

# Network magazine

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**THE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS NETWORK**

# NETWORK

The magazine for learning communities

education **EXTRA**  Changemakers

*Creating active citizens – implementing the citizenship curriculum*

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# Developing social enterprise

A practice model initiated by Changemakers to connect young-person-led community action with the development of enterprise capability

The government recently welcomed the report by Sir Howard Davies on Enterprise and the Economy in Education<sup>1</sup> and his broad recommendations have been accepted. By 2005/2006, every secondary school will be given funding to enable every young person to benefit from the equivalent of five days' enterprise experience during Year 10. This experience will develop students' knowledge, skills and attitudes about enterprise capability, financial capability and economic and business understanding. The development of these skills and abilities are seen as essential in a changing labour market and a global economy.

## What do we mean by 'enterprise'?

The concept of enterprise in the context of education has three main elements:

- 1 the degree to which young people have developed the capability to handle uncertainty and to respond positively to change, to create and implement new ideas and new ways of doing things, to make risk/reward assessments and to act upon them in their personal and working life. The progress of pupils in this area depends on the development of:
  - their knowledge and understanding of concepts, such as organisation, innovation, risk, change
  - their skills – decision-making skills, personal and social attributes, leadership skills, management abilities, presentational abilities
  - their attitudes – self-reliance, open mindedness, pragmatism.
- 2 the degree to which young people have an understanding of the financial system so that they are discerning and informed consumers with the ability to manage their own finances effectively
- 3 the degree to which pupils have an understanding of how business and the economy function, especially in relation to the scarcity of resources and the need to make choices.

It is envisaged that by introducing 'enterprise learning' into the curriculum, students may be inspired to start up their own businesses, or they may use their enterprise capability within their future places of work.

## Linking enterprise with citizenship

Changemakers believes that it is possible to link enterprise learning directly to the citizenship agenda through its model of social enterprise. By doing this, schools can reduce the pressure on curriculum time, and young people can have a more coherent and meaningful experience. The

initial idea was tested on a small scale in 1999 when Changemakers approached the DfES for support to enable them to carry out a small pilot scheme in the North East. The proposal was to involve young people, together with chosen respondents from the world of work, in reviewing the experiential learning that the students had derived from their community action projects. By doing this they could explore the match between the skills they already possessed and the skills needed for their chosen career. This initiative provided both an alternative model of work experience, as it reflected the greater range of situations in which young people will find employment in the future, including self-employment and portfolio working. It also provided a means by which students could develop enterprise skills and understanding.

## A stimulating approach

The approach proved intellectually stimulating. The pilot showed that this approach can make a significant contribution to the work-related experience of more academically successful students who have a positive view about the future. Many of these young people may find that traditional work placements are limited. They are

planning to be professionals, skilled trades people, entrepreneurs and managers and they want to be active participants rather than observers in the work-related curriculum.

However, the approach also proved relevant in motivating and preparing for the world of work those students who are considered to be 'at risk'. Experience suggests that many 'at risk' students or young people who have left school early need other forms of support and intervention before they are able to benefit fully from this approach. Often such students are not able to articulate their career aspirations and they need to participate in a more comprehensive process of personal support and career education.

## The social enterprise model in action

The model is built around three main elements:

- **Young people lead the action.** They design and manage community projects that generate a common good or benefit. They create project ideas that are based upon their values, personal interests or vocational aspirations and their concerns for the



Learning about the world of work

community and environment in which they live. They turn these ideas into practical projects with stated goals and deadlines and implement them. They are the social entrepreneurs who set out to make things happen and make a difference to their community. As they experience the very essence of enterprise, they create numerous opportunities to use and develop the enterprising qualities and employability skills necessary to design and manage a piece of work.



Improving the community

● **Adults support the learning.**

An adult facilitator supports the young people in generating ideas and leading their project. The teacher, youth worker, or personal adviser ensures that the young people are given the opportunities to:

- identify the skills and qualities that they need in order to achieve their purpose, and to place them in a wider context of understanding enterprise and the world of business
- monitor the progress of their project, review and reflect upon what they have learnt and use this in order to improve their future performance
- work with the facilitator and other adults in the community, perhaps youth workers or personal advisers, and take time out of their project to develop the enterprising qualities and employability skills they need to move their project forward. The facilitator is flexible, responding to the needs of the team and teaching the appropriate skills as and when the opportunities arise.
- have their efforts, achievements and learning recognised and

accredited where appropriate. The facilitator should make the most of opportunities for affirming the young people, whether these occur within the team or outside it.

● **Representatives from business and the world of work review the learning acquired by the young people against their requirements.**

The young team members nominate a vocation or job in which they have an interest and the facilitator ensures that they have the opportunity to meet someone who has that vocation or job. This meeting takes the form of a review session between the young person and the work respondent. It focuses upon the relevance of the enterprising qualities and employability skills the young people have developed through their project work to the expectations and requirements of the job.



Developing new skills

The respondent is asked to prepare for the interview by going through a cultural audit of their own workplace to consider afresh what skills and attributes are required. They may be a salaried person or a contractor, or be self-employed. They may be a member of a co-operative or the director of a community business. One of the exciting possibilities generated by this model is the potential to engage representatives from the world of work who may not be able to provide traditional work experience placements.

**The next phase of development**

The social enterprise model is now being actively taken forward through the linked development of:

- **Curriculum resources** – a sixty hour enterprise learning package is being

developed. The package is very flexible, allowing schools to choose the way in which they want to incorporate it into their curriculum. It has three components:

- **Exploration** – this is a fifteen hour introductory programme designed to help young people develop an awareness of what the concepts of 'community' and 'enterprise' mean to them, and to help them decide whether and how they might want to implement a community enterprise project.
- **Experience** – the students then design and manage a thirty-hour community project, the aim of which is to improve their community in some way.
- **Evaluation** – in this fifteen-hour unit the students review and reflect upon what they have learnt from their experience and apply it to the world of work. Each student presents their 'enterprise learning' to a work-based respondent. Supported by a Connexions adviser, they then decide how they can use their experience in the future.

- **Accreditation** – this is the development of young-person-led assessment through an award in social enterprise developed with ASDAN, the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network, which is also recognised by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA).

- **A structured training package for adult facilitators** – this is aimed at teachers, youth workers and Connexions advisers. It concentrates on honing and developing facilitation skills. It is envisaged that the package will be suitable for university accreditation.

- **A school-based venture fund** – this is managed by the young people, and is established with the aim of providing venture capital for the community projects whilst developing students' financial awareness.

Changemakers would be keen to hear from schools interested in contributing to the further development of these ideas.

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<sup>1</sup> Copies of the Davies report are available from Prolog on 0845 602 2260 or from the Davies Review website at [www.daviesreview.org](http://www.daviesreview.org).