❖ MEH undertakes a simple eligibility check but does not appraise applications prior to the Panel meetings.</li> <li>❖ Panel discuss merits of an individual proposal and individual members complete an assessment form.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Strategic Planning &amp; Management</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Programme operates on a first come – first served basis</li> <li>❖ No fundamental strategic management of programme to identify groups or geographical areas where there is low take-up of MEH funding, although adverts placed in Wirral newspapers to encourage take up suggest that gaps are identified and are addressed.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Monitoring Arrangements</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Monitoring takes place at six-month point.</li> <li>❖ Visits take place one year after grant is received. All projects are scheduled to receive a twelve month monitoring visit.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Aftercare Support</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 1-1 capacity building support, funded through MEH's successful Community Fund programme, is available. This can provide advice on other grant or funding opportunities and details of other support organisations. However, this is limited to a relatively small number of organisations as resources do not permit MEH to work intensively with each of the 900 organisations with who it has a relationship</li> </ul> |
| <b>Partnership Linkages</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ MEH is well integrated into local partnership networks.</li> <li>❖ It has extensive links with local CVS, voluntary and community sector groups and is also involved with public sector partners including Government Office North West in initiatives and joint ventures such as Merseyside Social Inclusion Observatory and Merseyside Social Enterprise Initiative (MSEI).</li> </ul>                                  |

**EVALUATION OF MERSEYSIDE SOCIAL RISK CAPITAL FUNDING PROGRAMMES 2001-2004**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Programme Name:</b> St Helens Community Opportunities Fund |   |
| <b>Applicant:</b><br>St Helens Council                        |   |
| <b>Organisational Details &amp; Resources</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ St Helens Council is both the applicant and administrator for this programme.</li> <li>❖ Over the period 2001-2004 a team of 2 (now one) individuals worked on this programme.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Activities &amp; Details of other Grant Programmes</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Programme is a service offered to Community / Voluntary groups.</li> <li>❖ St Helens Council became the accountable body because, at the time of developing the COF, there were no other organisations prepared to manage it.</li> <li>❖ St Helens Council also directly manages other grant programmes . Locally, there are links to other programmes such as the Local Network Fund, which is managed by Community Foundation for Merseyside.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Programme Size:</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The St Helens Community Fund had a total value of £655,219 over the period 2001-September 2004.</li> <li>❖ The amount sourced from ESF was £312,346.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Timescale:</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 2001-September 2004.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Geographical Coverage &amp; Marketing Arrangements</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ COF programme only funds the activities of community and voluntary groups across St Helens Council area.</li> <li>❖ Specific Literature complemented by local Health Partnership Funding Opportunities marketing material.</li> <li>❖ Marketing of programme via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Existing regeneration partnerships e.g. LSP, local Health Partnership and Pathways</li> <li>○ St Helens First</li> <li>○ CVS</li> <li>○ St Helens Star (local free paper)</li> <li>○ Funders Fayres</li> <li>○ Community Centres</li> </ul> </li> </ul>             |
| <b>No. of Projects Supported</b>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 172 grants have been awarded over the lifetime of the programme.</li> <li>❖ The average grant awarded was £2,945.78.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Frequency of Funding</b>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Round-based programme with regular calls for applications.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Process for Application &amp; Support Arrangements</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Initial application pack with clear guidance notes.</li> <li>❖ Provides practical assistance to organisations to develop applications. Support is appropriate to the needs and request of the organisation. This can be phone or visit based.</li> <li>❖ Support is given to test eligibility, avoidance of duplication of funding and to ensure that the process is streamlined and not delayed by correspondence relating to technical matters.</li> <li>❖ Process takes approximately 3 months from application to notification of award, deferral or rejection.</li> </ul> |

## EVALUATION OF MERSEYSIDE SOCIAL RISK CAPITAL FUNDING PROGRAMMES 2001-2004

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Application Form</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 1 standard application form for all groups (7 pages) supported by guidance booklet.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Selection &amp; Approval Arrangements</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Initial assessment by COF Support Officer.</li> <li>❖ Qualitative rather than quantitative appraisal e.g. does it meet criteria.</li> <li>❖ Assessment details passed to a multi-agency panel comprising local partner organisations and community and youth group representatives.</li> <li>❖ Strong focus upon meeting needs of local residents, employability issues and increasing stock of community-based organisations.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Strategic Planning &amp; Management</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ No monitoring of under / over – representation of specific projects or groups.</li> <li>❖ No focused marketing activity aimed at areas of low take up.</li> <li>❖ First come – first served basis.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Monitoring Arrangements</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ At 12-month point – written monitoring form accompanied by an evaluation form.</li> <li>❖ Work towards visiting approximately 20% of projects that have received funding.</li> <li>❖ Capture wide range of statistical information relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Nos. of individuals accessing project by beneficiary groups e.g. unemployed, lone parents, BME groups etc</li> <li>○ Nos. accessing training and obtaining qualifications</li> <li>○ No. of people undertaking voluntary work and accessing employment</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Also captures significant narrative information relating to the delivery of the project.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Aftercare Support</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Limited support available during the delivery of the project due to resource restrictions.</li> <li>❖ Raise awareness of other grant programmes and encourage groups to access support and services of organisations such as St Helens CVS.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Partnership Linkages</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ St Helens Council is a lead partner in a number of local partnership networks including the Heath Partnership and Local Strategic Partnership.</li> <li>❖ Have raised awareness of this programme to partners – promotion of COF as a means of kick starting and assisting local community development.</li> </ul>   |

**EVALUATION OF MERSEYSIDE SOCIAL RISK CAPITAL FUNDING PROGRAMMES 2001-2004**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Programme Name:</b> S. Sefton Key Fund                 |   |
| <b>Applicant:</b><br>Community Foundation for Merseyside  |   |
| <b>Organisational Details &amp; Resources</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ CFM is one of 65 specialist grant making bodies across the United Kingdom.</li> <li>❖ Employs 20 staff, of whom 3 regularly work on this programme.</li> <li>❖ Established in 1999 as an intermediary between local community groups and donors (incl. Public sector) and corporate sponsors.</li> <li>❖ Since 2001 has distributed grants across Merseyside. Prior to this date it funded activity in Sefton only.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Activities &amp; Details of other Grant Programmes</b> | <p>Distributes a number of grant funds including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Local Community Chest with awards up to £5,000.</li> <li>❖ Local Network Fund (DfES) with awards up to £7,000.</li> <li>❖ S. Sefton Key Fund with awards up to £10,000.</li> <li>❖ Funded over 2,000 projects in 2003.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Programme Size:</b>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ S. Sefton Key Fund received funding from both S. Sefton Partnership (SRB Programme) and Objective 1 ESF.</li> <li>❖ £583,000.</li> <li>❖ Focus upon S. Sefton Pathways areas. This is the only social risk capital programme to be funded from Priority 4 (Pathways) of the Objective 1 Programme, the others being funded from Priority 2 and not restricted to a specific geographical area.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Timescale:</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 2001-2005.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Geographical Coverage &amp; Marketing Arrangements</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Primarily S1-Bootle and S2-Litherland &amp; Netherton. Pathways areas (due to funding from Priority 4 Pathways) but other parts of Sefton.</li> <li>❖ Specific Grant Literature.</li> <li>❖ Marketing of programme via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Local Partnership linkages – both public &amp; community &amp; voluntary</li> <li>○ CVS</li> <li>○ Funding fayres &amp; workshops</li> <li>○ Press &amp; Media opportunities – showcasing of previous success stories</li> <li>○ SRB magazine</li> <li>○ Referrals</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b>No. of Projects Supported</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 61 projects supported.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Frequency of Funding</b>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Round-based programme with regular calls for applications.</li> <li>❖ 7 funding rounds in total.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Process for Application &amp; Support Arrangements</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Contract outreach support to Sefton CVS.</li> <li>❖ Practical assistance to develop applications.</li> <li>❖ Test eligibility.</li> <li>❖ 12-week process from receipt of form to notification of award.</li> </ul>  |

**EVALUATION OF MERSEYSIDE SOCIAL RISK CAPITAL FUNDING PROGRAMMES 2001-2004**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Application Form</b>                      | Two application forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Start-up grant for organisations requesting £1,000 or less (2 pages).</li> <li>❖ Standard application (4 pages) for groups requesting between £1,000 and £10,000.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Selection &amp; Approval Arrangements</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Assessment by Grants Officer.</li> <li>❖ Projects individually scored.</li> <li>❖ Assessment &amp; Projects assessed by Panel consisting of Community Representatives.</li> <li>❖ Feedback prompt.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Strategic Planning &amp; Management</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ CFM have undertaken reviews to identify areas and groups who have been less successful in applying for grant and have arranged specific funding surgeries to encourage greater representation.</li> <li>❖ First come – first served basis.</li> </ul>          |
| <b>Monitoring Arrangements</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ At 6 month point.</li> <li>❖ Capture wide range of information.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Aftercare Support</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Support and contact throughout programme from monitoring officer.</li> <li>❖ Raise awareness of other grant programmes.</li> <li>❖ CVS expected to provide aftercare support and assistance to promote sustainability.</li> </ul>                              |
| <b>Partnership Linkages</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Well integrated into wider local partnership.</li> <li>❖ Excellent links with local CVS who are involved in the delivery of this programme and represent MCF on LSP.</li> <li>❖ Now exploring opportunity to manage grants on behalf of Sefton MBC.</li> </ul> |

#### 4. OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS SUPPORTED

- 4.1 In undertaking this evaluation, through obtaining an overview of the impact of the programmes and assessing the extent to which the existence of social risk capital programmes have supported the creation and development of community and voluntary sector organisations, Community Concepts Ltd identified a random sample of projects and visited them.
- 4.2 These visits organisations, who had been in receipt of social risk capital funding, were designed to gather information from beneficiary organisations regarding the appropriateness of the social risk capital programme to their needs and the needs of their client groups.
- 4.3 During the course of these visits, Community Concepts Limited adopted a semi-structured approach, designed to elicit responses around the following key issues:
- ❖ The marketing of the programme.
  - ❖ The application process.
  - ❖ Management and monitoring processes.
  - ❖ Benefits and impact of the programme.
  - ❖ The role of the programme as a platform for further development of individual organisations and the community and voluntary sectors and as a vehicle for the development of social capital locally.
- 4.4 In selecting projects for review Community Concepts Ltd sought to obtain a representative sample of projects by:
- ❖ Geography
  - ❖ Size of Grant
  - ❖ Type of activity & beneficiary group
  - ❖ Completed and current projects
- 4.5 At the time of writing this report, and in line with our desire to visit a wide range of projects (both those that were still active and that had been completed), not all projects had been completed. Indeed a number had only just started activity, and as such it was too early to obtain an accurate profile of the impact of the project.

