

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS REALISING SUCCESS

At UnLtd, we are often challenged to give evidence of our success and to explain what makes a social entrepreneur successful. So what does success look like? How do we distinguish between social entrepreneurs who have succeeded and those who have not? How can support practitioners help engender success? This second paper in our Research Findings Series explores these questions, providing an insight into the learning UnLtd has gained over the last eight years through ongoing delivery, research and evaluation.

RESEARCH FINDINGS SERIES

The provision of support to social entrepreneurs would be enhanced if based on a deeper understanding of the spectrum of outcomes they create

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through evidencing the array of social and economic outcomes that UnLtd Award Winners generate, this Findings paper illustrates the nuances of success and failure. This paper explores how success encompasses a range of outcomes, including:

- * Sustainable social enterprises that generate high turnover, high social impact, high economic impact.
- * Short-term social projects that generate a deep, localised social impact and low, if any, financial turnover.
- * Social enterprises that generate a high social impact but a low financial turnover.

We demonstrate that some projects end because of positive reasons:

- * The original aim has been achieved or the social need has been met.
- * The social entrepreneur has decided to take up another personal or professional opportunity that moves them on and prevents them from continuing their venture.
- * The venture has been taken up by another service provider or organisation.

We illustrate that project 'failure', due to insurmountable obstacles of one kind or another, can nonetheless be a formative experience and create valuable skills and learning for the individual involved. In turn, the skills and expertise gained may indirectly benefit society by being applied to other areas of the individual's life, such as their career or other social activism. We believe that the provision of support to social entrepreneurs would be enhanced if based on a deeper understanding of the spectrum of outcomes they may create. Thematic analysis of different qualitative data sets reveals that the most effective forms of support are often the simplest:

- * Bureaucracy-free access to start-up funding.
- * Access to a dedicated support person to provide general encouragement, advice and act as a sounding board.
- * Belief in the individual and their idea.

Access to a dedicated support person is particularly important for younger social entrepreneurs throughout their venture in order to build their confidence and help them survive the ups and downs of project delivery. Finally, our research indicates that three additional sources of support are especially valuable to both start-up and developing social entrepreneurs:

- * Expert advice, mentoring and coaching from business professionals from the private, public and third sectors.
- * The support and opportunity to network and build key relationships.
- * Informal networks of support, encouragement and knowledge-sharing from other social entrepreneurs or like-minded individuals.

In summary, a sophisticated and dynamic understanding of success will enable the support sector to recognise and value the range of social entrepreneurs and outcomes they generate and as a result should enhance the provision of appropriate and targeted support. Further research is required to continue and evolve this understanding of what success encompasses and the corresponding support needs of social entrepreneurs.

INTRODUCTION

UnLtd's mission is to reach out and unleash the energies of people who can transform the world in which they live. We call these people social entrepreneurs. Our approach is to provide financial and non-financial start-up support to a large number of start-up, or nascent social entrepreneurs, some of whom take their social venture to scale. We also provide development support to a smaller number of social entrepreneurs to scale up their social venture. This pyramid-based development model is simple in its intended outcome: to create a supportive environment for individual social entrepreneurs to come forward and make their ideas happen.

As illustrated in our first Findings paper, *Social Entrepreneurs: The Facts* (UnLtd; March 2010), social entrepreneurs create a range of outcomes; some create impressive sustainable and measurable social and economic impact, whilst others create focused or localised impact at a community level. UnLtd believes the latter, whom we are now starting to refer to as community entrepreneurs, are equally important to support as the former. Why? Because many individuals working at the local level have the potential for creating much wider impact in society, including the creation of social capital, social innovation, economic impact and raised aspirations in disadvantaged communities.

How do we distinguish between social entrepreneurs who have succeeded and those who have not? This second paper in our Research Findings Series begins to explore how the spectrum of outcomes that social entrepreneurs create can add up to successful social entrepreneurship activity. This understanding will enable support practitioners and organisations, like UnLtd, to better engender success.

