



Annual Report 2010/2011



Our Mission

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

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Our Values

- People** We will create a culture in the organisation that inspires our clients, staff, members, board and other supporters. We believe that all our people should have opportunity to work in a way that realises their full potential and ambition.
- Respect** We believe in equality and respect for all. We celebrate diversity and actively promote inclusion so that everyone's voice is heard and their opinions' respected.
- Choice** Each individual is entitled to make choices, about their pathway to learning and employment and about the pace and timing of that journey.
- Excellence** We will embrace a culture of quality and continuous improvement so that our clients and customers can expect great service that represents value for money.

We are committed to achieving organisational excellence measured across a range of areas that include:

- Providing **leadership**
- **Investing** in our people
- Developing ambitious **strategies**
- Working in **partnership**
- **Serving** our clients and customers
- Having a positive **impact** on wider society
- Getting great **results** for our stakeholders.

Chair's Report 2010/11

Our people and structures were the subject of an important review undertaken in our last reporting period. Since Stepping Stones was incorporated 15 years ago, it was important to acknowledge that our organisation has grown significantly since that time and determine whether our structures and roles remain fit for its current purpose as well as future challenges.



This extensive review drew on consultation with staff and board members alike and put forward a number of recommendations for optimum structures going forward. We are taking a phased approach to the implementation of the plans.

One of our first steps was to acknowledge the need to invest more into business development including income generation and marketing. This resulted in the creation of a new post Business Development Manager and we are delighted that Cara Cash who so ably helped steer the organisation during our Chief Officer and Operations Manager's maternity leave was the successful candidate for this post.

In the early part of 2010 the Chief Officer returned from maternity leave

as did the Operations Manager in the latter part of the year. Having the full complement of the management team in place has been reinvigorating for the organisation and the Board has benefited greatly from their combined support.

During the year Margaret O'Kane who was a board observer stepped down and we are very thankful for her sage counsel and support over the years. At that point we had a number of vacancies on the board and following an advertising and recruitment process, 3 new board members have joined Stepping Stones – Mike Jones, Richard Knox and Paul Fox. In the early part of 2011, we ran a governance workshop for the board and senior management. It is vitally important to the board that we demonstrate good governance across

all aspects of our business and we are in the process of implementing the outcomes and recommendations from this workshop.

In the latter half of 2010, we learnt that we had won a further 3 years of funding for our Workforce project in partnership with NOW. This was a fantastic achievement for the team and whilst there are increased constraints on the funding, our fundraising activity under the Business Development Manager has really stepped up a gear to help deliver any shortfall.

In April 2010, a Social Return on Investment (SROI) study commenced with a view to quantify the social value generated by Stepping Stones Workforce Project which is in partnership with NOW. The study took place over the financial year and I am delighted to report that every £1 spent by Stepping Stones equates to a social and economic value of £5.45. A very real demonstration of how Stepping Stones is changing lives and communities.

A highlight of every year is celebrating the successes of our trainees. 2010 was no exception and we organised an event in Lisburn Civic Centre in September. Our special guest was Tim McGarry who did a wonderful job in keeping all of us entertained. Congratulations to all the trainees for their successes.

The Board and Senior Management Team held a strategic review day during the year and updated our strategy and operational plan. We

have adopted a balanced scorecard approach which we hope will make reporting on our achievements towards objectives simpler and easier to monitor.

Our social enterprises continue to perform well despite the economic conditions. Continuous refreshment of our marketing activity is important and we have moved into the social media world with a presence on Facebook for both Stepping Stones NI and Pink Elephant Cards.

The Board is very thankful for all the support which the organisation receives. Our funders and partners are extremely important to us and we couldn't achieve as much as we do without them. Committed and passionate staff are a credit to any organisation and we are so lucky to have some of the most motivated and talented individuals working at Stepping Stones. To the trainees, their parents and carers we owe a huge debt of gratitude. It is their interest, support and ultimately successes which mean that we can continue to demonstrate the very real impact the organisation has on people's lives.

Finally, thank you to all of our board members for their ongoing, positive contribution.

Kathy Martin
Chairperson
Stepping Stones NI

Chief Officer's Report

Stepping Stones during 2010/2011 has continued to deliver a quality training and employment service for people with learning disabilities and learning difficulties. As I write my piece for the report I am reflecting on the past years at Stepping Stones and how the organisation and its services has provided the much needed support to enhance the learning and development of our young adults.



Stepping Stones has made such an impact to the lives of our Trainees and Clients, it is fantastic to see at first hand the developments big and small, whether it's getting a paid job for some or for others saying hello and smiling.