## **MERSEYSIDE DISABILITY FEDERATION**

### **Lyndale Cancer Support Group**

**Grant: £ 4,590**

The Lyndale Cancer Support Group was established in 1982 in Huyton. Since then the group has developed significantly. Originally, offering an opportunity for cancer sufferers to meet and talk through their problems the group has grown and now owns a building (Lyndale House), “a home from home”, where 25 volunteers work and support cancer sufferers providing a range of benefits, health, learning and employment support.

The organisation has been very successful in raising its own funding and accessing grants from other bodies. It obtained £290,000 from the Lottery Fund to refurbish Lyndale House and the £4,590 from the Social Risk Capital Fund was used to establish a quiet and confidential room for counselling with individuals.

The project established an environment in which people with cancer can relax and interact, together with volunteering opportunities for 25, mainly disabled, people. As a result, beneficiaries gained confidence and self-esteem, subsequently progressing to volunteering opportunities, further education and training and employment opportunities.

The centre is now seen as a flagship project and works with 100 cancer sufferers each week. It is well integrated into the local health partnership and health workers undertake outreach work from the centre.

### **IMPACT**

“ The grant has played a key role in enabling us to meet the needs, whatever they may be, of individuals”

Accessing the grant has:

- ❖ Allowed Lyndale to establish a dedicated counselling and quiet room and provide counselling specific to the needs of cancer sufferers.

With the support of the Lottery and MDF grant, Lyndale has also:

- ❖ Provided valuable work experience and volunteering opportunities for 25 individuals.
- ❖ Provided a dedicated service enabling cancer sufferers to access support and counselling on a range of health and non-health issues including benefits, learning, employment etc.
- ❖ Supported volunteers and service users to progress and access learning and employment opportunities. One volunteer has recently secured employment as a full time bereavement counsellor and one volunteer was encouraged to follow an Access Course and has now obtained a Degree in Psychology.

**Everton Disability Football Club**

**Grant: £ 4,690**

Everton Football Club has a very successful Football in the Community project, indeed it is the largest programme in the UK and now employs two full time development workers and 6 full time coaches.

Core activity is funded by the Football Foundation, local Private Sector companies and through other forms of fund raising. With the assistance of social risk capital EDFC has been able to establish a dedicated and groundbreaking football team for young girls and women with physical and learning disabilities. This complements 8 other teams for individuals with a range of disabilities. The grant was also used to purchase equipment and specialist coaching.

Although the team is the first of its kind in the North West they play a game once a month and receive weekly coaching and instruction. Such has been the interest across the North West other football clubs are looking to establish similar teams.

EDFC is now looking at options to develop this project further, including the possibility of spinning it off as a charitable organisation. Key to this is accessing further funding, either grants (and sponsorship) or contracts, to drive the development of both the organisation and its range of coaching activities.

**IMPACT**

The project works with some 20 young women. Whilst there have been no formal employment outputs in terms of individuals accessing jobs, EDFC identified the following benefits:

- ❖ Improving the range of opportunities that are available to young women with a form of disability.
- ❖ The programme through its coaching activity has assisted individuals to become accustomed to a learning process and to improve their overall levels of fitness, and their health in turn.
- ❖ There have been visible improvements in each individual's attitude and self-esteem, largely as a result of increased social interaction.

**Wicked Fish Theatre Company**

**Grant: £ 4,690**

The Wicked Fish Theatre Co. (a name chosen by its members and users) works with individuals who have special educational needs.

Established by two volunteers who continue to provide creative, technical and management support the group provides a learning opportunity to individuals wishing to gain experience in community arts.

Many of the individuals participating in the group, there are 7 in total, had a negative experience of College. Many had been in College for 9 years yet had taken little out of the education process.

The MDF Social Risk Capital Grant is seen as being a first step to establishing the group as a specialist arts company. Run very much by its members, they influence the choice of activities, the group is like a "family" (seen as providing much needed peer support) and "provides theatre from the heart".

The grant itself is permitting each of the individuals to learn performing arts skills that will support their prospects of employment and, moreover, independent living. Participation in the performing arts is assisting individuals to build their self-confidence, independence and ability to communicate. Voice coaching is significantly assisting this.

The group, which meets twice a week, is beginning to perform in public contributing to DaDaFest (an arts festival for individuals with disabilities) and has performed for a major event hosted by Merseyside Police. Whilst still in its early days, the group hopes to access funding from Liverpool Culture Company to develop its activities and to start generating fee earning income from specific jobs and artistic commissions.

This funding would enable the group to employ part time or full time development workers and for it to increase the range of work it could undertake.

**IMPACT**

During the evaluation Community Concepts met with both the volunteers and members - service users of this project. Unsolicited and in their own words they identified that:

- ❖ This was the first programme that had treated them responsibly enabling them to choose what they wanted to do.
- ❖ Participation in this performing arts group had had more impact, in a shorter space of time, than many years of College. Essentially, they felt more enthused and empowered.
- ❖ Had given them new responsibility and skills particularly communications skills.
- ❖ The performing arts had contributed to them having a greater degree of independence.

From the volunteer's perspective the grant had:

- ❖ Provided the group with an opportunity to pilot a service for a group with special needs and demonstrate a track record of managing funding.

**Hoylake Hearing Impaired Group**

**Grant: £1,744**

Serving people with mild to severe hearing loss across the whole of Wirral, the group operates under Wirral CVS umbrella. The group meets once a fortnight and has developed over the past five years from a low ebb, with only eight active members, to having more than twenty regular attenders at its fortnightly events.

Originally the main focus of the group was the organisation of social events and the provision of peer group support. Additionally, legacy funding of c.£2,000, which was granted to the group upon the dissolution of a large charity, has been utilised to pay for a small number of lip reading sessions.

As the group developed, demand for lip reading skills grew. Initially this demand was met by a volunteer tutor, utilising videos and textbooks. However, since there is no other provision in Wirral and the nearest course for tutors is delivered in Manchester, funding was needed to pay for the professional tuition and equipment required. The group originally applied for £1,000, eventually this increased to £1,744, and subsequently paid for:

- ❖ The purchase of a loop system.
- ❖ Continuation of lip reading tuition.
- ❖ A lip reading video for each member.
- ❖ The establishment of a library.
- ❖ Two outings to theatres staging plays with Stage Text.

**IMPACT**

The biggest single impact of the project, as identified by the group, has been “enabling a group of individuals to get back in touch with society”.

In addition, benefits include:

- ❖ Improved lip reading skills and, subsequently, improved confidence and an ability to interact to a greater extent with the rest of society.
- ❖ The establishment strong links with Arrowe Park Hospital and Hearing Dogs.
- ❖ Increased awareness of the support available from MDF and the availability of other grants. However, the group won't be applying for any other funding at present as income from subscriptions and fund raising activities is sufficient.

**Lets Go For It**

**Grant: £5,000**

The group has been established for around six months, since the Liverpool Echo abandoned its "I Can Do That" magazine, a publication aimed at raising awareness of disability issues. The organisation has established a charity in order to publish the magazine independently of the Liverpool Echo. Now adopting the name "All Together Now" (ATN), the short-term aim is to employ a salesperson in order to generate advertising and sponsorship required to make ATN a sustainable social enterprise.

The motivation for applying for the grant came from not having any cash; having originally approached Objective 1, who informed ATN that they would not be eligible for support as they employ too few people.

Having not received any earlier grants, ATN would not have been established without this funding. Through the social risk capital programme, ATN has been able to commission three months consultancy support, enabling the establishment of a registered charity, developing a web site and commissioning training required to enable the magazine to function effectively.

**IMPACT**

The work carried out with the assistance of the social risk capital grant has assisted in promoting the charity and demonstrating an ability to deliver. As a result of the grant, ATN was in a position to successfully apply for Awards for All and NRF Community Chest funding.

In addition:

- ❖ The charity has accessed the Skill Works programme, accessing specific workforce development support.
- ❖ An MSEI Sustainability Grant application has been developed, with the support of the Social Enterprise Enablers (Blue Orchid), to fund a salesperson and editorial support.
- ❖ In addition, an application has been made to Liverpool Chamber under the Mersey Broadband fund to finance the website.

The grant has built the confidence of the group; particularly through the support provided by MDF and the simplicity of the process. ATN believe the people at MDF made the social risk capital programme accessible.

**Merseyside Stroke Network**

**Grant: £3,920**

The Network (MSN) was established c.9 years ago when an established organisation (Different Strokes) dissolved and redistributed its resources elsewhere. Members on Merseyside decided to remain at the Glaxo Centre and formed MSN.

The group, which serves “younger “ stroke survivors up to the age of 65, has around 200 members, of whom 35-40 attend regular meetings and events. In addition to providing opportunities to associate with other survivors, MSN aims to enable progression in terms of communication, manual skills (e.g. art) and building confidence.

The group has previously received a £1,200 grant from Awards for All, about 2 years ago.

Through the social risk capital funded project, the group could purchase art materials of the standard generally available to those attending colleges and formal tuition, block-book suitable accommodation at the Glaxo Centre and pay for a tutor.

In addition, the project enabled the group to provide a consistent programme, people therefore knew when meetings were taking place, and establish a further group in Bootle.

**IMPACT**

The grant has enabled people to make real progression, overcoming major barriers and providing mutual support through the development of a positive network of stroke survivors. Members who attended the art project have developed confidence and skills to attend other classes, e.g. Bluecoat Art Centre.

In addition:

- ❖ Many of those benefiting from the project weren't previously motivated to take up a positive interest in anything and, through the confidence developed as a result of the art project, have gone on to develop further skills, e.g. IT.
- ❖ The grant has left MSN better placed to access other funds. The Board of Trustees is now more confident in the ability of the group to fund raise and is considering an application for Lottery funding to enable the group to employ a full-time worker.

The group believes that it requires further support in drafting a feasibility study in respect of its future development plans.

**Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council**

**Grant: £4,500**

Originally known as the “Special Needs Committee”, the group was formed in the mid-late 1970’s and, although still entirely volunteer led and managed, now operates under the umbrella of the Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council as the Disability Integration Project.