THE RESEARCH

UnLtd's Research Findings Series synthesises the key learning UnLtd has gained through delivery, research and evaluation across all of its work during the past eight years. We draw out common themes and findings identified across multiple research and evaluation projects, however the majority of material referenced in this paper derives from the following data sets:

- ★ UnLtd's five-year Longitudinal Study:
Annual in-depth, semi-structured, one-to-one interviews with a representative sample of approximately 60 UnLtd Award Winners across the UK. Its aim is to track the trajectories that these individuals take and thematically explore trends and differences across project and personal development. To date we have collected three years of data.
- ★ Survey with Award Winners, January 2010:
A follow-up survey of all former Award Winners generating a sample of 437 people (from a total of 2,378 contacted). The results provided a long-term view of personal and project outcomes generated through an UnLtd Award.
- ★ Evaluation of the UnLtd Sport Relief Programme 2007 - 2009 (funded by Comic Relief):
Involving longitudinal interviews with fifteen young Award Winners aged 11 - 21 (seven of whom took part in follow-up interviews), alongside twelve case studies.

WHAT IS SUCCESS AND HOW DO YOU REALISE IT?

UnLtd supports in the region of 1,000 individuals every year and invests in individuals with a wide array of ideas and skills sets. Consequently our Award Winners create a range of social and economic outcomes. In the following section we compare and contrast our evidence about these outcomes with the following off-cited indicators of 'success'; sustainability, financial turnover and scale of social and economic impact. We use case studies to illustrate the range of outcomes that social entrepreneurs can create and to highlight that success encompasses different outcomes, which can be realised in different ways.

Surviving and success

'Survivability' is often used as an indicator of success – has a social entrepreneur created something that can be sustained? UnLtd has many examples of social entrepreneurs who have received start-up funding from us and have survived by developing their initial idea into a viable social business. Matt Wilcox, for example, a former Award Winner who won an initial start-up award followed by an additional development award in 2007, succeeded in scaling up his venture, Unity – Young People's Project, into a sustainable social venture. Matt's venture, as the inset case study illustrates, is successful because it generates substantial turnover, economic impact (through job creation) and direct social impact (by enabling young people to re-engage with employment and education). In this sense it could be considered a classic success story of social entrepreneurship.

Differences between 'success' and 'failure' were not clear cut: of the six different themes identified, three cited positive reasons for the project ending.

MATT WILCOX: UNITY – YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROJECT

KEY OUTCOMES:

- ★ £300,000 turnover 2009/10
- ★ Eight full-time members of staff
- ★ 126 students achieved a nationally recognised Unity arts award in 2009
- ★ 150 young people reengaged with education or employment through Unity

STATUS: **Active**

Matt Wilcox is a former UnLtd Award Winner who won an initial start-up award and a further development award in 2007, enabling Matt to devote his time to developing his social venture further. Unity - Young People's Project is now a local organisation that specialises in creating bespoke projects, programmes and activities aimed at solving local social problems which the local authority has a responsibility for, things like educational exclusion, unemployment, low attainment and anti-social behaviour. From the early days when Matt offered one-off DJ tutoring sessions, Unity has grown into a high profile and in-demand social enterprise operating from three centres across Stoke-on-Trent. Unity is used by government agencies, such as Connexions and the Youth Justice Board, to take on and teach young adults who have been excluded from school and who are young offenders. Its growth has helped many young people in different ways, be that through confidence building, through learning new and transferrable skills, or through salvaging qualifications from a disrupted education, thus ensuring more young people in Stoke re-engage with employment or education.

Our recent research with Award Winners shows that survival beyond an Award period is common: 75% of respondents to our January 2010 survey with former Award Winners indicated that their social venture is ongoing. 71% started their projects over four years ago. Another 9% indicated that they had started another project. Even keeping in mind a positive response bias, these survival percentages are high.

