

Supporting People with a learning disability or learning difficulty to fulfil their work potential

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STEPPING STONES NI Ltd



Stepping Stones NI Project Workforce Year 3 Executive Summary

Social Return On Investment Study

1st April 2010 – 31st March 2011

Stepping Stones (NI) A Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status Inland Revenue Charity No: XR 14543

This Project is part-funded by The European Union and Department of Employment and Learning



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stepping Stones NI (referred to after as Stepping Stones) is a local supported employment organisation, working with people with learning disabilities and difficulties in the greater Lisburn area. Funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) (with match funding from DEL's Disablement Advisory Service & the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust), Project Workforce's approach is based on the Supported Employment model which facilitates people with significant disabilities to access real jobs, in a real work environment with appropriate ongoing support.

The SROI model, adopted in this Study, uses monetary value to represent the social costs and benefits of a programme or activity. Once monetary values have been assigned, a ratio of cost to benefits can be calculated. However, the SROI ratio does not "stand alone" and must always be regarded within the context of all that is uncovered in a full SROI Study. Covering the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011, the Study's results were extrapolated over a five-year period (extended to 31st March 2015). The £379,500 invested in the year 2010/11 generated **£2,286,343** of social value over the five years (discounting the return by Government-advised 3.5%).

This Study identified Project Workforce's main inputs, outputs and outcomes, as they relate to the seven stakeholder groups relevant to the Project. Outcomes were all assigned a social value, the main ones of which are summarised below:

- **Training Outcomes.** With 147 courses and qualifications undertaken, individuals with learning disabilities and difficulties are being equipped for the workplace, building the skills and confidence required. The social value generated by the training, in terms of **potential future income and the value of the courses to the individuals today amounts to a total of £54,315.**
- **Employment Outcomes.** 19 participants secured employment, with varying degrees of support still being provided by the Project Employment Service. Taking into consideration reductions in benefits payments, **the overall increase in income this represents to the individuals over the 5 years is valued at £181,271.**
- **Changes in Family Life.** The change in family life, experienced predominantly by the immediate families of Project Workforce participants is very

significant and **amounts to a total social value of £1,050,576** over the Study period. This value represents increased respite opportunities and significant improvements in the dynamics of family life.

- **Placement Benefits to Employers.** Employers from the Lisburn area experienced many anticipated (and some unanticipated) benefits from hosting Project Workforce participants, through work experience placements and voluntary employment, **assigning these a total value to their workplaces of £50,440.**
- **Recruitment Benefits to Employers.** Employers who employed a participant from Project Workforce testified to an average reduction in recruitment-associated costs of £1,000 per employee, representing a total saving of **£10,000.**
- **Transitions Service Outcomes.** The Service generated a total value (to schools, employers, SEHSC (in future day care spaces not used) and individual participants) of **£246,389.**

The **SROI ratio of costs to benefits is 1:5.45**; for every £1 spent between 1st April 2010 and 31st March 2011, £5.45 of social and economic value will be returned between 1st April 2010 and 31st March 2015. In determining the ratio, values were discounted to allow for: attribution (an assessment of how much value can be attributed to other factors at work); deadweight (an assessment of what proportion of the outcomes would have happened without Project Workforce); and drop-off (an assessment of how much value falls away over time, as individuals and organisations become more influenced by other factors).

The value that Project Workforce is generating illustrates the importance of investing in the confidence, skills and experience levels of individuals with significant learning disabilities, most of whom are unlikely to enter sustained and successful employment otherwise. Feedback from stakeholder consultation highlighted the very effective ways in which Stepping Stones' staff work in partnership with families, employers, SEHSC Trust, employers and schools (in the case of Transition students). This partnership approach, that builds trust and takes into account the needs and circumstances of each individual, has enabled Stepping Stones to achieve very significant vocational, social and economic outcomes for its Project Workforce participants and related stakeholders.