Activities undertaken include services and support related to special needs provision for local residents, ranging from young children to older residents.

The VNC applied to MDF for support from the social risk capital fund as there did not appear to be any other way of funding the planned activities. As a result of the grant, 43 disabled young people were able to develop and integrate with other young people within a mainstream play scheme project. Through the project, the disabled young people acquired new skills and knowledge, enabling greater independence and improving their future labour market potential.

The group has been able to involve local volunteers in activities and workshops that would not have otherwise taken place. In addition, the project increased volunteer awareness of disabled issues and has enabled barriers to be overcome in terms of getting volunteers to undergo Police checks and undertake Child Protection Training.

**IMPACT**

These grants have assisted in the development of the community/voluntary sector through their impact on the ground.

*“You can chase the million pound grants but it’s these projects that have the impact”.*

Although the group do not believe that the grant has assisted significantly in securing further funds, it has ensured that the project has continued to make progress and possibly be better positioned to apply for funding in the future funding.

A particular benefit of the social risk capital fund has been the enabling of progress in terms of volunteer development, 12 have completed basic skills and child development training, and continued provision for the disabled young people in Vauxhall.

**Wirral ADD/HD Family Support Group**

**Grant: £3,000**

The group has been established for nine years, providing mutual support for parents of children with ADD/HD. The group operates on an informal drop-in rather than formal membership basis, with participants benefiting from information, advice, guidance, signposting and access to a library offering a range of relevant literature.

The group sought funding from the social risk capital fund programme as they had identified a gap in provision relating to the 16 to 19 years old age group. This group tended to fall between the support available for children and their families and the provision available to adults.

Through the grant, the group paid for a member with ADD to attend a coaching course and gain the relevant qualifications to establish a group for 16-19 year olds. In common with many undiagnosed cases, this volunteer had previously been in trouble with the law. These problems had led to a custodial sentence.

*“It’s about personal growth, since the course he uses methods to keep his own life on track and also helps others to avoid the problems he’s had.”*

**IMPACT**

Since attending the coaching course, the volunteer has also attended the local Youth Offending Team’s Community Panel training and undergone an enhanced CRB check in order to allow him to work with younger people. This has assisted the development of the group through:

- ❖ Enabling the provision of mentoring support.
- ❖ Enabling the Youth Offending Team to recognise the impact of ADD/HD and identify cases where intervention will prevent association with crime.
- ❖ Reducing the risk of further involvement in criminal activity through the provision of support to young people with ADD/HD.

In addition:

- ❖ The grant has left the group better placed to access other funds.
- ❖ The group is considering an application to Barnardos to fund activities for children with ADD/HD.
- ❖ The group has developed effective financial record keeping systems to support the management of future funding secured.
- ❖ Enabling the Youth Offending Team to recognise the impact of ADD/HD.

**Merseyside Regional Epilepsy Association**

**Grant: £1,652**

The Association was established in 1956 to provide support for epilepsy sufferers, giving opportunities for people to socialise, meet other sufferers and share concerns and experiences.

There are ten support groups across Merseyside and Cheshire, all of which are led by epilepsy sufferers. The Association provides support to people at the time of their diagnosis through a presence at the epilepsy clinic at Walton Hospital.

The group approached MDF for funding in order to pay for group leaders' training. Funding such activities is generally difficult, with income from membership fees, fundraising and street collections currently being used to fund two posts: a full-time Manager and a part-time Administrative Officer.

The social risk capital funding enabled the Association to pay for group leaders and deputies to receive professional training, including:

- ❖ Counselling Skills.
- ❖ Listening Skills.
- ❖ Support for new members.

**IMPACT**

As a result of the project, the Association feels that it now has a group of leaders that can be relied upon to provide people with the right information. Funding from MDF has assisted the work of the Association in:

- ❖ Removing the stigma that people with epilepsy face.
- ❖ Improving other people's understanding of what having epilepsy means.
- ❖ Providing appropriate help, advice and support.

## **MERSEYSIDE EXPANDING HORIZONS**

### **Merseyside Centre for Independent Living (MCIL)**

**Grant: £5,000**

As early as 1998 Liverpool City Council and the Disabled Association identified the need for a support service to assist individuals with independent living needs. MCIL, a member led group representing individuals with independent living needs, was established in 2001.

MCIL accessed a grant of £5,000 from the Merseyside Expanding Horizon's Social Risk Capital programme enabling the group to become incorporated (MCIL is a Company Limited by Guarantee and is applying for Charitable status). The grant has enabled, along with some funding from Liverpool City Council, to employ a part time development worker and have a dedicated office in Liverpool.

Since 2001 MCIL has grown to employ three people and now has contracts with the Department of Health and Liverpool City Council to provide an outreach service and provide advice and guidance on the "Direct Payments" initiative that encourages individuals to access the full range of benefits to support them to live independently.

### **IMPACT**

"It was a first step on the funding ladder for us"

"Social Risk Capital has helped us to build a track record of managing money...it helped us open a bank account and to have a presence...an office of our own"

MCIL identified that accessing an SRC grant contributed to or had the following impact

- ❖ Allowed the organisation to be established.
- ❖ Filled a gap in service provision – previously there wasn't a members group representing and supporting service users.
- ❖ Management of SRC and LCC money enabled MCIL to win an 18-month contract worth £100,000 from the Department of Health to support the implementation of Direct Payments.
- ❖ Enabled three individuals, all of whom have a form of disability, to be employed.

**Rampworx**

**Grant: £5,000**

Rampworx was established initially as a private company, a partnership between two individuals with an interest in skateboarding, with a view to developing a skateboarding and skating centre that would generate revenue from individuals being charged to use the centre.

In April 2002 the company converted into a charitable organisation. Rather than pursue commercial goals the organisation recognised that a dedicated and indoor skateboard park, based in South Sefton, could provide entertainment and diversionary activity for young people.

Charging young people to access the Rampworx centre, the organisation now turns over approximately £250,000 to £300,000 per annum and employs 4 full time and 3 part time workers.

Rampworx was successful in accessing MEH's Social Capital Fund. It has used the grant to support the development of new inter-agency partnerships e.g. Alchemy and Connexions, to work with youth services to identify disadvantaged young people who might wish to use the Rampworx centre and to purchase equipment and coaching that such young people can access. It has particularly sought to engage young girls.

**IMPACT**

*"The grant has enabled us to target young people who are excluded and get them into the centre"*

*"Provided young people with an alternative, that is fun and healthy"*

Whilst Rampworx has only recently accessed this grant, and it may be too early to quantify a real impact, the organisation pointed towards the following:

- ❖ Providing an alternative activity for young people who are disadvantaged and who might be at risk of committing anti-social behaviour.
- ❖ Offering a unique, fun and healthy learning experience through the provision of coaching.

**Lantern Project**

**Grant: £ 4,794**

The Lantern Project works with victims or “survivors” of abuse. A voluntary sector organisation, now working with 18 volunteers, the Lantern Project received £4,794 of social capital funding.

The grant enabled the organisation to develop its services to individuals in the Wirral MBC area. Without specialist support “survivors” of abuse often experience emotional breakdown, alcohol or drug related problems which in turn, in many cases, leads to anti-social behavioural issues, loss of employment and quite often imprisonment. Indeed, the Survivors Trust, a body that contributes to a Government Think Tank on employability issues highlights the negative consequences abuse, and a failure to provide support, can have on an individual’s career and general employment prospects.

Specifically, the grant has supported the production of a handbook for “survivors” and has allowed a drop in surgery to be offered twice a week. Individuals requiring specialist support are able to meet volunteers and talk and work through their problems. With a long waiting list to meet counsellors in the health sector, often approaching a year, the Lantern Project can commit to meeting victims of abuse quicker and thus be more proactive in addressing the needs of individuals.

The Lantern Project has, subsequently, also secured £5,000 from the Awards for All programme to develop a website that now receives ½ million hits per annum (it was only created in 2003). Since 2003 the organisation has become a registered Charity and has begun to develop partnership arrangements and referral mechanisms with local prisons (who report a large number of inmates with a history of abuse), GP’s surgeries and the local Social Services Department.

**IMPACT**

At an organisational level:

- ❖ Lantern Project went on to access a further £16,000 of grant funding during the year 2003 /04 which was due to the track record they had developed in accessing social capital funding and Awards for All.
- ❖ The organisation now contracts with the local PCT and Wirral MBC Social Services to deliver support services to “survivors” and referred patients. It receives £8,500 per annum from these organisations that cover the core costs (volunteer costs) of delivering the services.

At an individual level:

- ❖ Over 50 individuals from the Wirral access the services of the project.
- ❖ The development of the project means that assistance is more readily accessible and responsive (measured in speed of response) to victims of abuse.
- ❖ Individuals, in receipt of support, have demonstrated increased levels of inter-action, confidence and ability to lead an active and independent life.

**Active 8**

**Grant: £ 4,794**

The Active 8 project was created to address low levels of participation by disabled individuals from BME groups in gyms and limited access to physical exercise by removing barriers to participation.

Originally an idea of the Toxteth Health Forum (working with BME groups in the Toxteth and Granby areas), the Active 8 project sought grant assistance from the Social Capital Fund to support BME groups from across Liverpool, although primarily South and Central Liverpool, to participate in gym and physical activity.

With a small scale Sport Action grant (£500) Active 8 was able to support eight people to access gym facilities at Greenbank Academy. Building upon this, Active 8 accessed Social Capital Fund support to drive the initial project forward.

With the grant a formal Management Committee was established (this draws upon people from the local community), which has allowed the group to function and to support some 25 individuals, over the course of a year, to access the gym. The grant has enabled barriers to access such as transport costs and the costs of using the gym to be addressed and removed. Active 8 subsidise the costs of accessing the gym.

Active 8 finds itself at a critical stage in its development. The Management Committee continues to develop but has a number of training needs if it is to “step up”. The organisation also needs to secure further funding to drive forward the project and increase access to gyms and physical exercise. They would like to recruit a development worker to drive forward this development and develop links with organisations charged with promoting sport and healthy living.

**IMPACT**

- ❖ Has enabled a new organisation to be established.
- ❖ Promotion of exercise to a disadvantaged community with the obvious health benefits that that brings.
- ❖ Improved mobility of individuals.