During the reporting year we continued to deliver our Transitions, Training and Employment Service and our range of social enterprise activity. I am especially delighted to report that 19 people gained paid employment during a difficult economic year through the support of our Employment Service. Our celebration event at the Island Centre Lisburn in September was

a perfect setting in which to award our Trainees and Clients for their achievements and hard work, which was attended by a full house of 250 invited guests.

I returned from maternity leave in 2010 with a new Management team. With my Operations Manager and Business Development Manager we worked together to ensure that Stepping Stones was delivering quality services, providing the best for our trainees. We continued to seek out new opportunities, provide different experiences, new ways to learn and overall to support our trainees to fulfil their potential.

I was delighted to welcome our new Board members during the year, who participated in the setting of our strategy for the next 3 years and to ensure good governance of the organisation.

Working through partnerships with NOW, Parkview Special School, Beechlaw School, The Beeches, Down Residential Project and our employers we have strived to ensure that through our practices and services we are reaching more people with learning difficulties and learning disabilities and that we are creating an impact to the disability community. I was delighted at the outcome of the SROI evaluation report for the Workforce project, not only for the financial outcome and SROI ratio of 1:5.45 but for all the positive comments and case studies illustrated throughout the report.

Thanks to my dedicated and motivated team of staff and volunteers who support our trainees in their skills development on site at Stepping Stones and out in the business community giving support in the work place.

I extend my thanks to my Board for their support in my role. Also to funders and everyone who have supported Stepping Stones during 2010/2011 in fundraising activities, donations and as customers. The years ahead will be tough but we as an organisation will work with our partners to develop our services and continuously seize every opportunity for our trainees so that they can develop and realize their talents as citizens in our city.

Paula Jennings
Chief Officer
Stepping Stones NI

“Stepping Stones is great. I like doing the work and making the cards.” Aileen Austen



Employment Service

2010/2011 was another fantastic year for the Employment Service, working in continued partnership with NOW to deliver Project Workforce, funded by the European Social Fund and the Department of Employment and Learning.

Throughout the year our Stepping Stones Employment Service has continued to grow and diversify supporting 75 people with learning disabilities and learning difficulties throughout the Lisburn Community. We supported **12 people** into part-time employment, **7 people** into full time employment, **12 people** into voluntary work and a total **75 people** accessed the **Employment Service** during the year working with **120 local employers** across the Lisburn Community

Additionally, the Employment Service supported **3 clients** through the Workable NI Programme in partnership with **NOW**. Workable NI aims to provide support for both employees and employers to ensure that people with disabilities find and keep appropriate jobs. Through the programme our Job Coach provides person centred support to enable employees with a disability to integrate into the workplace.

In difficult economic times when jobs are difficult to secure, Stepping Stones Employment Service has demonstrated that with support people with learning difficulties and learning disabilities can achieve paid jobs even when the going gets tough.

Transitions Service

Our Transitions Service, has proved to be an invaluable asset to local school leavers, in both special educational and mainstream schools, in their post school development. 18 pupils have been successfully supported into further education and training.

Training Service



Achievements in Training Courses

Working With Others	11
Customer Care	13
RSPH*Health & Safety	15
Open College Network Workability	5
Inductions	11
RSPH Food Hygiene Awareness Food Safety	16
NVQ Catering	8
Travel Training Refresher	15
OCN Travel Training	12
OCN Inclusion Communication and Understanding	24

The Training Team are delighted to report another outstanding year of delivery of quality training, through ESF Project Workforce.

Our outreach training programme continues to grow in strength with more people accessing our excellent range of courses across the catchment area with organisations such as Down Residential Project, The Beeches at Aghalee and Lisburn Adult Resource Centre.

A total of 119 people accessed training during the year. In addition 32 people participated in safety skills workshops and 107 people took part in anti-bullying training sessions.

Peace III funds administered by Lisburn City Council provided the opportunity for the roll out of a new OCN accredited course "Inclusion Communication & Understanding." This course equipped participants with the opportunities to advance their understanding in diversity

issues, improve their communication skills, and the knowledge of how to keep themselves safe.

Our series of innovative Anti-bullying workshops coincided with National Anti Bullying week (15th-19th November 2010) and raised awareness and highlighted the importance of speaking up against physical, verbal and cyber bullying.

Our celebration event on 15th September at the Island Centre Lisburn was a fantastic event to celebrate the achievements of our trainees and clients. We also awarded the Fire and Rescue Service in Lisburn with the Champions of Stepping Stones award, for their support towards helping our trainees achieve paid employment.