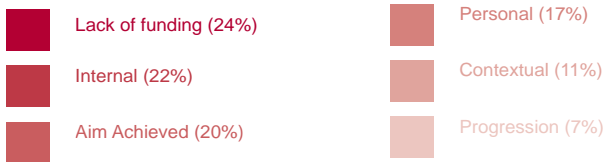
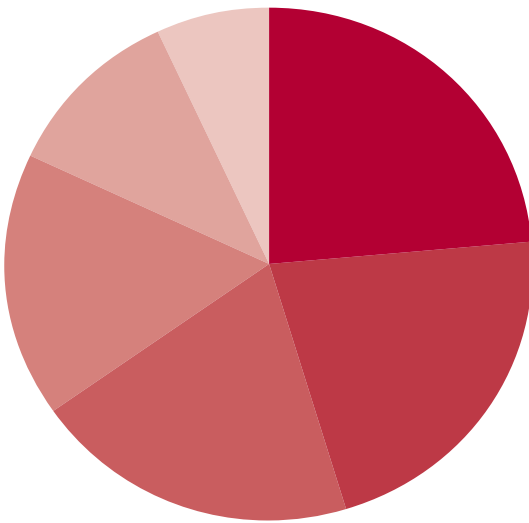
In order to better understand these statistics, we explored the reasons why 23% of these social ventures 'failed' to continue. A thematic analysis of the 72 open-ended answers as to why the project ended highlighted that the differences between 'success' (project continuing) and 'failure' (project ending) were not clear cut: of the six different themes identified, three cited positive reasons for the project ending, as the list to the right demonstrates:

- ★ **Aim achieved:** The social venture met the original need, provided the necessary service or produced what it intended to. (14/72 or 20%).
- ★ **Progression:** The social venture was co-opted by another service, developed significantly to meet a different social need or operated in a very different way. (5/72 or 7%).
- ★ **Personal:** The individual setting up the social venture chose not to continue for personal reasons (such as to have a baby or to pursue a job opportunity). (12/72 or 17%).
- ★ **Contextual:** External factors changed such as vital partnerships or necessary networks and the social venture could no longer operate as a result. (8/72 or 11%).

★ **Lack of funding:** The social venture was unable to gain further funding and could no longer operate without this (17/72 or 24%).

★ **Internal:** The social venture was not able to operate effectively because of internal factors (such as the cost of administration outweighing resources) (16/72 or 22%).

REASON FOR SOCIAL VENTURE NOT CONTINUING



N:72 NB: Percentages have been rounded up.

Whilst survival time can indicate success, these figures demonstrate that actually a successful outcome, such as the project has met the social need it set out to achieve, may lie behind a prima-facie failure, like a project ending. Our former start-up Award Winner, Karen Carolan-Evans, illustrates this scenario well; her signposting and consultancy service for women in East Kent was so effective in meeting the social need it addressed that elements of her service were adopted by the local Primary Care Trust (see inset case study). This resulted in the end of the social venture itself but the ongoing provision of the service. Unlike Matt Wilcox, Karen did not create a self-sustaining social venture but nonetheless succeeded in creating a sustainable solution to a local social problem. This reminds us that success can be achieved through taking elements of an innovative social solution to scale through absorption into another service or venture, or through replication.

KAREN CAROLAN-EVANS: KENDRA

KEY OUTCOMES:

- ★ Passed on key 'life' skills to local women
- ★ Contributed to the local PCT establishing core strategies to help users navigate NHS services
- ★ Contributed to PCT giving patients a voice in their own care
- ★ Contributed to the professional development of Kendra's founders

STATUS: **Inactive**

Karen Carolan-Evans and her business partner established Kendra, a development programme for women in East Kent. Originally established in 2003, Kendra became a Community Interest Company and received an UnLtd start-up award in 2006. Its aim was to provide better access to information about the range of public services available to local women, particularly those from disadvantaged or vulnerable backgrounds, thereby enabling those that most need NHS services to access them. Kendra also addressed a diverse array of other needs through a range of workshops, from mental health to sexual health, improving self-esteem to work-place bullying. As Kendra grew in scope and magnitude, the local NHS Primary Care Trust began to recognise its value in creating awareness of particular public services and took over the provision of this aspect Kendra's work. Eventually, the PCT took over a number of the services Kendra provided and there was no longer a need for Kendra. Karen now uses the wealth of experience and expertise she gained from setting up and running Kendra to serve as a public representative on several local NHS scrutiny and accountability panels. Karen and her business partner have gone on to develop professional links with major patient service providers, including the NHS and the British Medical Association, and have become involved in public health projects at the University of Oxford and Canterbury Christchurch University College. Karen attributes this in part to her experience running Kendra.