**Wirral Fibromyalgia Support**

**Grant: £ 3,170**

Wirral Fibromyalgia Support (WFS) is a Charitable organisation that was established to provide support to fibromyalgia sufferers across Wirral.

The organisation applied simultaneously for an Expanding Horizons and Health Action Zone (HAZ) grant to both set up the group and obtain support to run the group including funding to pay for a scribe to take notes and minutes of meetings.

Whilst £1,500 was obtained from the HAZ, the initial request for grant from Expanding Horizons was rejected and it would appear, from discussions with WFS, that the national fibromyalgia charity was given a grant.

Following that decision, WFS submitted a further, and this time successful, grant request. The result of this was that two organisations with similar aims, one a local group and the other a national charity (albeit a very small one) operate similar projects in the Wirral. The value of funding two similar projects that work with approximately 40-50 fibromyalgia sufferers each must be questioned (WFS has 43 members currently).

Notwithstanding the above comment WFS, since accessing HAZ and MEH grants, have gone on to work with Liverpool John Moores University and Arrowe Park on a paediatric-fibromyalgia research project and have secured £5,000 from Comic Relief (The Fighting Injustice Fund) and 2 Neighbourhood Renewal Fund grants for £640 and £1,550 respectively.

MEH funding has enabled the group, which has no paid staff and relies heavily upon 9 very active volunteers, to meet regularly, publish a newsletter and hold social events. Critically, though, the funding has enabled the group to develop its remit beyond simple meetings and social events to begin to become an organisation that contributes to research activity and campaigns for the rights of fibromyalgia sufferers.

*“none of that over complexity.....obviously for groups like us who are starting up”*

*“given us bidding experience and a track record.....managing this funding certainly enabled us to access Comic Relief funding”*

**IMPACT**

- ❖ Has enabled a specific Wirral based organisation to be established that represents fibromyalgia sufferers.
- ❖ Funding from HAZ and MEH has enabled WFS to lever in additional funding and become more involved in research projects.

**Breckfield HIM Project**

**Grant: £ 3,500**

Breckfield HIM Project was established in 2002. The project is a service offered by Breckfield and North Everton Neighbourhood Council, who operate in North Liverpool.

The grant was used to assist an informal group of male volunteers to establish a dedicated community group that would work towards improving the health of men in the Anfield area.

The grant supported the group to engage and retain more volunteers in the project and to provide some initial capacity building training. The result of this is that of the 10 volunteers working on the project originally, it started in 2002, 6 are still active volunteers and 3 are involved in the project's management committee.

The grant also supported a local healthy living newsletter, published four times a year, and enabled a piece of community research to be undertaken. Alongside this the volunteers undertook regular outreach work in the community in pubs and snooker halls raising awareness of health related issues.

So successful has the project been in raising awareness of health related issues to men locally the PCT (Central Liverpool PCT) has recently entered into a three year contract with the group to provide health related advice and guidance support and to employ a dedicated outreach health worker.

**IMPACT**

- ❖ The grant has directly contributed to Breckfield HIM obtaining a 3 year PCT contract worth £90,000 in total
- ❖ Since the initial MEH grant was awarded in 2002 the project has been awarded £6,900 of additional grants and will recruit their first full time employee shortly
- ❖ Project turnover has increased from approximately £4,500 per annum in 2002 to £15,500 now. This is set to increase further with the award of a PCT grant

**Concrete Communications**

**Grant: £ 4,900**

Concrete Communications is a project that was inspired by Birkenhead Youth Project and a community sculptor. The redevelopment of Rock Ferry Library and the One Stop Shop offered an opportunity to undertake a community art project. Concrete Communications was established to take forward such a piece of public art. Securing £6,900, of which £4,900 came from Merseyside Expanding Horizons, Concrete Communications, over a period of 4 months, worked with approximately 20 young people aged 14 and over to design and produce a sculpture to be located outside the new library. The grant purchased tools, provided some limited expenses to the young people and covered the costs of holding two practical workshops each week for some 16 weeks, which offered experiential learning opportunities.

Concrete Communications was a new concept in a number of ways; it tested a model for engaging disaffected young people into sculpture and public and community art, it sought to develop new skills and to establish whether the model could be developed into a stand alone, income generating organisation or community group.

With regards to engaging the young people Concrete Communications appears to have been an unqualified success. The project reported high rates of attendance on a regular basis but more importantly highlighted changes in the attitude of the young people. Completing the sculpture provided each young person with a sense of purpose and something that they had a degree of ownership in.

*“ the journey was more important than when we got there [completing the sculpture] .....the grant enabled us to make a difference.....it was art in the making and enabled us to affect the lives of the people involved in the project”*

**IMPACT**

From a neighbourhood perspective, the impact appears significant:

- ❖ Not only was a piece of public art produced but in producing it there appears to have been a reduction in youth disorder and anti-social behaviour.
- ❖ Local shops provided significant amounts of in kind support to the project, particularly on the day when the project was inaugurated, providing both food and drink to the young people.
- ❖ The local community police officers were supportive of the project as they had seen real changes in the attitude of a number of young people.
- ❖ Whilst the project has now finished the concept of Concrete Communications is attracting interest from elsewhere.
- ❖ A private sector Land Developer based in Bury (a local authority that is committed to ensuring that 1% of the cost of all new developments is invested in public art) has approached the community sculptor, who led this project, to take forward a £25,000 commission to develop a piece of public art using local young people.
- ❖ The model also has potential to be replicated across Merseyside as part of the Capital of Culture celebrations.

## ST HELENS COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES FUND

### Friends of Cowley Hill School

Grant: £ 2,100

The Social Inclusion Officer within Cowley High School, a post funded by St Helens LEA, accessed a grant from the Community Opportunities for the Friends of Cowley Hill School.

The grant was used to purchase equipment for the Young Persons' room in the School and to purchase equipment to enable young people from the school, particularly children from disadvantaged backgrounds, to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Youth Award Scheme.

Over time, and particularly with the support of this grant (Friends of Cowley Hill have had access to smaller grants previously) the Social Inclusion Officer has been able to grow the number of individuals joining the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and widen participation. From 12 young people 7 years ago there are now 176 individuals, aged 14-18, on the scheme.

The impact of the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, its role within the school curriculum and the way in which it has assisted young people from disadvantaged areas to participate has been recognised and praised by OFSTED.

At the time of undertaking the evaluation the project was seeking to access further grant. Whilst it is clear that the Award scheme has had tangible benefits to both the school and young people it has not proved possible to mainstream the project.

### IMPACT

*"The grant has enabled us to support young people, and particularly those who may be disadvantaged or low achievers"*

*"The programme has contributed to building confidence and a sense of achievement across the whole school and low achieving groups in particular."*

- ❖ The programme has raised levels of confidence and self-esteem in individuals at risk of under-achievement.
- ❖ Has reduced truancy and there have been increases in participation and attainment among those identified as being at risk of low or under achievement.
- ❖ Has promoted a better attitude and improved behaviour amongst the target cohort – the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme provides a platform for further learning and a healthy lifestyle.
- ❖ High numbers (almost 50% of those working to the Gold Award) go on to Higher Education.

**Painting for Pleasure**

**Grant: £ 1,545**

The Painting for Pleasure project was established by a group of mature female learners (over 50) in 2004. Poor experience of a College course that failed to “wrap the course around the needs of its learners” made them consider alternatives.

Based in Rainhill, a small group of women (about 12 in number) decided to establish their own community group to pursue a programme of learning based around art and painting. Having agreed a constitution and established themselves as a group Painting for Pleasure accessed a grant of £1,545. This, along with membership fees and a grant of £100 from Helping Hands (which was obtained after the COF grant) has enabled Painting with Pleasure to meet weekly and pay for more appropriate and learner centred provision.

It is possibly too early to identify whether the grant has had or will have a significant impact other than keeping a group of individuals in learning. The group recognises that the grant will enable them to maintain a programme of learning for a period of 12 months but acknowledges that there may well be difficulty in continuing the group beyond this period if they cannot access any further grant or mainstream their project. They have no plans to significantly grow the group as they feel that this would be inappropriate.

**IMPACT**

- ❖ Enabled a new community group to be established that promotes learning activities among more mature individuals.
- ❖ Demonstrates the need for more learner centred provision.

Whilst the project has only just started the group points towards the following:

- ❖ The project, whilst a learning activity, also contributes to improved health.
- ❖ Has contributed to breaking the isolation of individuals.

**Dawn Patrol**

**Grant: £ 3,927**

Dawn Patrol was started in 2000. Whilst Dawn Patrol is a stand-alone organisation with a constitution it operates from the British Red Cross and is based in Earlestown near St Helens. The project employs one part time worker.

The Dawn Patrol concept utilises school children in Primary and Secondary schools to pass by the houses of individuals, particularly pensioners but people who also have independent living needs, who live alone. Using a simple card in the window scheme (the No. 1 relating to Monday, No. 2 relating to Tuesday etc) young people can identify if the card (and number) does not match the day if there is a potential problem. If there is an issue, the young person notifies the school who in turn notifies the Dawn Patrol who examines the issue.

Operating initially in the Newton le Willows area it now operates in Parr and Haydock and has plans to widen further its service coverage. Currently some 8 schools are involved in the Dawn Patrol scheme. 80 young people check on some 75 people who live on their own.

The grant from the Communities Opportunities Fund enabled Dawn Patrol to purchase a computer, printer and some office equipment and to produce a newsletter that is sent to local schools, community groups and organisations working with individuals with independent living needs.

The grant has made a significant difference enabling increased awareness raising of the scheme. New schools have joined, and continue to join, seeing benefits in the scheme. Volunteering to become a Dawn Patroller ties in with the Citizenship element of the national curriculum and can be accredited.

Since obtaining the grant from Community Opportunities Fund Dawn Patrol has secured a PCT contract (this covers the core running costs of Dawn patrol) and has received "positive soundings" from the Lottery Fund for funding to develop the project. This will enable Dawn Patrol to develop over the next three years and increase the number of schools it will work with and to cover other areas of St Helens including Pocket Nook and Thatto Heath

*"The grant has been really positive.....has enabled us to demonstrate our ability to manage money and to market ourselves better"*

**IMPACT**

- ❖ Has enabled the Dawn Patrol scheme to grow to cover 8 schools, 80 young people and 75 individuals with care needs.
- ❖ Central to enabling Dawn patrol to obtain a PCT contract and demonstrate to the Lottery a track record of managing funding and delivering a service.
- ❖ Has supported a scheme that promotes and encourages active citizenship.