SROI – Workforce – Transition, Training and Employment Service

The SROI model (Social Return on Investment), was adopted by the organisation as a tool to measure the impact of its Project Workforce i.e Transition, Training and Employment Services.

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 £2,027,842 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 were 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, SEHSCT (in future day care spaces not used) and individual participants) of £246,389.

The SROI ratio of costs to benefits is 1:5.343; for every £1 spent between 1st April 2010 and 31st March 2011, £5.34 of social and economic value will be returned between 1st April 2010 and 31st March 2015.

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, SEHSCT 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.

The Avenue

Our team of hardworking staff and volunteers at The Avenue have continued to make an invaluable contribution to the smooth running of our busy Coffee Shop.

Our product offering expanded with the launch of our Corporate Catering Menu which led to an increase in orders for working lunches to local offices and businesses. Also our Children's Party Menu has been successful with Cup Cake and Gingerbread Men decorating parties for birthdays.



“I love meeting new friends, doing different courses and being part of something that helps me to keep myself busy.” Graeme Collins

theavenue

Picture Framing

Due to increased marketing and media coverage of Stepping Stones during the year, 2010/2011 has been a good one for Stepping Stones Picture Framing Department.

Positive customer feedback and high recommendations from a secret shopper in January have given us confidence that we are continuing to provide excellent service and high quality products to our customers.

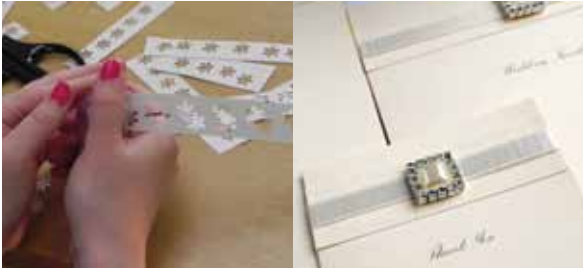
We are now into the second year of membership with ‘The Fine Art Trade Guild’ and one of our Vocational Training Officers is currently in preparation for the ‘Guild Commended Framer’ examination. This will give staff additional skills and techniques in order to broaden our product range.

A big thank you to our Volunteers, for their ongoing commitment and kindness. Their endless patience, hard work and sense of humour are invaluable to trainees and staff alike.

Staff and Volunteers continue to support Trainees to progress through their Training Plans at a pace that works for them, equipping them with all the necessary tools to progress into work placements and employment.



“I enjoy Picture Framing and Pink Elephant. I like I.C.T because Helen takes me to the computer course.” Nicholas Presho



Pink Elephant Cards

2010 was an exciting year for Pink Elephant Cards. We expanded our range to offer more choice in card designs to our bridal customer, and rebranded our product ranges with names that reflected the themes that inspired our design.

Our Elegance, Romance, Couture, Vintage and Luxury ranges have been received with great acclaim. Attendance at a range of Bridal Fairs during the year reinforced to us that we were paving the way in becoming market leaders in the production of Wedding Stationery in Northern Ireland.

We have had fantastic feedback from our customers and critics alike with press coverage and articles including the Irish News as well as renowned fashion blog SugahFix advising followers to buy their wedding stationery from Pink Elephant Cards.

To increase brand awareness of Pink Elephant we re-launched our webpage to include a gallery where customers can view each design up close which has made shopping for the perfect stationary even easier. Social Media proved to be a great way of keeping in touch with our current and prospective brides. The launch of our Pink Elephant Facebook page was greatly received and we are delighted to be have new followers each day.

In the Pink Elephant Workshop we were able to offer 6 training places per day and saw trainees progress in their confidence, work skills and ability which for some meant a move to work placements and employment.



Stepping Stones Coffee Shop

In the year 2010/2011 we are delighted to report that 8 trainees achieved the City & Guilds NVQ Level 1 in Hospitality & Catering (7081) - 5 Trainees achieved in Food Preparation & Cooking with 3 Trainees in Food & Drinks service.

Aaron one of our trainees who completed Level 1 in Food Preparation & Cooking & also Food & Drinks Service has a work placement in Marks & Spencer's Deli Restaurant, he said "My NVQ has helped me in my work placement, I enjoy working with the staff, they help me in the kitchen over busy lunch times. I am very happy with my achievements."

Rosamund achieved her Level 1 in Food Preparation & Cooking & also Level 1 Food & Drinks Service and as a result of her qualifications has gained paid employment at Oak ridge Nursing home in Ballynahinch. Rosamund commented "I love working there and is not too far from where I live."