Turnover, like survivability, is widely used as a proxy measure to indicate sustainability and success, but it does not always equate to high social impact

Turnover

Turnover, like survivability, is also widely used as a proxy measure to indicate sustainability and success, particularly in the current economic climate (Social Enterprise Coalition (2009) State of Social Enterprise Survey, SEC: London). However, UnLtd's experience shows that high turnover does not always equate to high impact. We support social entrepreneurs who generate social impact at scale yet low financial turnover, as Marion Janner's social venture, Star Wards, illustrates (see inset case study). Since achieving success in social entrepreneurial activity inarguably includes generating positive social impact at scale, Star Wards demonstrates that high turnover is not a necessary ingredient of success, and therefore lack of turnover cannot be a generalised indicator of failure.

Further evidence of this point comes from our evaluation of UnLtd Sport Relief, an award scheme supporting young people to address community cohesion through community level sport and recreation projects. These outcomes contributed to increasing the social capital of communities through creation of new friendships and building a sense of belonging, often across a myriad of social differences. These short-term, local projects (up to one year) with low, if any, financial turnover, were successful thus demonstrating that 'success', if acknowledged at a local level and on a short-term basis, need not involve high turnover, scale or sustainability. Furthermore, the potential for wider social impact and social capital created by many small ventures localised to a physical area or specific community of interest should not be overlooked nor undervalued.

MARION JANNER: STAR WARDS

KEY OUTCOMES:

- ★ Increased staff-patient contact (81%); improved ward atmosphere (85%); improved patient satisfaction (84%).
- ★ Approx. 70% of inpatient mental health wards across the UK are members of Star Wards
- ★ Marion was awarded an OBE in recognition of Star Ward's outstanding innovation
- ★ Turnover: £100,000 approx.

STATUS: **Active**

Marion Janner was inspired to set up Star Wards following her experience of being sectioned, or compulsorily detained, as an in-patient in 2005. Having become aware that many patients have admissions which could be described as 'untherapeutic', Marion became determined to find a way to improve the day to day experience of patients and set up Star Wards later that same year. Star Wards enables inpatient mental health wards to create small innovations to improve conditions; there were originally 75 free or low costs ideas that wards could try out, such as patient and staff meetings, cinema nights and pamper sessions. One ward introduced a pet rabbit which reduced self harming on a women's secure unit - where self harm levels are particularly high - by 50%. Star Wards approach is 'relentlessly positive'; focusing on what goes right, pointing out excellence in practice and validating what is done well contributes to an increase in staff morale and energy. Fundamentally Star Wards promotes the redistribution of decision-making and power more equally amongst patients and staff, enabling patients to raise their confidence, self-esteem and rebuild their skills, all of which may be shattered by the time they are hospitalised. Star Wards is pragmatic and practical; it does not cost much to run and creates substantial social outcomes. As one person comments in a recent impact review, Star Wards "... has without doubt brought about some of the biggest changes in acute in-patient psychiatric care seen in the last two decades."

Project 'failure', personal success

Developing new ways of addressing social problems will not always work, and UnLtd recognises that some Award Winners will not succeed in achieving their intended project aims. We also know that risk is inherent in our aim of supporting large numbers of start-up social entrepreneurs and so the outcome of project failure is one that UnLtd embraces as a necessary result of its work. Emerging findings from our Longitudinal Study indicate that project failure is not clear cut and that a great deal of valuable learning and expertise can be gained from this experience.

