

Business Planning For Emerging Social Firms

Key Points from the Workshop

Tuesday 28th June 2005

- 1) Chopsticks is a project in Northallerton which began as a daycare and provides work activities with a contract from social services. It is a emmber-led society providing home and garden maintenance, work placements and training and produces wood chips which are sold locally for log fires. It provides benefit to the community with a good team spirit.
- 2) Chopsticks needed a business plan for a funding application to develop the business. It enlisted the help of the Cranfield Trust, an organisation that provides business experience and skills to small charities (under 25 employees whose work relieves human suffering) by using volunteer consultants from the commercial sector.
- 3) The application process was outlined.
- 4) Chopsticks used the Cranfield Trust to write a 3 year business plan and fill in the financial and management gaps.
- 5) The consultants from the Cranfield Trust are working for free and all have full time jobs, so careful thought must be used to ensure you get the best from the volunteer in terms of time and results. Expect to work evenings and weekends with them.
- 6) In hindsight it would have been better to do the funding application alone and use the Cranfield Trust to develop the business, when more time and thought could be devoted to it.
- 7) Chopsticks' future plans need to focus on developing commercial activities to gain a level of sustainability, increasing its income from sales.