The team in the Stepping Stones Coffee Shop continued to work hard assessing trainees and providing the support for the trainees to make their catering training experience successful.

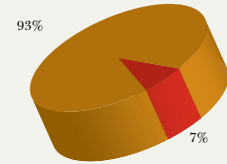
The Coffee Shop, maintained their 5 stars – "Scores on the Doors" after a visit from Environmental Health in August 2010.

Finances April 2010 – March 2011

Total Resources Expended: £698,326

Costs of generating voluntary income	£649,930
Fundraising trading: cost of goods sold	
And other costs	£ 48,396

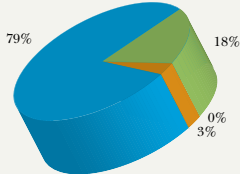
Total Resources Expended



Total Incoming Resources: £592,099

Voluntary income	£469,722
Activities for generating funds	£105,791
Investment Income	£9
Other Investment Income	£16,577

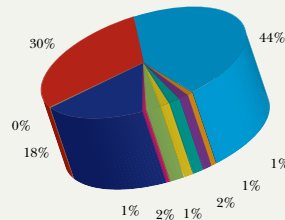
Total Incoming Resources



Sources of Income 2010/2011

Donations	£2,691
SEHSCT	£176,689
ESF/DEL/DAS	£259,016
DSD	£5,644
Peace III	£6,982
Charitable Trust	£10,000
Deferred Income	£8,700
Charity Car Park	£12,525
Other	£4,061
Social Enterprise income	£105,791

Sources of Income



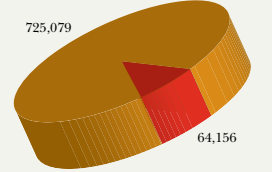
Full accounts are available on request for the period April 2010 – March 2011

Finances January 2009 - March 2010

Total Resources Expended: £789,235

Costs of generating voluntary income	£725,079
Fundraising trading: cost of goods sold	
And other costs	£64,156
Total	£789,235

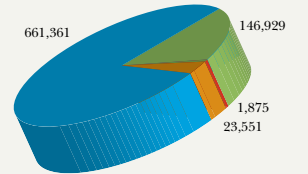
Total Resources Expended



Total Incoming Resources: £833,716

Voluntary income	£661,361
Activities for generating funds	£146,929
Investment Income	£1,875
Other Investment Income	£23,551

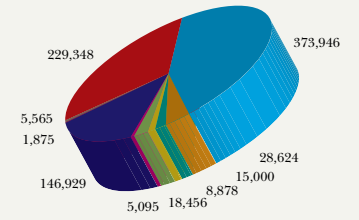
Total Incoming Resources



Sources of Income 2009/2010

Donations	£5,565
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	£229,348
ESF/DEL/DAS	£373,946
DSD	£28,624
Charitable Trust	£15,000
Deferred Income	£8,878
Charity Car Park	£18,456
Other	£5,095
Social Enterprise income	£146,929
Investment Income	£1,875

Sources of Income



Full accounts available on request for the period January 2009 - March 2010

Thank you

We would like to say a huge thank you to all our funders during the year:

- South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
- European Social Fund
- Department of Employment and Learning
- Disablement Advisory Service
- Baily Thomas Foundation
- Peace III administered by Lisburn City Council

Your investment has gone towards making a huge impact to the lives of our trainees and clients.

We also thank our Volunteers to Stepping Stones who give up their time so willingly to help our Trainees and support the work of the organisation.

We thank the Soroptimists of Lisburn for their generosity in helping at the Saturday car park and to the public for supporting us.

Also we thank our employers and the business community in the Lisburn Community who assist with work placements, work trials and give employment opportunities to our trainee and clients.

Finally may we thank the trainees, clients and staff of Stepping Stones for all your hard work, motivation and commitment during this reporting year.



This Project is part-funded by the European Union and the Department for Employment and Learning

Our Structure

The Board of Trustees:

During the year the Board of Stepping Stones NI were:

Paula Jennings	Chief Officer
Kathy Martin	Chairperson
Mike Jones	Vice Chair
Oliver McLarnon	Secretary
William Rogan	Treasurer
Michael Dixon	
Richard Knox	
Paul Fox	
Harry Goodman OBE	
Canice Hamill	
Chris Patton	
Margaret O'Kane	

Stepping Stones NI a Company Limited by Guarantee with charitable status with the Inland Revenue.

Inland Revenue Charity Number XR 14543

Company Number NI031411

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