One such example is that of former Award Winner, Jack Welch, who set up The Orchard in Scotland. Over time the venture did not develop as Jack had intended and eventually he decided to stop working on it (see inset case study). The personal journey that Jack gained from the experience of a 'failed' project was a positive one; journeying from being unemployed at the start of his project to working as a Manager with a Credit Union at the end of it. Jack's case illustrates that so-called project 'failure' nonetheless has the potential to develop into personal 'success', as his own words illustrate:

"What UnLtd did was to allow me to go through a transition. Quite a painful personal transition, where I'd been depressed and redundant, to move through that. The UnLtd grant filled a gap for me, and allowed me to try things I hadn't done, which I then took into trying new jobs I hadn't done before, and developing projects more. So it was a learning experience."

Jack Welch and Karen Carolan-Evans have both transferred the skills they gained to continue providing public benefit; Jack through his employment at a Credit Union, whose aim is to alleviate poverty and educate people in personal finances, and Karen through serving as a public representative on several local NHS scrutiny and accountability panels. These examples and other, as yet un-analysed, evidence from our Longitudinal Study suggest that the experience of running a social project can create positive 'ripple' effects by enabling the individual to gain or/and develop knowledge and expertise and apply it to other areas of their professional lives, which in turn may be put to use serving other social issues through their career choices or other forms of social activism. This illustrates that positive outcomes of social entrepreneurship activity encompass more than financial turnover, scale and survivability and serve to remind us that it is important to understand 'failure' and 'success' from the perspective of social entrepreneurs. In doing so we better understand the potential value in project 'failure' both to the individual and indirectly to society at large.

JACK WELCH: THE ORCHARD

KEY OUTCOMES:

- ★ Personal learning
- ★ Career development

STATUS: **Inactive**

The Orchard in Scotland was set up by Jack Welch* in 2005 with the support of a wide range of individuals, agencies, services and an UnLtd start-up Award. Its aim was to provide access to 'green' therapy support for members of the local community who were marginalised due to their mental health needs. In addition to some notable highs and achievements along the way, The Orchard was beset by some of the usual and unusual problems associated with such a venture. Eventually issues relating to the isolated location, health and safety, and the inflexibility of the local community and relevant health services all contributed to its demise. Jack wound down the orchard itself and it is now dormant, although the area is still maintained by young friends. Yet Jack does not see the failure of the project as a negative experience because the learning and the experience he gained from setting it up, running it and winding it down was valuable in numerous ways. Jack attributed areas of personal and professional development to this experience, specifically in developing his management, leadership and communication skills that he attributes to helping him gain a managerial role within a Credit Union. More generally Jack believes he gained invaluable learning about both the opportunities and the limitations that are part and parcel of setting up a social project; as well as perseverance he learnt the value of knowing when to move on and let something go. Most importantly, Jack learnt that the failure of his project was actually a positive experience for him, helping him to build a positive 'can-do' attitude and a set of skills that he has transferred to other areas of his life.

**Name and personal identifiers have been changed*

It wasn't just the money itself...it was the belief in me.

HOW DO WE ENGENDER 'SUCCESS'?

The paper thus far illustrates that a broader definition of success which encompasses a spectrum of outcomes is more representative of the experiences of the social entrepreneurs UnLtd supports. We have found that success is not reliant upon specific outcomes, such as financial turnover, scale of impact and survivability, nor upon a specific combination of outcomes. Correspondingly this indicates that the support that social entrepreneurs need to pursue their aims varies. Yet we know from our ongoing delivery, research and evaluation since 2003 that social entrepreneurs actively value key aspects of our financial and non-financial support model. Whilst we do not know exactly when and why each element of this support model can contribute to success, we have been able to identify which support works most effectively and turn our attention to this below.