**Pressure Off Parents**

**Grant: £ 4,300**

Pressure Off Parents (POP) was established in 2000. The group, comprising three parents initially, received a small start up grant from the local Education Action Zone to provide support in the Thatto Heath area of St Helens. POP was set up to provide to support advice and support to parents of children with special educational needs and other problems e.g. victims of bullying.

The grant of £4,300 has enabled POP to promote itself more and widen its geographical service coverage. The grant enabled the purchase of IT equipment and the organisations members to access training and to produce a regular newsletter alerting parents of new developments and the activities of the group. It also covered some volunteer expenses.

As a result of the grant the organisation now provides an advocacy and signposting service providing advice and guidance to parents across the entire Borough. The organisation now has 12 members or volunteers and works with over 40 parents and their children each year. It provides advice and support on how to diagnose issues, stress management and how to support young people.

The award of the COF grant put the group onto a “more stable footing” and provided it with sufficient funding to develop itself. In the year that it was granted COF funding POP secured two additional grants totalling £11,094; £4,860 from Awards for All and £6,234 from the Local Network Fund to fund a calendar of events including staying at school activity.

The organisation is now looking at plans for future development and is considering how and with whom it might be able to contract for the provision of its support services. However, there is a desire to keep the group.

**IMPACT**

- ❖ Enabled the community group to grow both in terms of members and service users.
- ❖ Has provided a forum with individuals with common problems to meet and share their experiences and, over the long term, support their children to fulfil their potential.
- ❖ Has enabled the group’s members to access specialist training e.g. Brain Stimulation training and to improve their knowledge of IT through the development of a newsletter.

Additionally, through the development of the group and its activities, POP indicated that:

- ❖ The children of users have benefited in terms of improved parental support.
- ❖ That there are examples of children of members, who had achieved no or very few GCSEs, beginning to progress into Further Education and access post-16 provision.

**Parr Hall Millennium Green**

**Grant: £ 1,587**

The Parr Hall Millennium Green project received two grants totally £3,500 from St Helens COF and the Groundwork Trust.

The grants were obtained for a number of reasons but primarily to provide some stimulus to a recently developed community group, to provide some signs for a site of local historical interest and to support a small-scale community research project.

The Parr Hall Millennium Green project involves a group of volunteers who are committed to developing Parr Hall as a historical site and tourist destination, the Hall has links to Catherine Parr.

“Community Opportunities Fund support has been the key that has unlocked our potential to access further funding”

The grant from COF enabled local volunteers to undergo a training project that taught them how to undertake community-based research and to establish the views of local residents as to how the Hall might be redeveloped. Apparently, research to identify local views on redevelopment was requested by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The COF grant has given impetus to a small community group and has enabled them to present a strong case for Heritage Lottery Fund support to redevelop Parr Hall and its immediate surroundings.

It would appear that there is a strong case for the project to be funded and this is put down to the contribution of the Community Opportunities Fund.

**IMPACT**

- ❖ Kickstarted a community group and has provided training to volunteers.
- ❖ The grant and the training that was provided has given volunteers new skills but moreover has laid the foundations for a successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

**STAR Project**

**Grant: £5,000**

The STAR centre exists to support the parents of disabled children. The group applied for the social risk capital grant in order to fill a gap in provision that had been identified in terms of facilitating parent participation. The need to approach the fund was determined by the unwillingness of statutory bodies to support this work.

The grant was utilised to:

- ❖ Provide training for eight volunteers.
- ❖ Carry out an audit of 33 services.
- ❖ Enable parent participation in Action Learning Sets, comprising 50% parents and 50% professionals.

Since the project, STAR has been recognised as a model of good practice by the National Council for Disabled Parents and is the subject of a study by the University of York's Social Policy Research Unit.

**IMPACT**

The centre is now a children's' centre offering the following services:

- ❖ Pre-school.
- ❖ Portage.
- ❖ Outreach.
- ❖ Assessment.

As a result of the project, parents are now actively taking the lead in the design of services. This follows a training programme delivered to 20 parents, of whom 11 are still actively involved in a research programme covering 200 households, to evaluate delivery models, service provision, budgets and value for money.

## **SOUTH SEFTON KEY FUND**

### **Litherland Community Resource Centre**

**Grant: £8,527**

Established in 1998 with a cocktail of funding, including £54,000 ERDF, £14,400 from Sefton MBC Housing and miscellaneous small donations from a range of bodies, e.g. Sefton MBC Leisure.

The group operates a Resource Centre from which the following are delivered:

- ❖ Basic Maths and English.
- ❖ ECDL.
- ❖ Floristry.
- ❖ Signposting to local public services.
- ❖ Fax and photocopying service.

The motivation for applying for the grant came from the requirement to replace six ageing PCs. The organisation went to the Key Fund as it appeared to be the easiest in terms of paperwork and access. Without the grant the IT suite would have become obsolete, denying formal courses to 30-40 people per week, plus those who use the centre on a drop-in basis.

*“It’s peanuts relatively, but it makes an immense difference to communities.”*

### **IMPACT**

The group believes that it is hard to quantify the total picture in terms of skills development and employability as those who progress to employment and further training tend to just move on without informing the centre. However, following the social risk capital grant project, Litherland Community Resource Centre reports the following benefits:

- ❖ The grant has helped with seeking further funding as it is recognised as “the first step on the funding ladder”.
- ❖ The centre has applied to SRB 6 for funding to finance the post of Manager / Development Worker to enable the group to plan for sustainability over a ten-year timescale.
- ❖ The applications for further funding can be handled in-house.

**SING**

**Grant: £9,980**

SING was established November 1997 by a group of local people and, whilst remaining an entirely voluntary-led organisation, now employs seven part-time staff. The organisation currently provides an "Info Shop" (with a Housing Market Renewal focus), an IT suite and accommodation for courses, childcare and meetings.

Previously, the organisation has received funding from:

- ❖ Pathways ERDF.
- ❖ HAZ.
- ❖ Children in Need.
- ❖ SRB.
- ❖ S Sefton ILM.
- ❖ A range of small funds.

SING has a policy of only applying for money to deliver specific objectives, rather than simply applying for any available funds. The motivation for applying for the grant came from the lack of other options.

The grant enabled SING to provide weekend and evening opening, enabling more groups to be able to use the premises, and allowed the volunteers to take a step back from the full-time operation of the organisation to undertake planning.

*"You always know where you stand. Val listens and understands; the process is open and transparent to the same extent with everyone."*

**IMPACT**

The Key Fund has been used specifically to move people on, providing structured supervision, management and training so that individuals can progress, develop skills and improve their employment options.

Through the grant, people have got involved in networks such as CVS and CFM, and subsequently developed the confidence and awareness to benefit from programmes such as Working With Children.

With regard to the development of the organisation, the grant has enable SING to:

- ❖ Plan and look towards future funding and income generation.
- ❖ Negotiate an SLA regarding the use of the Info Shop by agencies involved in Housing Market Renewal.
- ❖ Increase the number of agencies that use their centre as base for the delivery of projects and services.

**Sefton ABC & Community Gym**

**Grant: £3,512**

The Amateur Boxing Club has been established for over 30 years. However, the organisation has been operating in its current form since 2001. The organisation is led by a team of volunteers, who are keen to extend use of the facility through all sections of the local community.

Since 2001, the gym has been completely renovated and the aim in the near future is to increase the use of the facility by local women.

The grant enabled the organisation to purchase two new running machines, further diversifying the facilities available away from the tradition boxing related equipment, a PC and the installation of a telephone line.

The computerisation of the organisation's operation has significantly improved its effectiveness:

- ❖ E-mail facilitates rapid circulation of team lists to various Amateur Boxing authorities and other clubs, enabling matches to be arranged without the delays associated with the conventional postal system,
- ❖ Members' records are more easily kept up to date.
- ❖ The group can now maintain accounts to the standards required by the Inland Revenue Sports Clubs Scheme – Sefton is one of only two amateur boxing clubs in the UK to be accepted onto the scheme.

*"This has moved us on 100%. Not just with the equipment but because people can now see the quality of our set-up. Everything is now in place to move on."*

**IMPACT**

As a result of the grant, Sefton ABC & Community Gym has developed its capacity in terms of:

- ❖ Enabling coaches to access accredited courses in Diversity and Working With Children.
- ❖ Maintaining up to date and accurate records of coaches and volunteers' Criminal Records Bureau checks.
- ❖ Professionalising internal operations and external communications.

**LOVAR**

**Grant: £9,638**

The LOVAR project was established six months ago by refugee volunteers who had been through the process of seeking asylum in Sefton and wished to provide a support service for those currently going through similar experiences.

The organisation provides a drop-in IT suite that provides e-mail, job search and IT skills training to beneficiaries. In addition, LOVAR provides outreach to community organisations and schools, explaining to local residents the motivation behind people fleeing places such as Iraq and Somalia. The project also assists in developing the confidence of asylum seekers through helping them to understand the culture of the UK.

LOVAR applied to the fund as it supports a diverse range of activity, allowing for all aspects of the group's work, and provides prompt responses to applications. The group cited the contrast with their application for a similar amount of funding from the Home Office, that took a number of months to progress to approval.

*"Were it not for the grant we would not be here. That cheque gave us a lease of life."*

**IMPACT**

In addition to the "hard" output of three people finding employment as a direct result of the project, the grant has "assisted immensely" in the development of LOVAR:

- ❖ The Management Committee now has eight volunteer members, with the fund effectively enabling LOVAR to serve as a "School" in developing their organisational management skills.
- ❖ Through the project, school students and the wider community have a broader view of race relations and issues around asylum.

In addition, the local community now has access to IT facilities until 7 pm (the facility at the nearby community centre closes at 3.30 pm).

LOVAR intends to move to the next stage in its organisational development and, in doing so, will be working with the Community Foundation and other partners identified as a result of this project.

**Netherton Park Community Association**

**Grant: £4,290**

The Association has been established for 18 years, providing a range of facilities and services, including:

- ❖ After school clubs.
- ❖ Football teams.
- ❖ Bingo.
- ❖ Under 10's and Over 10's clubs.

In addition, the Association provides accommodation to the local Christian Fellowship group, the Scouts and Beavers.

The Association operates from a community centre that is leased on a peppercorn rent from Sefton MBC. In addition, NPCA receives a grant to cover running costs.

Grant funding was sought to fund the costs of running a summer play scheme for over 350 children. In addition to enabling the employment of five paid workers, the grant allowed the association to provide training to 35 volunteers, who supported the paid staff, in health and safety and food hygiene.

**IMPACT**

The Association is credited with playing a key role in the improvements that have taken place on the Netherton Park estate. Without support from social risk capital funding, the Association would not be in a position to deliver the services it currently does, including an after school club that operates at 100% capacity.

Specifically, the project has, through providing training and volunteering opportunities, provided routes to the labour market for local people. This is illustrated in the number of requests for references from employers considering employing volunteers.

## 5. Findings

### Purpose of the Evaluation

- 5.1 At this point it is worth recapping the broad objectives and rationale for this evaluation. The development of four social risk capital programmes, a vehicle for investing in Merseyside's social capital infrastructure, was an innovative feature of the current Objective 1 Programme. As that programme begins to draw to a close and arrangements for a successor programme or strategy are being developed it was felt appropriate to undertake an evaluation of these four operational programmes.
- 5.2 The focus of this evaluation was fourfold; to evaluate the processes and procedural arrangements underpinning the delivery of social risk capital funding; assessing the outcomes and impact of activities supported through the 4 social risk capital programmes; identifying good practice to support continuous improvement and undertaking a gap analysis to establish whether there remain any significant and unmet development needs.

### Need for Programme

- 5.3 Social risk capital programmes, which channel resources into the region's social capital infrastructure, fulfil a unique role. For the first time comprehensive arrangements have been put in place to enable small groups to access initial grant funding and to develop their capacity to deliver services to their local communities and disadvantaged groups.
- 5.4 Indeed, the development of 4 social risk capital programmes spanning the whole of Merseyside is in itself a success. Previously small grant programmes, for both individuals and communities, had been restricted to narrowly defined geographical areas. In developing 4 social risk capital programmes one of the overriding principles of the Objective 1 Programme, namely greater and more open access to funding, has been achieved.
- 5.5 It must be recognised that social risk capital programmes differ significantly from more mainstream Objective 1 projects in the sense that they exist to pilot or test bed new approaches to social inclusion, they are specifically targeted at groups of individuals and communities (the resources are meant to empower them to design, develop and deliver activities that tackle social exclusion) and seek to develop a social capital infrastructure. The concept of "risk", as in social risk capital, is also a feature. It recognises that in piloting activity there will be mixed levels of success and impact.

### Development of Local Social Capital Infrastructure

- 5.6 One of the current Objective 1 Programme's priorities is concerned with reducing levels of social exclusion locally. The programme also stresses the role that individuals themselves can play in promoting social inclusion.
- 5.7 In evaluating these 4 social risk capital programmes, and in reviewing the range of management information available to us, Community Concepts Ltd have been able to establish that some 469 groups or communities have been assisted to develop projects and services that support their local areas and support efforts to increase social inclusion.

5.8 The position that the development of social capital is crucial to the achievement of social inclusion and economic development initiatives is supported by the Performance and Innovation Unit (April 2002), which identified the potential benefits of investment in social capital that are directly relevant to the aims and objectives of the Merseyside Objective One programme:

- ❖ Higher levels of, and growth in, GDP.
- ❖ Efficient functioning of labour markets.
- ❖ Improved educational attainment.
- ❖ Lower levels of crime.
- ❖ Better health.
- ❖ Improved effectiveness of institutions of government.

5.9 The four social risk capital programmes fulfil a unique role in Merseyside in terms of developing a local social capital infrastructure. The investment provided by the Merseyside Objective 1 Programme has enabled communities, both in terms of neighbourhoods and communities of interest, to progress through a “social capital continuum”:



The programme has succeeded in building upon the region’s existing, strong bonding social capital, i.e. informal local networks of individuals with common characteristics and/or interests, through enabling the establishment and development of new organisations, groups and activities.

5.10 Put simply, the 4 social risk capital programmes have acted as a catalyst for change and have enabled groups to access funding to develop a myriad projects that tackle social exclusion. Without the existence of these four social risk capital programmes it is unlikely that such a diverse range of innovative projects and services, which target disadvantaged groups and communities, could have been developed on such a scale.

5.11 As such the development of social capital has enabled a large number of individuals and groups of individuals to bond and to support them to develop ideas and services that are intended to promote social inclusion and the employability of individuals. In total some 469 groups or organisations, with the aid of social risk capital funding, have been assisted to make that most important first step or transition to becoming a more formalised

5.12 What is also apparent from a review of the projects that Community Concepts Ltd randomly reviewed is that, in many cases, it has enabled a series of new relationships to develop; between individuals and communities and, in its widest sense, public services. This “bridging” has enabled groups, for the first time in many cases, to become involved in the wider regeneration process fulfilling a principal requirement of the Government’s Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, namely the involvement of communities and neighbourhoods.

- 5.13 Furthermore, the development of new organisations has enabled individuals across Merseyside to increase their connections with people and organisations that would not previously have been seen as sharing the characteristics or interests that influenced the initial emergence of bonding social capital. This process has resulted in growth in bridging social capital, the form of social capital most commonly associated with enabling labour market progression
- 5.14 In terms of short-term impact, the social risk capital programmes have enabled more organisations to develop new, and build upon, existing links with policy makers and mainstream funders, principally those in the public sector who contract with service providers. In the context of user centred service delivery, a principle at the core of contemporary regeneration and economic development policy, these relationships, known collectively as linking social capital, are crucial to effective policy design, development and implementation.

### **Developing Access to the Merseyside Objective 1 Programme**

- 5.15 For new, emerging and smaller voluntary and community groups, the social risk capital programmes fill a niche role, providing a bridge or path to larger grants, service level agreements and contracts. The existence of these programmes has enabled a significant number of groups to access Objective 1 Programme resources for the first time.
- 5.16 Through providing organisations with experience of managing projects and associated budgets, the programme can act as an entry mechanism for organisations seeking to upscale their activities, build for sustainability or access mainstream funding. Without the existence of this “bridging” social capital it is highly unlikely that many of the groups supported would have accessed funding. This is largely due to the fact that the Merseyside Objective 1 Programme, whilst having strategic priorities, must balance strategic and operational priorities and manage an appropriate number of projects. In practice this means that only projects that request substantial resources, generally over £25,000 are able to access funding.

### **Enabling the Development of Social Capital in Merseyside**

- 5.17 The existence of the 4 social risk capital funding programmes has proved successful in providing small groups with an opportunity to access and manage EU funding. This has enabled these small groups to demonstrate a track record in the use and management of public funding.
- 5.18 From the review of projects it is clear that a significant number of groups have accessed social risk capital funding and have then proceeded to access “next phase” funding. Whilst this is the case not all groups have opted to access further funding. This may be because they do not feel that they require it or they feel that they do not wish to develop their group or organisation further.

5.19 Notwithstanding this there are examples or case studies that demonstrate both the success and impact the four programmes have had in developing a local stock of social capital. These include:

- ❖ The Breckfield HIM Project – a small grant of £3,500 enabled a small volunteer group to develop and test a new health improvement programme for men. The grant support enabled volunteers to be trained to undertake research and offer outreach health advice. The project was perceived to be a significant success that it now has a three-year contract from the local PCT worth £90,000 in total. This has, in turn, enabled a dedicated health worker to be employed.
- ❖ Litherland Resource Centre – a small grant to a local group to promote learning provided the catalyst for the group to step up and access a much larger grant from the Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities Programme.

5.20 Although social risk capital funding support, for many, does facilitate a “step-up”, enabling access to other funding (be they grant or contract based) opportunities for other organisations the level of financial support offered is not sufficient to enable the transition to larger scale funding and contractual arrangements. For many the step from £5,000 or £10,000 to larger grants such as £30,000 is still a step too far. In many such cases, organisations go on to access further small-scale funding including Awards for All, Local Network Fund and Neighbourhood Learning Chest, which offer additional funding.

5.21 Additionally, a large number of volunteer led organisations, both new start and long standing, that continue to contribute to Merseyside’s stock of local social capital, do not aspire to expand their activities or enter the larger funding arenas. Rather, they have a discrete purpose, requiring minimal amounts of funding. Never the less, such organisations play a key role, jointly and severally, in maintaining social cohesion and providing the base upon which a successful economy can be developed.

### **Socio-Economic Impact**

5.22 Each of the four social risk capital programmes are different in nature yet, in addition to their overarching desire to create and develop social capital locally, are bound by a common requirement (a requirement of European Social Fund support) to target and work with groups who are disadvantaged within the labour market and promote the employability of such individuals through opportunities to access advice, education, training, volunteering and jobs.

5.23 The Merseyside Objective 1 Programme also places an emphasis upon growing organisations by providing support to enable organisations to grow their turnover and Net Value Added.

5.24 In visiting the projects selected for review, primarily those that had already completed their activities, it soon became clear that the four social risk capital programmes had delivered significant socio-economic impact locally.

- 5.25 This impact took a number of forms. Much of the impact was tangible and capable of measurement. For example, it was possible to establish where social risk capital funding had proved to be the trigger or catalyst for establishing an organisation, job creation, the delivery of training or organisational growth.
- 5.26 In talking to the recipients of social risk capital funding it soon became clear, however, that the true level, or full extent, of impact of the four social risk capital programmes might not always be captured because it is either not measured or is not always capable of being measured.
- 5.27 In addition to generating measurable and “hard” outputs, many of the projects and groups in receipt of social risk capital funding have also generated “softer” outputs and impact that is less measurable. Examples of this includes groups or projects that have worked with young people and where, it is reported, there has been a reduction in crime and disorder locally. Whilst it may not be possible to measure this impact, the fact that stakeholders such as the local Youth Offending Team and Community Safety Partnership acknowledge the value of such projects is evidence that such projects and groups, with the benefit of social capital funding, have made a difference and an impact.
- 5.28 In terms of tangible benefits the four programmes have contributed significantly to the local economy. From the projects or case studies that Community Concepts Ltd selected, it is evident that the four social risk capital fund programmes have delivered the following benefits:

❖ Organisational Growth – Assisting Growth in Turnover

There are clear examples, and some of these have been touched upon previously, of organisations who have received social risk capital funding support going to successfully apply for further funding, be it grant or contract based funding.