The value of recognition

UnLtd's model is based upon the ethos of investing in the individual and developing their potential to build the skills necessary to set up and run a social venture. This means that for start-up, or nascent, social entrepreneurs, UnLtd does not require an extensive business plan, prior experience or credentials in order to award funding. Instead, UnLtd operates under the principle of investing in the individual, their idea and their potential to develop as a social entrepreneur. Limiting the bureaucracy around the Award decision-making process and backing hunches allows UnLtd to take on risks where other organisations might not. It is striking that 42 of the 58 Longitudinal Study interviewees spontaneously and without prompting drew attention to the injection of confidence they gained in their idea and their ability to put it into practice as a result of winning an Award. Moreover, they connected the confidence gained through this recognition to a strengthening of their drive to set-up their social venture, as the following quotation highlights:

"This was only an idea until UnLtd said ok, here is five thousand to do it, and then we were like, oh we've got to do this then. And the 'ok we have trust in you and believe you can do something with this money'. It wasn't just the money itself, it was the belief in me. More than anything it was a recognition, a validation, of what we were doing."

Longitudinal Study participant, 2009 - 2010

Participants in our Longitudinal Study and evaluations of various award schemes continually emphasise the confidence, credibility and recognition provided by an UnLtd Award. Whilst money is needed to buy key equipment or resources, it also symbolises a belief in the potential success of their venture, something which social entrepreneurs may internalise. In this context, easier access to less bureaucratic start-up funding can play a vital role in engaging nascent social entrepreneurs who lack confidence, experience or/and finance to try out their idea. UnLtd continues to believe that investment in the potential of an individual and their idea is crucial to the growth of social entrepreneurship.

The value of ongoing support

Every UnLtd Award is accompanied by a dedicated Development Manager who provides one-to-one advice and support. A start-up Award begins with the first instalment of money and a project shaping meeting, followed by a mid-project update and a second payment, as well as a final transition meeting at the end of an Award period (typically one year). In addition to these formal support meetings, Development Managers are available to Award Winners as issues arise, whether it is to talk through an idea or provide general encouragement, updates or advice. Although contact time available is somewhat limited, Award Winners consistently identify the value of this ongoing support:

“The funny thing about money, it can be really handy at times, you know, if there’s something specific financially you need. But actually I’ve found quite often that it could get in the way; there are more important things, and the most important thing to me is people... I drop an email and have a little chat and the enthusiasm...! That’s what I get from UnLtd and it feeds me for weeks, months, you know.”

Start-up Award Winner, New Cross Gate evaluation, 2008

“I was really lacking in confidence and (my Development Manager) was just brilliant at just cutting through everything and seeing what the real problems were. I didn’t even know myself sometimes what was holding me back or what was causing it to be a difficult situation and she was brilliant at that. She was also good at being very practical and cutting a pathway through and just generally acting as a sounding board as well.”

Start-up Award Winner, 4iP evaluation, 2010

Our evaluations of different award schemes, research and delivery experiences consistently reveal that Award Winners value the access UnLtd provides to a dedicated support person because they provide a ‘sounding board’ for their ideas. We believe this is attributable in part to the Development Manager’s distinct and different vantage point from which to advise and support, as well as their professional experience and expertise. Our monitoring statistics also support this finding; at the end of their projects, 73% of Award Winners felt the support of their Development Manager had been very useful. When asked what was the most useful form of support in developing their project overall, the most common response was the support and encouragement of Development Managers (57%). The next most useful form of support was networking with other entrepreneurs (25%). Personalised support can be integral to starting a social venture not because it provides all the answers, but because it provides start-up social entrepreneurs with a renewed belief in their purpose and confidence, and helps them steer their project through the inevitable challenges of delivery.