Examples of this include:

- Merseyside Centre for Independent Living – where a small grant of £5,000 led to an 18-month contract worth £100,000 being awarded by the Department of Health and Liverpool City Council.
- The Lantern Project – securing £16,000 of additional grant and contract funding from the local authority and PCT following the award of social risk capital funding.
- Breckfield HIM Project – being awarded a three-year PCT contract worth £90,000 following the initial award of grant support.

❖ Targeting Disadvantaged Groups

All of the projects that were visited by Community Concepts Ltd were able to demonstrate that they were targeting groups who had been prioritised by the Objective 1 programme. A broad range of groups were supported by the 4 social risk capital programmes including:

- Disabled People – all of the Merseyside Disability Federation projects targeted this group.
- Young People – particularly those who were at risk of dropping out of full time education and training and becoming excluded. Examples include Concrete Communications and Rampworx.
- Older People – an example of this was Painting for Pleasure that provided lifelong learning opportunities for the over 50's.
- Parents / Single Parents – examples include Pressure Off Parents and the STAR Family Centre projects that provided training to parents.
- Individuals in Disadvantaged Communities – the Litherland Community Resource Centre and SING projects are examples of projects providing new learning resources for local communities and engaging local residents.
- BME Groups – the Active 8 project is a good example of a project targeting this group and seeking to engage them through a leisure and health improvement programme.
- Refugees & Asylum Seekers – the LOVAR project is an example of a project targeting this group.

### ❖ Providing Advice and Guidance

Many of the projects that were reviewed provided a form of advice, guidance or mentoring to individuals. The focus of this advice and guidance was to assist individuals to overcome barriers to finding or remaining in employment.

Many of the social risk capital funded projects target a niche group with a specific need. The focus of the advice and guidance is usually upon providing intensive levels of support and as such the number of users accessing advice and guidance support is usually quite small. Examples of projects providing advice and guidance include:

- The Lantern Project and Fire In Ice – these projects provide intensive support, in the form of ongoing advice and guidance, to some 100 individuals who have been victims of domestic or sexual abuse.
- The Merseyside Regional Epilepsy Association – providing advice and support to individuals who feel that their condition is a barrier to finding or remaining in employment.

### ❖ Creating Volunteering Opportunities

Almost without exception each of the projects developed and relied heavily upon volunteers to make their projects successful. Examples of projects providing volunteering opportunities include:

- The Lantern Project – since its inception the project can now count upon 18 active volunteers.
- Dawn Patrol – whilst the project is set to grow even further it involves some 80 young volunteers on a regular basis.

### ❖ Providing Education and Training Opportunities

The projects supported by the social risk capital programmes provided education and training opportunities at two levels; firstly an experiential learning process for those involved whether they were volunteers and / or employees and secondly to beneficiaries.

Examples of projects providing education and training opportunities include:

- The STAR Centre – this project supported 20 volunteers, parents of disabled children, to access Units of NVQ qualifications at Levels II and III to undertake community research.
- Litherland Community Resource Centre – providing training opportunities to some 30-40 local residents each week.
- Concrete Communications – providing an experiential learning programme for some 20 young people.
- Wicked Fish Theatre Company – this project has provided a programme of community arts and training to some 7 individuals with learning disabilities. It has engaged individuals who were on the point of dropping out or who had dropped out of formal learning

### ❖ Supporting People to find Employment and Maintaining and Creating Jobs

A number of the projects that were supported by the social risk capital programmes had a tangible impact upon people finding employment. Some individuals have found employment within the projects themselves and others as a result of accessing the services offered by the projects. Examples include:

- Merseyside Centre for Inclusive Living – three part time jobs have been created as a result of the initial grant award.
- The Breckfield HIM project – has now appointed a full time, dedicated community health worker on the back of the activities supported by the award of grant funding.
- Community Action Base – as a direct result of a £1,653 grant from the St Helens Community Opportunities Fund leading to other funding the project has been able to recruit 2 part time youth workers.

What also emerged from visits to these projects is the relatively high number of individuals who have gone on to find employment or remain in employment as a result of accessing the services of those projects supported by the four social risk capital programmes.

### **Process Findings**

- 5.29 An element of this evaluation was to determine the extent to which the existing processes were appropriate to support the delivery of the social risk capital programmes.

### **Marketing**

- 5.30 Varying degrees of awareness of marketing initiatives were described by organisations visited during this evaluation. Whilst a number of groups, notably those that were already linked to established networks, indicated satisfaction with the marketing material published by the Intermediary Bodies, newer groups appeared to rely on information disseminated via word of mouth and informal networks. Word of mouth marketing is recognised by the Intermediary Bodies as their most powerful publicity tool, effectively utilising and contributing to social capital growth.
- 5.31 While targeted marketing does take place, e.g. MEH specifically sought to reach groups in Knowsley through an advertising campaign broadcast on the local KCR radio station, a number of groups felt that a more high profile marketing campaign would raise awareness of the availability of social risk capital funding. The marketing material produced by the Intermediary bodies ranges in quality, from professionally produced DTP materials to A4 photocopies.
- 5.32 Each of the four social risk capital funding programmes have adopted slightly different approaches to marketing their programmes. All have used their formal and informal networks to raise awareness of the existence of the social risk capital fund programmes and this has been complemented by the use of newsletters, attendance at funding fayres and the use of local media. It is evident that the marketing has been successful in the sense that, collectively, the four programmes have engaged with over 400 groups across Merseyside.
- 5.33 Existing marketing approaches appear to have been successful in engaging groups. In looking to the future, and in wishing to ensure that all communities are fully aware of the opportunities afforded by the social risk capital programmes, there may well be some merit in the Intermediary Bodies considering closer co-operation and joint marketing of their programmes in addition to their use of formal and informal networks.

### **Application Process**

#### **Timetable**

- 5.34 The timetable and process for bidding for social risk capital funding varied between the Intermediary Bodies, with some operating bidding rounds and others working on a rolling programme. Both approaches have individual merits. Most importantly, the structure of both approaches allowed regular windows of opportunity for small groups to submit applications for social risk capital funding. One issue, which did emerge from discussions with some groups was that, where a rolling programme of bidding was operated, it would have been helpful to know when deadlines for the receipt of applications were. This is not a critical

issue as both MEH and MDF meet on a monthly basis to discuss applications so organisations will not have to wait beyond a month to have their application considered. Furthermore, MEH and MDF believe that, in not publishing a series of deadlines dates, they receive a steady flow of applications which makes their social risk capital programmes more manageable.

- 5.35 For reasons of clarity and transparency the four Intermediary Bodies might wish to consider producing a clear timetable indicating when proposals should be submitted. Whilst this might strengthen the operation of the four social risk capital programmes and enable organisations to understand when their proposals will be considered one should not lose sight of a very real strength in the way each of the four programmes has operated.
- 5.36 Each of the four programmes operates an appraisal system that allows a rapid turn round of proposals and applications with most being reviewed and decisions made within a period of 4 weeks.

### **Decision Making Process**

- 5.37 Such an approach not only maintains the momentum and interest of groups but enables projects or services to be kick-started that much quicker. This compares favourably with the more mainstream decision making process of the Objective 1 programme where it can take up to three months (and beyond in some cases) to make a decision on a proposal.

### **Application Form**

- 5.38 Each of the social risk capital programmes used a different application form. This is probably a result of the fact that each of the social risk capital fund programmes has a slightly different focus and that they developed at different points in time. Critically, the application forms were generally seen as straightforward by those organisations completing them and were perceived to be fit for purpose. In future, and to assist in the collection of baseline data that is comparable, each of the organisations managing social risk capital funding programmes may wish to consider producing a common “skeleton” application form that captures the same information but that is also capable of capturing specific information required by each of the Intermediary Bodies for their own purposes.
- 5.39 The approach adopted in Sefton, with separate forms for applications for grants under and over £1,000, had particular merit. This form, which was used by organisations that were setting up and who only required a very low level of grant, was an abridged version of the main South Sefton Key Fund application form. It is seen as being fit for purpose and asking for a level of detail that is directly proportionate to the level of grant. Whilst few projects, it would appear overall, asked for grants worth less than £1,000 the extension of this form across all 4 social risk capital programmes might be considered.

### **Guidance & Support**

- 5.40 The guidance provided with the application forms is viewed favourably by applicants. However, the real strength of the application processes operated by each of the intermediary bodies lies in the level of support offered to applicants and potential applicants. This support comprises visits, one to one sessions, telephone support or any combination of the three.
- 5.41 In addition to assisting organisations to access social risk capital, this “gateway” type support has positive value for money implications for the social risk capital programmes. Through providing an initial sift, this initial investment prevents later or subsequent cost through dealing with ineligible and inappropriate project proposals. There is also extensive evidence of outreach activity, which appears to have been welcomed by applicant organisations. All four social risk capital programmes appear to have gone out to applicant organisations to provide advice and guidance and discuss the eligibility of their proposals.
- 5.42 Overall, the application process is viewed favourably and is seen as the most appropriate source of funding by smaller applicants. The approach adopted by the four social risk capital programmes is also seen as a model for how other regeneration programmes provide first step support to the voluntary and community sectors.

*“This should be the way you apply for small amounts from SRB ”.*

### **Appraisal & Approval**

- 5.43 As described earlier, each of the social risk capital programmes operates a rapid turn around process, with applications rarely taking more than six weeks to progress from receipt by the Intermediary body to project approval. This timescale is effective in enabling organisations to effectively plan and commence delivery and was viewed favourably by organisations visited when compared the delays experienced when applying for similar sums from Objective One, SRB and the Home Office.
- 5.44 Each of the programmes adopts a different approach to project selection, with one Intermediary body operating a formal scoring system and the other three employing slightly varying qualitative approaches. These differing approaches, however, do not appear to impact upon the relative effectiveness of the respective programmes.

### **Monitoring**

- 5.45 The approaches to monitoring employed in the social risk capital programmes have supported and enabled cultural change within organisations. As a result of successfully delivering projects, organisations have gained experience in the provision of financial and management information and evidencing impact of grant aid.

- 5.46 Each Intermediary Body has put in place a monitoring framework that meets the requirements of the Merseyside Objective 1 Programme. All operate a paper based approach requiring 100% organisations in receipt of social risk capital funding to provide a report at agreed points in time. Then, depending on the size of the social risk capital programme and the number of projects or groups supported between 20% and 100% of projects receive a monitoring visit, some during the project's operation or at the project's conclusion. Both Merseyside Disability Federation and Merseyside Expanding Horizons are committed to visiting 100% of projects. This personal approach to monitoring appears to be appreciated by the recipients of social risk capital funding. Monitoring visits provide an opportunity for recipients of grant to discuss the performance and progress of their projects (and to discuss any issues which might have arisen) but also allow an opportunity for each of the social risk capital programmes to obtain a more thorough understanding of each of the projects supported and to see the wide range of benefits, both direct and indirect, the projects are having.
- 5.47 As highlighted earlier many of the benefits, and impact, of investment by the four social risk capital programmes cannot be easily measured or quantified. Adherence to a paper based monitoring system that merely concentrates upon capturing "hard" outputs would not enable the true impact of the four social risk capital programmes to be captured and would, in all likelihood, lead to a position where the true impact of the four programmes is understated. Personal monitoring visits provide an opportunity to see the impact of social risk capital funding projects at first hand and to capture added value monitoring information.
- 5.48 These sentiments were echoed by organisations whom Community Concepts Ltd visited. Although finding the monitoring process relatively easy to negotiate, a number of organisations visited felt that the forms involved did not enable them to fully express the true level of benefits and impacts of their projects. In future, and where resources permit, organisations managing social risk capital programmes should consider increasing the number of personal monitoring visits. Such visits would enable added value monitoring and management information to be collected and to enable the programmes to understand and present a truer and wider picture of impact.
- 5.49 No examples of duplicate funding of projects by more than one Intermediary body were identified.

### **Impact**

- 5.50 A number of tangible outcomes and impacts have been discussed earlier in this section. It is clear from a review of the projects that the 4 social risk capital programmes, in supporting a wide range of groups, have successfully targeted the priority groups of the Objective 1 Programme and have provided opportunities to individuals to become volunteers, access training and employment.
- 5.51 It is also clear that in addition to the outputs and impacts that we have already identified that there have also been a number of indirect outcomes or benefits, namely those benefits that are not readily capable of being measured.

### **Indirect Benefits & Impact**

- 5.52 As discussed earlier not all of the benefits arising from investment in groups and projects by the four social risk capital programmes can be captured and formally quantified. This is, either because forms don't allow it or the data cannot be captured e.g. reduction in crimes, proactive support reducing demand on education and health services.
- 5.53 Although they are not capable of being measured they are as equally important as those benefits or impact that can be measured. One clear and indirect benefit is that a large number of organisations and groups reported that they would not be in existence had it not been for the grant. To this extent, the value of social risk capital funding in both maintaining and expanding Merseyside's "stock" of social capital cannot be over emphasised.
- 5.54 The organisations benefiting from the social risk capital programmes have demonstrated their value in terms of:
- ❖ Providing a useful and valuable community service.
  - ❖ Fostering a sense of community.
  - ❖ Promoting volunteering and citizenship.
  - ❖ Providing support to a range of individuals, particularly those facing barriers to inclusion.
  - ❖ Providing services complimentary to statutory service provision.
- 5.55 Examples of the more indirect benefits of the social risk capital programmes include:
- ❖ The STAR Centre – the involvement and training of parents of disabled young children to undertake research to establish service users' needs is now seen by the national Sure Start Unit as a model of good practice in developing parental involvement and ensuring that services are user centred. This project, whilst not just changing the way services are offered to parents of disabled children in St Helens will have a wider impact beyond Merseyside and is likely to change the way services to parents and disabled young people will be offered.

### **Cost Effectiveness**

- 5.56 Much of the activity funded by the social risk capital programmes is volunteer led, managed and delivered. As such the benefits are largely delivered without incurring employee, overhead and profit related costs. The complex matrices of relationships, networks and linkages that comprise social capital provide unemployed residents with the most commonly used and cost effective pathway to employment. "Escaping Poverty – From Safety nets to Networks of Opportunity", published by DEMOS in 1997, reported that more unemployed people find employment through friends and personal contacts than through any other single route. Research carried out by MORI, for the Performance and Innovation Unit, in

2001 found that one of the barriers to “labour market achievement” faced by black and minority ethnic job seekers is a lack of social connections. Furthermore, concentrations of poverty and disadvantage are compounded by residents’ lack of social networks that include those who are active in the labour market (Buck, N. Urban Studies, 2001). The development of bridging and linking social capital through each of the social risk capital programme has increased access to these largely unrecognised routes to employment.

### **Post Grant Progression**

- 5.57 The social risk capital programmes have succeeded in kick-starting new activities and enabling the establishment of new groups and organisations delivering social benefit. However, there is a clear need for further financial and organisational support among many of the projects visited by Community Concepts Limited if sustainability is to be a viable objective.
- 5.58 Although a number of smaller groups have indicated that they will not be seeking larger amounts of funding in future, a majority aspire to access Objective One and National Lottery Funding. A small number of organisations have secured contracts or service level agreements from the public sector.
- 5.59 Only one of the organisations visited reported accessing the support available under the Skillworks programme. Similarly, only one group informed us of their use of the support available under the MSEI Social Enterprise Enablers programme.

## 6. Recommendations

- 6.1 **Improved marketing;** Whilst many grants have been awarded to new groups, a number of groups have received multiple awards and some to existing and well established organisations. Some revision may be required in terms of the objective of the social risk capital programme in relation to whether or not the intention is to continually produce new organisations in Merseyside, or does social risk capital extend to assisting Merseyside's existing community and voluntary sectors to develop their sustainability and range of services? This will play a key role in determining the focus of future marketing campaigns. A joint marketing programme, bringing together all social risk capital programmes, that builds upon existing channels to market may support the programmes, both individually and collectively, to "extend their reach" and engage new groups.
- 6.2 **Consistency of Application Form;** To the extent that there are common information requirements and programme objectives, there may be merit in standardising the application forms issued by the Intermediary bodies. As detailed previously this may involve application forms consisting of a core "skeleton" of questions with certain common sections plus specific questions relating to particular aspects of the individual social risk capital programme.
- 6.3 **Monitoring;** Although difficult to quantify, and potentially bureaucratic, the measurement of "distance travelled" by project beneficiaries would enable a move towards quantification of the "softer" outcomes of social risk capital projects. Examples of such outcomes would include progression to employment and improvements in self-confidence. In order to avoid overly complex reporting requirements consideration could be given to a simple self-assessment process to capture baseline and end-point positions on a scale of one to ten in respect of key "soft" outcomes. Such baseline information might form part of the core application form.
- 6.4 Furthermore, each of the social risk capital programmes should consider increasing the number of personal monitoring visits to organisations in receipt of social risk capital funding. Increasing the number of visits would not only be a means of providing assistance to groups and projects but would, more importantly, enable each of the social risk capital programmes to capture and present added value information, usually indirect benefits that are not always capable of measurement, thus enabling a more comprehensive overview of the impact of social risk capital programmes, both individually and collectively.
- 6.5 **Best Practice;** In particular, consideration should be given to sharing best practice in terms of the monitoring visits carried out by MCF and MDF. Increased co-operation would have additional benefits to the Intermediary Bodies; e.g. adding value to activities of MCF and its management of Local Network Fund through the other partners providing referrals. A further enhancement of the monitoring process would be to provide the opportunity for project managers to provide a narrative description of the impact of their projects.

- 6.5 **Links to Other Programmes;** Closer integration with other grant mechanisms and bodies, in particular LSPs seeking to promote neighbourhood based service delivery, would assist in enabling recipients of social risk capital funding to take the next steps in their development.
- 6.6 **Strategic Management;** The Intermediary bodies should given consideration to increased collaboration in the strategic management of the programme. This would assist in identifying and filling gaps in provision and avoiding duplication of funding to groups and projects.
- 6.7 **Measurement of Social Capital;** In addition to the tangible outcomes related to improved employability, access to jobs and training and qualifications obtained, there is benefit in measuring the growth in social capital itself that is achieved as a result of the operation of social risk capital programmes. Given that social capital is recognised as having an intrinsic economic value, such a measurement will enable the contribution of these programmes to economic development to be more effectively quantified.

A model for the measurement of social capital in five communities in New South Wales, developed by the Sydney University of Technology in 1996, identified a “social capital factor” that can be derived from the results of a questionnaire survey structured around eight elements of social capital:

- ❖ Participation in local community.
- ❖ Proactivity in a social context.
- ❖ Feelings of trust and safety.
- ❖ Neighbourhood connections.
- ❖ Family and friends connections.
- ❖ Tolerance and diversity.
- ❖ Value of life.
- ❖ Work connections.

Consideration should be given to the development of a methodology for a similar exercise in Merseyside, possibly utilising the Social Capital Question Bank developed by the Office for National Statistics in 2001. Such an undertaking may be within the remit of the Merseyside Social Inclusion Observatory.

- 6.8 **Good Practice;** many of the organisations visited as part of this evaluation indicated that the arrangements for bidding for and accessing social risk capital funding were straightforward and very effective. Indeed, a number of organisations indicated that the processes and procedures employed by each of the social risk capital programmes should be replicated and adopted by other regeneration programmes to support the development of the voluntary and community sectors.
- 6.9 **Future Funding;** it is clear that, both individually and collectively, the four social risk capital funding programmes have had a significant impact upon and within the communities that they serve. Critically, not only have they created access to “first step” funding and encouraged the creation and development of a large number of groups but they have, and in a very cost effective way, assisted individuals, the majority of whom are from disadvantaged groups, to access training, volunteering opportunities and obtain employment.
- 6.10 Most importantly, many of the groups that have been supported have developed new services that have addressed a local need and have gone on to secure contracts with bodies in the statutory sector, often through commissioning arrangements. Social risk capital, therefore, has played a pivotal role in developing more effective client centred and public services. With this in mind there is a compelling case for additional resources to be earmarked, particularly in any post Merseyside Objective 1 Programme, to support the continued development of social capital locally.
- 6.11 **Additional Activity;** The introduction of an aftercare programme, offering technical, professional and funding support to organisations benefiting from funding from social risk capital would contribute towards improving “return on investment” and minimising the risk of organisations failing to realise their potential.

Although beyond the remit of social risk capital, consideration may be given by partners to establishing an intermediate stage of funding for those organisations that are unable to make the transition to mainstream funding in a single large step. This could potentially be based upon the Start-up and Sustainability funds offered by MSEI with funds offered in relation to progression along the “social capital continuum” outlined in 5.9.

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