Supporting confidence

The mounting evidence that confidence building was a common impact of an UnLtd Award prompted us to unpick how and why confidence develops and what part our support played in this. In relation to young Award Winners, aged 11 - 21, our evaluation of UnLtd Sport Relief identified a seven-staged ‘Confidence Trajectory’ through which different inter-related forms of confidence develop at particular stages in the award period (although not always in the same order) according to specific experiences:

THE CONFIDENCE TRAJECTORY



1. Risking it’ (developed at the stage of successfully applying for an award)
2. ‘Doing it’ (developing skills ‘on the job’)
3. ‘Surviving it’ (weathering challenges and/or running the project)
4. ‘Being seen to do it’ (recognition and affirmation from others)
5. ‘Knowing I can do it’ (self-belief, often manifests in retrospect)
6. ‘Wanting to do it more’ (inspiration to initiate further projects)
7. ‘Inspiring others’ (translating this confidence to inspire others to create social impact)

We found that a key element of the Confidence Trajectory was the crucial role ongoing, personalised support can play. Specifically, this helped younger Award Winners overcome and bounce back from challenges so integral to setting up and running a social initiative. Our data gathered from Development Managers and Award Winners indicated that facing such challenges without the necessary support could leave a younger Award Winner feeling intimidated and incapable, potentially damaging their self-confidence and making the award experience a negative one. This evaluation found that Development Managers were acutely aware of how pivotal their support is to young people, not only in enhancing positive impacts but in reducing the likelihood of these more damaging impacts, as the quote below illustrates:

“But I can (sometimes) see that a confident young person has started to slip, and that’s where I think having DMs there for that length of time to support them through the project is crucial; to make sure, to reinforce, that that’s just how it is, and we work through that.”

Development Manager, Sport Relief Evaluation, Focus Group, February 2009

Whilst it does not necessarily apply to every Award Winner in the same way or in full, our evidence demonstrates that confidence-building is crucial in enabling young people to achieve and develop their social ventures. Importantly, the potential for the Confidence Trajectory to develop is stronger when ongoing support is provided to help weather the highs and lows of project delivery. Although further research is needed to explore the Confidence Trajectory finding in relation to adult social entrepreneurs, our evidence base consistently shows that ongoing encouragement and support plays a vital role in the success of a social entrepreneur and the social venture they set up.

The mechanisms of engendering success are varied and should respond to the needs of the social entrepreneur

What else? Emerging findings deserving further research

Our Longitudinal Study and evaluations of specific award schemes have begun to highlight how integral other sources of support are to social entrepreneurs. Most notably Award Winners highlight the value of three additional forms of support:

- ★ The provision of specific advice and expertise from business professionals with backgrounds in the private, public and third sectors.
- ★ Informal networks of support, encouragement and knowledge sharing from other social entrepreneurs or like-minded individuals.
- ★ The support and opportunity to network and build key relationships.

In particular, preliminary analysis of our Longitudinal Study data indicates that Award Winners miss these forms of support when they are absent. And our evaluation of our New Cross Gate programme found that Award Winners wanted to belong to a community of fellow social entrepreneurs, or change-makers, through which they could access the support of their peers (UnLtd; 2008).

A significant portion of this data was collected at the time when UnLtd Connect, a service that provides Award Winners with specialist pro-bono support and expertise and networking opportunities with other UnLtd Award Winners, was being established. Now that the provision of these forms of support are more established through UnLtd Connect, we plan to explore them in more detail through evaluation of this service and through in-depth thematic analysis of our Longitudinal Study data to date. At that point we can more fully evidence the myriad of support required to engender success.

CONCLUSION

As this paper outlines, success looks different according to the social entrepreneur and the aims of the venture involved. Correspondingly, the mechanisms of engendering that success are varied and should respond to the needs of the social entrepreneur. The challenge for the sector is to develop systems and forms of support that operate on this understanding and not to assume a linear progression from the idea stage to a particular end point of a social venture.

After eight years of delivering awards, UnLtd has gained a substantial amount of knowledge about social entrepreneurs and how to best to support them. Our ongoing research and evaluation has helped us to realise the importance of building a more sophisticated and dynamic view of success and the corresponding support needs of social entrepreneurs. UnLtd is keen to take on the challenge of unravelling 'success' further, to understand what works, as well as what does not, and therefore ensure the awards and support we provide to social entrepreneurs are able to maximise the potential of each social entrepreneur to become successful. We believe that in collaboratively building and sharing this knowledge, the sector will be better positioned to provide more meaningful support to successful social entrepreneurs.

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